

University Hill Public Safety Association

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October 21, 2015

Syracuse University Department of
Public Safety Office
130 College Place

11:00 am

MINUTES

Present: President Waltz, Ms. Collins, Mssrs: Brown, Daugherty, Godfrey, Goldacker, LeRoy, Maldonado, Petterelli, Walsh

Guests: Mr. Thomas Martin, Criminal Investigator, Veterans Administration Medical Center

Staff: David A. Mankiewicz

I. WELCOME AND MINUTES OF AUGUST 20, 2015

President Waltz called the meeting to order and welcomed members and guest present. He asked for a motion to waive the reading of the minutes of August 20. Mr. Godfrey moved, and Mr. LeRoy seconded the motion to waive the reading. The motion was unanimously approved. Mr. Waltz asked for a motion to approve the minutes of October 21. Ms. Collins moved, and Mr. Daugherty seconded a motion to approve the minutes of October 21, 2015 as distributed. The motion was unanimously approved.

II. SUCCESSION PLAN FOR UHPSA OFFICERS

Mr. Waltz noted that he was elected President of UHPSA in August 2013 to succeed Drew Buske who had retired. At that same meeting Mr. Sardino was elected Vice President. Mr. Waltz noted that therefore December 2015 closes out the second year of Mr. Waltz's term. He also noted that Mr. LeRoy was elected secretary in December 2014. That was also to fill a vacancy in the officers.

The succession plan outlined in the by-laws is that at the December meeting, officers are nominated for vice president and secretary. At the February meeting, the vice president, in this case, Mr. Sardino automatically succeeds Mr. Waltz as the President and a new vice president and secretary must be elected in February for a term of two years. Mr. Waltz asked that members of the board who would be interested in serving in those roles should call him before the December meeting.

III. UPDATE ON INCIDENTS AND CONSTRUCTION REPORTS

A. Ostrom Avenue House Invasion

Mr. Maldonado reported on the incident that took place on Ostrom Avenue earlier this month. He believes that the house was clearly targeted for the vehicle. The house was occupied by three foreign students, one of whom was driving a Porsche. The thieves knocked on the door and one of the residents opened the door to find two people wearing surgical masks who held the three residents at gunpoint for 30 minutes. One was trying to start the vehicle. It had an anti-theft device which it took the thieves 30 minutes to overcome. The thieves took the vehicle, the cell phones, wallets and keys. They dumped the car shortly thereafter. The incident is still being investigated by the Syracuse Police Department. The students fearing for their safety were invited to stay at the Sheraton and were given options by Syracuse University to relocate elsewhere. The landlord was able to convince them to re-occupy their apartment.

B. Orange Alert Incident

Mr. Maldonado reported that there was a homicide on Hope Ave. The officers who responded to a shots fired call were in turn fired upon. The officers pursued the vehicle and the occupants left the vehicle and fled into the Oakwood Cemetery. While the officers were searching through the cemetery for the shooter, the City did a reverse 911 call to alert residents of the area of the situation and a decision was made to send an Orange Alert to the S.U. community. Mr. Maldonado noted it's the fourth time the alert has been sent in seven years, and two were weather related. Mr. Maldonado noted that the alert only allows 140 characters to be used and given the brevity of the alert, they were not able to provide much information. He also noted that when an update was sent, the alert was mistakenly labeled as a weather emergency.

Mr. Maldonado noted that officers from DPS were patrolling the boundary of the cemetery between Syracuse University and SUNY-ESF. Mr. Maldonado noted that the lessons learned from the incident included:

1. Always send out a new message and do not use the text of an old one that was the basis of the inaccurate description of the event of the weather alert.
2. There was a lot of questions raised about buildings that had to be locked down remotely and people were asking why officers were not sent to the Archbold Gym and the Schine Student Center to lock those buildings.
3. Mr. Maldonado noted that education is needed to get the campus community to understand the differences between the term "shelter in place" vs. "lockdown." He noted that it was virtually impossible to lock down a campus. That term is more readily applied to a K-12 classroom building. The term "lockdown" could apply to a specific building on campus, but otherwise students have to shelter in place, which basically tells them to stay indoors. He noted that he was getting calls from resident advisers asking if delivery people could be allowed into the building. He also noted that in once instance, a student who was outside who wanted to get into a

building to shelter and those in the building were reluctant to let him inside and wanted DPS to come check on the individual who was trying to get in. Mr. Maldonado noted that compliance during the shelter in place order was generally good and from during the two-hour period from 8:30 p.m.-10:30 p.m. there was very little movement on campus.

Mr. LeRoy expressed his appreciation to Syracuse University DPS and to the Chief for the decision to patrol the border of the cemetery protecting both ESF and S.U. He noted they have the the same issues on their campus dealing with mechanically locked doors. These types of incidents are brought on by society and that all individuals have to be prepared and must be willing to learn more to know what they need to do for their safety. He commented that people need to understand the difference if they are told to get into a public area or to secure themselves in a private area. This is something that citizens need to learn. He noted that while the officers are responsible for public safety, individuals need to educate themselves and read the guidance that is placed on websites to instruct the students and residents what to do when such an incident takes place.

Mr. Petterelli noted that Le Moyne is also updating the definition of “shelter in place,” “lockdown,” and “evacuate.” He noted the term “lockdown” can be used with respect to a specific building, but not the entire campus. Mr. Waltz noted that there are similar issues at SUNY Upstate Medical University and that they discovered that only about 20% of the students and employees signed up to use New York Alert. Therefore, Upstate communicates through Twitter, Instagram, and whatever other social media outlets there may be. Upstate also rebroadcasts the Orange Alert.

Mr. Maldonado noted that at his last place of assignment he realized that murders in cities tend to be concentrated. The Post Standard produced a map of murders in Syracuse, and they are concentrated in a crescent that runs through the Southside and Eastside. There are no murders in the center of the University Hill area, but there are problems along the edge. All of University Hill and Syracuse University are located close to that edge. Mr. Maldonado also noted that there is an issue trying to control the social media. While the incident was taking place, the Daily Orange was tweeting about the incident, but a lot of misinformation was going out. He found it helpful that a public relations person from the University worked with him to try and counteract wrong information that was being distributed.

Mr. LeRoy noted that ESF is continuing to try to reach out and make safety part of the orientation for all students. He is trying to educate the ESF student body and faculty to look at the website and to do that before there is an actual incident taking place. Mr. Petterelli noted that he also had concerns expressed to him after they showed a clip of Sandy Hook to try and get people’s attention to the nature of the problem.

Mr. Maldonado noted that his DPS Staff have been regularly going out to the departments of Syracuse University to make safety presentations. He believes this is an important opportunity for the public to ask questions.

Mr. Godfrey noted that the Veterans Administration Medical Center were also given a mandate to do active shooter threat training. He noted that all 167 medical centers did it a different way. He noted that in a case of an active threat, most of the VA employees probably don't know what they should do and he noted that they realized during their drills that there are certain things they cannot shut down and whether or not an area can be isolated is unit specific.

Mr. Mankiewicz asked if Hill Net was used to alert the other institutions of the incident and the Orange Alert. Mr. LeRoy noted that he thought about it but did not use it. He noted that during Hill Net check-offs, only two institutions respond regularly. Mr. Waltz commented that UHPSA may need to re-examine Hill Net and that the University Hill institutions really should be part of a talk group on OCICS. He will see if Hill Net is included in the zone.

C. Marshall Street Stabbing

Mr. Mankiewicz noted that after the Marshall Street stabbing, two of the officers from the Crouse Marshall Business Improvement District (CMBID) and he went to meet with Chief Fowler regarding follow-up to the incident. He noted that Chief Fowler was very insistent that he wanted "the nonsense to stop." Chief Fowler noted that the SPD was following up with the State Liquor Authority (SLA) as the restaurant that had become the focus for gang activity did have a license from the SLA. The Chief was frustrated in that the owner was resisting allowing the SPD to recover the tape from the camera that was there to look at the stabbing incident. As a result, one of the CMBID store owners who happens to have stores on both ends of Marshall Street volunteered to install cameras that would give a direct feed to the police department so they could look at whatever they wanted to look at when they wanted to see it. Mr. Mankiewicz also noted that CMBID was also giving thought as to whether or not the BID should install additional cameras. As a result of the meeting, the two CMBID officers meet with the restaurant manager involved. The restaurant voluntarily agreed to move its closing hours back to 2:30 a.m. in the hopes that it would reduce any gang activity at their place of business. It was noted that there are other operations on Marshall Street that are open into the early morning hours, however, none of them have liquor licenses and are probably to be less likely an attraction for a gang.

IV. FUTURE AGENDAS

Mr. Walsh noted that he could bring in a demonstration to show all the chiefs what the Centro bus cameras can do. He wants to make sure that they are aware of the services are offered through Centro. Mr. Waltz asked Mr. Walsh to make that presentation at the December meeting. Mr. Waltz also suggested that each agency should prepare a 5-7 minute presentation on the agency itself to make sure that all of us get more familiar with what each agency has, its staffing, and what types of operations it conducts.

V. OTHER BUSINESS AND ADJOURN

Mr. Godfrey moved, and Ms. Collins seconded a motion to adjourn the meeting at 12:00 p.m. The motion was unanimously approved.