

# University Hill Public Safety Association

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November 2, 2016

Syracuse University Department of  
Lyman Hall, Room 091  
Syracuse University

10:00 am

### MINUTES

Present: President Sardino, Messrs. Benedict, Brown, Daugherty, Dufford, Goldacker, Maldonado, Petterelli

Guests: Mr. Vinnie Hueber, Syracuse Housing Authority  
Mr. David Mrizio, Syracuse Police Department  
Mr. Dave Bower, SUNY Upstate  
Mr. E. T. Donovan, Veterans Administration  
Mr. Christopher Dunham, Syracuse University

Staff: David A. Mankiewicz

#### **I. TABLETOP INTRODUCTION**

Mr. Dunham noted that this would be a facilitated discussion and the objective would be to focus on three goals: (1) identify communications pathways for both law enforcement and non-law enforcement partners, (2) identify resource gaps, and (3) explore integration between various organizations and the incident command centers.

#### **II. SCOPE OF THE INCIDENT AS LIMITED TO THE HILL**

1. There is obviously time compression as it's going through 24 hour period in two hours.
2. It is a normal day with all communications, transportation and workforce available.

Elements of the tabletop:

1. There is a winter weather advisory in place. There is light snow on the ground, but it is cold and dry.
2. There will be a football game at the Carrier Dome at 7:00 p.m., it is selling out and will be televised by ESPN. SPD will have 50 additional officers that would be in place three hours before the game, in addition there may be 50 police officers in the Carrier Dome.

3. There are 100-150 protesters that are located outside of Hendricks Chapel. They are concerned about a rare bird nest which has been found in the Carrier Dome area and they plan to protest at the Dome. However, the group is peaceful.
4. National Grid issued an advisory and the institutions have been asked to reduce power consumption. Upstate and the Syracuse Housing Authority noted that they have methods of bringing down power consumption, however, Syracuse University does not tell the students to reduce.

### **III. THE TABLETOP**

#### **A. Handling the Protest**

Mr. Sardino noted that DPS normally would meet with the organizers and would have internal notifications in place. However for a protest that small, there would be no impact on classes. They would notify the Syracuse Police Department that they are monitoring it, but probably would not notify the other institutions at that point. Syracuse University would only send two officers to typically monitor such an event. The Syracuse Police Department would not place any officers on campus for an event of this size.

Protestors who are not blocking traffic would not raise a great deal of concern. It was noted that later the protest group would grow to 200 and they moved down to Marshall Street to sit in before the Dome event. DPS would likely close it off to keep vehicle traffic away from the protestors.

#### **B. Water Issue**

Hutchings reports a low water pressure because of a leak that is taking place at Irving and Harrison Avenue. Hutchings noted that it has emergency sources of water which would allow it to operate for three days. Upstate would be concerned with the lack of water to the Institute for Human Performance because the research work might need water and the outpatient clinics would also be a concern. Water is a significant factor for research and water is also needed to heat the building. Upstate noted it would call the outpatients to cancel elective procedures and would also have to be involved in calling researchers to warn them of the water situation.

SPD would typically block off the intersection where the water main is broken and may also have to do that where the water is then running downhill. The SPD noted that they would likely ask the Department of Public Works to barricade off the water to avoid it freezing or to protect motorists from frozen water on the roads.

Crouse would likely communicate to the media to warn those who are coming to Crouse of the water problem and that they may need to seek an alternate location and that the road closure would be recorded as a New York alert. This would be a city effort. Mr. Dunham also noted that the City of Syracuse has announced that the water may be low or off for 48-72 hours and that is a 12 inch main which is a significant break in the system. It was agreed with that information there would be a need to engage the media and public relations staff to notify the public of the issue. Members also noted that they would likely use Hillnet to get the word out and would use the email chain to let each other know what each institution is doing. It was noted that the UHPSA should contact the University Hill Corporation to assist with notifying private property owners since there maybe major private property owners who are also impacted by the situation. However it was noted

that there is no external communications plan and that may be a role for University Hill Corporation.

It was noted that the low water situation would not necessarily be a sufficient reason to cancel the Dome event. The University's concern would be getting employees off The Hill, how to deal with traffic flow around the incident area, and to get the public to the Dome. It was agreed that the breakage at Harrison-Irving, the most important thing to do was to get people to go to the south to get them off The Hill. SPD would have the responsibility to notify the press.

This led to a discussion to whether or not there was a pre-designated traffic plan for early dismissal. There is a plan that was put in place almost 20 years ago that is tied to the distance that people live from the workforce to let those who live furthest away go first, but it was noted that the institutions may or may not have lists of non-essential personnel to be able to communicate who should and should not come in.

Mr. Dunham then noted that as the incident progresses, SUNY Upstate notices it has low water both in the north wing and east tower. He noted that it would push SUNY Upstate into full incident command where they would begin to discharge patients that are capable of going home and may also begin emergency department versions to have the ambulances go elsewhere. It was noted that Crouse believes that it has enough backup water for a day, but would be reliant on food service companies such as Sysco or Byrne to bring them in more water. Crouse noted that it would be trying to switch over feeds and also would be involved in discharging patients. With the minimum water requirement for people being 64 ounces a day, and having 2,500 employees, with probably 1,000 being on the peak schedule, there would be a concern about any disruption of the water. It was also noted that with this type of situation, Crouse would probably both stop its OR operations except for essential surgeries and would stop those that would take place in the Physician Office building. The operating rooms would be shut down with emergency cases only.

S.U. noted that under this set of circumstances they would not cancel classes, however they would have their communications staff monitoring social media to make sure that accurate information is getting out to the public. Mr. Dunham asked if there was any formal agreement for a public relations staff to work together which is there is not. It was noted that this may be important in an incident of this type.

Veterans Administration Medical Center noted that with a low water situation, they could use the pool filtration system on water and that there is a pool as part of the spinal cord injury center so there is quite a bit of water on site. 55 gallon drums of water would be used so people could be allowed to flush toilets.

### **C. Highway Failure**

The next element of the tabletop was that the media announced there was a major accident on I-81 north and south and that the accident may have led to structural damage to I-81 and even a section of the road suffering a collapse hazard. Under these circumstances, the county and state emergency operations centers would be activated. There would be a rotation among the emergency department to handle traffic. The institutions would communicate with their people to tell them to evacuate to the east and

south away from the incidents. In terms of notification of staffs, Crouse noted it would likely use email blasts to communicate with its staff regarding the traffic incident. The Veterans Administration Medical Center uses a phone tree, Hutchings has a reverse 911 call, and it is possible that a NY alert would be issued on the situation.

If there were no fatalities, the game would be played. The University may encourage people not to tailgate and the University would attempt to direct more people to Skytop. Upstate would be cancelling classes because they certainly would not want to run the risk of having their students walk under sections of I-81 and it was also anticipated that the cross streets under I-81 might be blocked. Given the anticipated multi-day nature of highway failure, alternative plans for staffing might include parking people at remote sites such as Shoppingtown Mall or Skytop. The Syracuse Housing Authority also noted that it may need to consider the evacuation of its housing that is directly adjacent to the highway and the possibly Toomey-Abbott if it is not possible to access the tower. It was noted that one of the needs identified might be an evacuation plan for University Hill. SPD may have that, however, it may need to be strengthened.

#### **IV. LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE INCIDENT**

1. The institutions may have to consider emergency sources for water. If a water main eliminated service or reduce service to multiple institutions, it is possible that their plans may conflict in that they would be going to the same sources for backup quantities of water.
2. In terms of public communication, the security departments would all work with their own public relations and communications officers. However it is clear that the public relations officers may not have an easy method to communicate with one another and just as there is a list serve for the security departments to talk to each other or services such as Hillnet, there may need to be an agreement put in place among the public relations and communications officers as how they would operate.
3. The University Hill Corporation should be engaged in the communications loop as it has contact information on a lot of the private sector buildings and the business districts such as Crouse-Marshall and East Genesee. An external communications plan may be necessary.
4. The early dismissal plan may be out of date and may be difficult to implement. It was built for a snowstorm scenario and it is questionable whether it's realistic to expect that people would evacuate by the geographic distance from which they live from their place of work.
5. The evacuation plan for University Hill should be revisited as there may be a need to update how people would move off The Hill in any type of situation. It might also be noted that with the impending construction of Interstate 81, it is possible that over the next four to five years some of the major access points to University Hill may be limited and so components of the plan would normally be available such as the Interstate highway system may not be as readily accessible as construction moves forward.