

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE
OF THE
SUFFOLK COUNTY LEGISLATURE
MINUTES

A special meeting of the Public Safety Committee of the Suffolk County Legislature was held in the Rose Y. Caracappa Legislative Auditorium of the William H. Rogers Legislature Building, 725 Veterans Memorial Highway, Smithtown, New York July 18, 2013.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Leg. Kate M. Browning, Chair
Leg. Robert Calarco, Vice Chair
Leg. Lou D'Amaro (Not present)
Leg. DuWayne Gregory
Leg. William Spencer

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Leg. John M. Kennedy, Jr., 12th Legislative District
Leg. Kara Hahn, 5th Legislative District
Samuel Chu, Commissioner/ Department of Labor
Gil Anderson, Commissioner/Department of Public Works
John Jordan, Deputy Commissioner/Fire Rescue
Ed Schneyer, Director/Emergency Preparedness
Steve Kamvakis, Community Emergency Evacuation/Emergency Management
Tony Brown, Community Emergency Response Team
Diane Dono Budget Review Office
Bobby Knight, Aide to Presiding Officer Lindsay
Michael Pitcher, Aide to Presiding Officer
Thomas Vaughn, County Attorney's Office
Marie Berkoski, Aide to County Executive
Lisa Santeramo, Intergovernmental Relations
Kevin LaValle, Aide to Leg. Muratore
Deborah Harris, Aide to Leg. Stern
Marge Acevedo, Aide to Presiding Officer
John Stype, Aide to Leg. Krupski
Amy Ellis, Aide to Leg. Anker
Bob Martinez, Aide to Leg. Montano
Massiel Fuentes, Aide to Leg. Montano
Lieutenant John Rung
James Reed, Shelter Island PD
David Hegermiller, Riverhead PD
And all other interested parties

MINUTES TAKEN BY:

Diana Flesher, Court Stenographer

MINUTES TRANSCRIBED BY:

Denise Weaver, Legislative Aide

MINUTES PROOFED BY:

AnneMarie Farrell, Legislative Aide

THE MEETING WAS CALLED TO ORDER AT 12:03 PM

CHAIRWOMAN BROWNING:

Okay, good afternoon. We'll start the Special Public Safety Meeting on Hurricane Preparedness. If everyone could please stand for the Pledge of Allegiance led by Legislator Calarco.

SALUTATION

If we could just do a moment of silence. Yesterday, the 17th, was the 17th anniversary of the Flight 800 crash.

MOMENT OF SILENCE OBSERVED

CHAIRWOMAN BROWNING:

Thank you. Okay, good afternoon. I just would like to start out, I believe, Mr. Chu, you wanted to come and speak. Do we have anyone in the room -- I don't have any cards -- do we have any speakers in the room? No. From the public? Okay.

Just as a -- an FYI we -- you know, this was a meeting requested by Legislator Gregory. We are in the hurricane season. And many of us have communities that have been very badly hit by the storm. So I kind of want to set the ground rules, make sure that this is not an after-action meeting from Sandy. This is about if we have a hurricane the next 24 hours to 72 hours, what is our plan today moving forward? I know that things can be subject to change. And I know that we would like to have updates. But if something was to happen tomorrow, this is why we want to have this meeting.

So, with that, Mr. Chu, if you'd like to go ahead -- oh, you want to say something, DuWayne?

LEG. GREGORY:

Yes. I just wanted to thank you and your office as the Chair of this Committee for -- for entertaining my request and organizing and pulling the meeting together. I know it was lot of work on your staff and I appreciate -- I appreciate everyone who -- who's here today to participate. You know, as Legislator Browning, the Chair, mentioned that, you know, we're into hurricane season. It's important that we have information available to us so that we can relay it to our constituents if such an event were to occur, that we know how we're going to respond to it. So that's the nature of this -- of the quest in the meeting today. So I just wanted thank you publicly.

CHAIRWOMAN BROWNING:

No problem. Thank you. So, Mr. Chu, if you'd like to go ahead.

COMMISSIONER CHU:

Sure. Well, I'd also like to thank Chairwoman Browning, the Public Safety Committee, as well as the full Legislature for taking the time to host this meeting as well as the members of the public that also made the time to show up.

This meeting is a very important conversation to ensure that we are continually thinking and making sure we can best serve the public whenever we have circumstances in severe weather events. And I know this is not an after-action review. Some of the things I'm going to review are things that are coming about. I think it is worth noting, and I think is a topic of interest of the lessons we have learned from Superstorm Sandy. And there are some of these items that will also -- that we found preliminarily already in our preliminary after-action review that are things that we would be able to implement on a more immediate basis.

This Administration in partnership with the Legislature and elected officials from all levels of

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government as well as community benefit organizations and non-profits work together to respond to the Superstorm Sandy. While we are now working together to recover and rebuild stronger, we are also very diligently looking at lessons learned and how we can better prepare for the next event, which we know is imminent.

As you're aware, as everyone's aware, Superstorm Sandy came ashore on October 29th. It was the second largest storm in American history and the largest storm in history to impact the East Coast. In Suffolk County alone it caused damaged to almost 30,000 homes. It costs hundreds of millions of dollars worth of structural damages, left more than one million County residents without electricity and is projected to cost more than one billion to rebuild and mitigate against future storms. And we all know no one on Long Island was spared by its impact in some way, shape or form.

The severity of the storm did cause, however, a historical coordinated response among departments within Suffolk County as well as other levels of government and continues to do so. Almost every department within Suffolk County played a more significant role than it had in previous events that -- than they have ever had to do.

These unprecedented roles that various agencies and departments played has led to all departments, not just departments that would traditionally be involved in storm preparedness or emergency response, being involved and considered in the after-action review. And as we make recommendations or recommendations were made for big picture changes as to how we handle emergencies of the magnitude, we are also currently working on a final report and expect it to be completed and ready for release in the near future. We look forward to also presenting that to this -- to the Public Safety Committee.

And while it's not finalized, the Administration and its departments have already taken steps to make sure that we are prepared for this upcoming hurricane season and also for subsequent events in years to come. So I'm just going to do a brief review of some of the implemented updates for preparedness.

CHAIRWOMAN BROWNING:

Sammy, do you -- would you prefer to sit? I -- you know, I didn't know that you were -- I don't want to say this the wrong way --

COMMISSIONER CHU:

I'm okay.

CHAIRWOMAN BROWNING:

-- but if you want to sit and be more comfortable.

COMMISSIONER CHU:

I actually prefer to stand if it's okay.

CHAIRWOMAN BROWNING:

Okay.

COMMISSIONER CHU:

You know, more slenderizing. Sitting in these arms -- with arms, it's a little, you know -- (laughter)

These are just some of the measures. And I'm going -- these are just brief measures in different categories that we've already identified through our after action-review that we can make improvements.

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As far as infrastructure goes, Suffolk County's working very closely since the beginning of the storm with New York State OEM and FEMA to prepare and submit approximately 30 Letters of Intent for -- for FEMA 404 funding. This funding is strictly for the purpose of mitigation measures, you know, permeable surface, hardening infrastructure and also in that -- in those Letters of Intent we plan on requesting generators for many County facilities and emergency facilities, which we know was an immediate issue during the storm.

We have also submitted requests for FEMA 406 funding, which both repairs facilities that were damaged during Sandy, but also allows for mitigation measures and infrastructure hardening at those facilities. We're going to hear from our Department of Public Works Commissioner, Gil Anderson, about our updated, debris removal plan and contracts that will be in place to allow for a more expeditious system to deal with the removal of debris. And various departments including the Police Department, FRES and DPW have ordered equipment that they have identified as needing to better respond to future storms.

We all know that at various points communication was an issue. And in regards to communication with the public we are in the process of putting together a system for automatic conference call updates when the EOC is activated. This will include regularly scheduled conference calls at different pre -- predesignated times for Suffolk County elected officials, Suffolk County staff and also the press. This will allow for accurate real-time information to be delivered at various times during the day.

We are also exploring the option of a designated weather emergency update phone line where a person -- where a person will be able to call a designated number to receive the latest updates of the storm. Currently that number's the EOC and this would allow for a more automated process and less-you labor intensive process. And it just delivers it more efficiently and effectively.

Similar to the designated phone line, we were also looking at a system for constituents to sign up to receive automatic storm updates via text. We know that that's an important method of communication for many people and many people rely on that means and there are other agencies that -- that do it already.

And various departments are putting in place processes to be able to assist populations they serve during emergencies. And these will be predesignated terms that allow for such things such as opening hours. We know for many of our -- many of the departments have constituent appointments that they -- they become very aware of because they're dependent on for various services. For example, we're focusing on increasing the efforts to advance the online registration of the vulnerable populations so that they can be proactively checked on and assisted during a storm, which will allow us to better keep track of folks.

In regards to Human Services, we have actually been working with Legislator Horsley to activate and make known to the community the warming centers that people could utilize during a storm. These are -- although, this time of year we're looking for cooling centers. These are pre-identified locations that people will know they can go to get food, warmth, cell phone charging, etcetera.

And, of course, we've been in contact since the beginning and engaged with the Long Island {BOED} and other non-profits to make sure that we are not duplicating services and actually complementing the efforts -- the valiant efforts that we know the -- the various non-profit communities have put out on Long Island, both traditional non-profits as well as many of those that activated a response.

And administratively, on a financial basis, which we know is important, in future events we will have a representative from Finance engaged in emergency federal reimbursement from the get-go so they can see the storm out from event all the way to the end to receive reimbursement, which will allow for a more effective process for federal reimbursements.

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With that, I'd be glad to take any questions or we can leave them to the end.

CHAIRWOMAN BROWNING:

I think we can wait until the end.

COMMISSIONER CHU:

Sure.

CHAIRWOMAN BROWNING:

And let everybody do their presentations and then -- you know, I know I have a few questions. I'm sure everybody does. So, you know, we'll let everybody do the presentations first. Because I'm sure after they're done, there might be more questions.

COMMISSIONER CHU:

Sure. Well, thank you again for the opportunity to be here and thanks again for facilitating the conversation.

CHAIRWOMAN BROWNING:

Thank you. With that, we have Suffolk County Department Fire, Rescue Emergency Services. I don't know -- do you -- does Gil, DPW, do you guys want to come up together in case there's a -- something where you might overlap and have something that you're working on together? So you're more than welcome to come up. I know that Joe Williams, our Commissioner for FRES, is not able to be here. He's in Albany regarding some Sandy issues. So, Gil, just want to put your name on the record. And, John, if you want to go ahead and start.

MR. JORDAN:

John Jordan. Can you hear me? John Jordan -- okay, John Jordan, Deputy Commissioner of Fire Rescue. With me I have Ed Schneyer. He's the Director of Emergency Preparedness. And also available for questions I have Steve Kamvakis. He's Community Emergency Evacuation Coordinator with Emergency Management also. He's the administrator for the County Community Emergency Response Team. And we also have the President of the Community Emergency Response Team, Tony Brown, with us also here if you have questions.

CHAIRWOMAN BROWNING:

Next.

COMMISSIONER ANDERSON:

Gil Anderson, Commissioner of Public Works, Suffolk County.

CHAIRWOMAN BROWNING:

Okay, you want to go ahead and start.

MR. JORDAN:

Okay. We have prepared a PowerPoint for you guys just to run through this briefly. We'll talk a little bit about Sandy. Commissioner Chu, covered a lot of statistics that we have in there so we could breeze through a lot of that. We're going to talk a little bit about our everyday tools that we use: Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan, our directory, our timeline, things like that, Some operational tools, some assets that we have now that are available. And toward the end we'll talk -- touch on some of the initiatives that are new and we'll retouch on some of the things that we cover throughout the presentation that we've already discussed. And then our last slide will be the storm outlook for the season.

So, Sandy, we don't have to beat the -- beat it up, but obviously we refer to it as a Frankenstorm. It was two storms in one. We all know the logistics of the storm and -- and it's makeup.

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Obviously, we've all experienced the devastation from the storm so we don't have to beat it up.

The wave: Some of the stats that you might not know were the -- the wave heights, 35 feet in the ocean, 20 to 25 foot crashing surf on our shores. The surf difference between the surf and the surge is the -- the wave action on top of the tide. So you'll hear numbers that may confuse you or maybe you don't understand, the 16-foot surge on Fire Island. And then you get 20 to 25 foot crashing surf, what is -- what is the difference, what does that mean? Well, the crashing surf is actually the tide plus the surge plus the wave action on top of that. That creates that number. But the actual height of the surge, the water flowing through, 16 feet on Fire Island at some points and 10 to 12 on the North Shore.

Some of the statistics relative to -- to FRES and County operations: The EOC was activated for over four weeks, 24 hours-a-day. It became the alternate seat of government. We had -- the County Executive and his senior staff were there 24/7 for most of that operation, which was definitely a -- we view that as a positive, having the County Executive and decision-makers there, you know, at our disposal, was definitely a help and necessary. Definitely necessary.

We had 88 agencies represented in EOC. Some of those agencies that represented came with two people, four people, ten people; so we had hundreds of people in the building. It caused us to actually displace a large percentage of the Probation Department from the building. We had to take over their operations for months -- their areas for months.

Some of the things we did, you know, obviously we -- we had conference calls. We stayed in communication with all our partners, both County departments, our local partners, our planning partners, our town supervisors, mayors, emergency managers. Our call center was activated. We have 12 phones in that call center. Our Community Emergency Response Team, which is 100% volunteers, they put in over 2000 hours answering those phones.

We established the 211 system for the -- for the STEP Program. And we used our -- our normal tools that we train on all the time, our E-Team, which is an internet management tool, our HURREVAC, which is -- which tracks the storm and makes predictions and our surge modeling, our SLOSH. And those are tools that we use to -- to plan. Those give us our benchmarks for evacuations and things like that. For our evacuation decisions. We make those decisions based on the surge modeling and the HURREVAC, what it's telling us. And we do that in conjunction obviously with the County Executive. And the Towns and Villages all play a part in that. We try and make those decisions together so that certain areas, you know, on Fire Island, the barrier island and Brookhaven's not calling for an evacuation and Islip's not; or Islip is and Brookhaven's not, that confuses people and it causes a problem. So we try and make those decisions together.

We make those decisions based on some information, you know, the time of day, zero hour, the onset of tropical storm-force winds and also some of the things we need to carry out those evacuations like the Fire Island Ferry system or the railroad, they all have points that they shut down based on their -- their procedures. So we have to take all that stuff into account when we order an evacuation to make sure it's going to go off.

All the evacuations -- all the mandatory evacuations were prefaced with -- by voluntary evacuations. The estimated population of people that were ordered to evacuate were 35,000. And that was basically surge zone one, inundation zone one. Two hospitals were included in that. And we deployed a lot of disaster supplies to the shelters once those were identified and open.

There were 14 general population shelters throughout the County, two pet-friendly shelters, three functional needs co-located shelters, one special needs shelter, a sex offender shelter. And we identified longtime housing through New York IT College, their dorms that they don't use. And we did continue sheltering for 25 days. The shelters were staffed by Red Cross volunteers, our

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Community Emergency Response Team volunteers, our Medical Reserve Corps. The Suffolk County SPCA played a big role in the pet sheltering. And we have a County employee Voluntary Shelter Officer Program that we -- I don't want to say reinvigorated, but we paid a lot of attention to last year luckily, we had a lot of County volunteers. And this year we're also pushing for more volunteers and getting the word out to them. And the local town personnel played a big role in those shelters. A lot of Towns opened their own shelters and were self-sufficient. But in total there were 1600 people sheltered and -- and 50 pets.

Some of the damage from the storm, we heard, you know -- we hear these numbers. Sometimes these numbers are -- change a bit -- but there were eight storm-related deaths in the County; 4,000 homes that were inhabitable, 11,000 flooded, you know, we hear all these numbers. LIPA damage, the big thing that -- that we talk about with LIPA is -- is the damage to the infrastructure, the aging infrastructure. Obviously the Governor commissioned the Moreland Commission to study all that stuff. But 12 of their 51 substations were flooded, which did not make operations easier, obviously, and it took 17 days to restore the power.

So some of the tools that we use, we have -- the County has and it's required by the State, we have a Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan and we have many annexes. Most of that plan is -- is open to -- to speak. There are some confidential annexes in there based on -- based on the emergency. But with regard to the hurricanes and coastal storms that information is all available. We have many annexes that are specific to different disciplines: Radiological, etcetera. But we use that -- we refer to that plan frequently.

The Emergency Management Directory, we keep this current. We're actually in the process of printing the latest version. Basically it gives us 24-hour access to elected officials, LIPA individuals, our partners in EOC, representatives in EOC. So if there's an incident in the middle of the night, you know, or the middle of the day, we'll be able to get to the people we need, the decision makers to -- to have a conversation if needed.

Our 120-hour timeline, we've -- we've established some changes to the 120-hour timeline based on Irene and -- and Sandy. It's a plan that we use. It outlines responsibility and operations and protective actions for decision-making purposes. And we look at this plan and basically this plan -- things that you might not think of in the spare of the moment like fueling generators or testing phones in EOC, things like that, things as small as that are on the list or also things giving us benchmarks for evacuation decisions. We know we have to make evacuation decision on this area because of those outside decision-making things that we had, like the ferry schedule and the railroad, things like that. And it addresses critical decision-making topics so we don't forget them.

Our mass notification systems, we still use CodeRED. CodeRED was an invaluable tool during Sandy. I think just about every Town utilized it. The County utilized it. We utilize it a lot. We use the Verizon 911 database for home phones. So it's automatic. Everybody's in the system, but you have the option as a resident to -- to subscribe your cell phone or text message -- for text messages and e-mails, etcetera, or certain topics, things like that. So you could target the messaging you want to receive through subscription, otherwise you'll get, you know, lifesaving or emergency notifications automatically.

And we also use our -- our emergency alerting system that we have the ability to interrupt, you know, news media, things like that. We have ARES RACES, the group, they have a position down in the EOC. They actually have a room. We have a radio station represented down there. So if -- if communications go out with the public, we have multiple levels that we utilize and we -- and we test on a regular basis.

Our special needs; Commissioner Chu had mentioned about our vulnerable population so we have -- we've broadened our -- formally known as the G-Program into a Vulnerable Population

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Emergency Preparedness Registry that anybody could register if they have what they deem special needs or things that they want us to know about, they can -- they can register in this. And this is actually a model that the State actually wants to adopt. This registry was developed by County IT in conjunction with -- with FRES. And we have multiple for-profit countrywide individuals that would like -- they love the model that we built. So it's, you know, we're viewing this as definitely a positive.

LEG. SPENCER:

You're using JEEPs?

MR. JORDAN:

Well, JEEP still exist. The people that were in JEEP are in this -- in this program.

LEG. SPENCER:

What does JEEP stand for?

MR. JORDAN:

Joint Emergency Evacuation Program. Basically that was a program that the County had started years ago for people who couldn't evacuate themselves. It would be doctor -- the doctor would have to fill out a thing and we would provide transportation. That's just one part of this now.

LEG. SPENCER:

Okay.

MR. JORDAN:

So the evacuation zones, we have four and that's based on surge.

*(*Legislator Hahn just entered the meeting*)*

But a total of 225,000 people and 1100 miles of shoreline are encompassed in those evacuation zones. And, again, the jurisdictions typically follow our lead with a coordinated evacuation decision. And we would, you know, our first -- our first -- other than the media, we would use CodeRED to notify the public of those -- the public of those evacuation decisions.

Our bus transportation plan, just as late as this morning, we had a meeting with the bus companies. And the key -- the key change from last year to this year, what we found -- and this was, you know, as a result of -- of the bus companies, our partners in this, is we're not a typical mass transit population like New York City. They know where all the bus routes are, the bus stops, things like that. Our population really doesn't know that.

So we found a lot of -- a lot of people confused during Sandy with regard to evacuation. So at the bus -- the bus company's idea, they thought that it would be better to develop a actual call-in system and they are willing to pick people up at their homes instead of saying meeting -- meet on the corner of 5th and Elm, we'll actually -- they'll call, they'll man their call center and -- their call centers and they'll actually pick people up that want to be picked up. So that's a huge bonus or a huge addition then from last year. Not many people took -- took advantage of the bus -- the bus transportation last year.

Sheltering: We're still in good shape. We have meetings all the time with the Red Cross. We've had one as late as about a week-and-a-half ago. They have 141 locations identified. There's 25 primary locations and they -- they basically activate their -- you know, for a coastal storm anyway, in the tiered system, they have five tier I and ten tier II, ten tier III locations that they activate based on need. There's 25 conex boxes at those. There's one conex box at each of those 25 locations with supplies that are prepositioned. And we're adding to those -- those conex boxes

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some special needs; cots and things of that nature so that we can -- we can cohabitate those shelters.

Our pet shelters are still ready to go. We've met with the -- with the SPCA. We've increased our supply of pet sheltering supplies. We've added a lot of cages and we've added two emergency trailers that can be deployed to different locations to increase the sheltering capability.

And our special needs/functional needs shelters, we're following a national model on cohabitation in these shelters. So all of our functional needs we've kind of changed the -- the name from special needs to functional needs. And all our functional-needs folks will be sheltered in a general population shelter with help from the Medical Reserve Corps, things like that.

Anybody that is -- requires a machine, so to speak, to sustain life, they would be excluded from this and they would have to go to a hospital. And in Sandy we saw, I think, there was a total of three -- three of those folks that would have needed, you know, to go to a hospital as opposed to a -- formerly known as a special needs shelter.

*(*Legislator Kennedy just entered the meeting*)*

And our sheltering and storm surge website, we -- we actually bought a couple of computers, one of the -- the things we found during Sandy was that folks that had Apple devices, whether it's an iPad or an iPhone, weren't able access the County website, the interactive portion of the County website. And so what we did was we bought some -- we bought computers anyway, we bought software so that they're able -- IT is able to do it now. So if you have an iPad or whatever, you're able to -- to access the -- the website. And basically what this does is it allows you pre-storm to go put your address in, see where you live, the shelters around you, the pre-identified shelters around you. But once there's actually an activation, our shelters are open, all that stuff disappears. And when you go to the website, only the shelters that are open will -- will appear. And that's to avoid confusion. People think that there is, you know, "well, it showed this shelter last week", and they go there. This will show you, you know -- and when you go on the website it tells you all that stuff.

(Indicating) This is a picture of the Mastic peninsula and the pre-identified shelters that are on the peninsula now. Again, during an activation, doesn't mean that those -- those will all be open or any of them will be open. It will be, you know, based on availability and need.

Our critical emergency supplies, I think this is an area where we've -- we've spent a lot -- a lot, a lot of time. We did have a warehouse that was about 8500 square feet before the storm. We've increased the size of the warehouse to 17,000 square feet. In the warehouse we have MREs, 164,000 of those. We have 305,000 bottles of water. We have 23 trailer-mounted generators, which again we're adding to that number. Those orders are in; we're waiting for delivery. Cots, blankets, some special needs supplies. We have 100 special needs cots so we can open a special needs shelter on the fly.

Pet supplies, again, we've -- we've increased -- we more than doubled our capacity for pet cages and -- and those supplies.

Some of our newer initiatives that we -- if I didn't cover them already, I'll just run through this quick. I mean, debris management, Commissioner Anderson will speak on that. Again, we reviewed the bus transportation plan. We've made some changes to that, which are good. American Red Cross, we reviewed the shelters. We've talked about that. We're continuing to recruit the shelter officers, the County volunteers in that program, we view it as a success and it's becoming more robust.

Our Incident Management Assistance Team, we activate that team for the -- for the hurricane.

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They were very, very instrumental in producing incident accident plans on a daily basis, helping us run the EOC and the operations associated with that. We're continuing to recruit reps for the EOC. We did have a -- a capital project proposed for this year that was pushed to subsequent years, but we're trying through mitigation money that Commissioner Chu had mentioned for either a new EOC facility or a renovation of the EOC facility. We've adjusted our 120-hour timeline. We've added to our internal communications. We're entering all the County employees into the CodeRED system so we can send out messages. We saw some -- some buildings and facilities not open during Sandy. And this is a good way to notify those folks, County employees, that that stuff's happening and keep them in the loop on some stuff.

We've increased our wireless capabilities in the building. And we're adding a building intercom. So no matter where you are in the building you can hear certain messages. We are expanding our E-Team, again, our Incident Management Program. And the training, we have a lot of training scheduled for the Towns and Villages, for EOC reps on E-Team, our HURREVAC, our incident command system, all that stuff is always -- we're always training on that stuff and opening it up to our partners.

And, finally, the storm outlook for 2013: Usually we use August 1st as our local benchmark that we really have to start worrying about storms because of the water temperature, but obviously anybody that's been to the beach knows that the water temperatures are certainly suitable now to handle a storm. So we're not waiting 'til August 1st. But the 2013 hurricane season is predicted to be very active. Again, from typical start to finish is a six-month period, but for us that's -- that is shortened. There's a 70% chance of 13 to 20 named storms. And that's 39 miles for our tropical storms. Seven to 11 could become hurricanes, which is 74 miles-per-hour or greater, three to six major hurricanes of category three, four or five. And obviously these predictions are well above the normal Atlantic Sea basin. Now these predictions are not for our area, this is for the entire Atlantic basin. But that's all I have unless you have any questions.

CHAIRWOMAN BROWNING:

No. I think, Gil, if you would like to start and we'll save the questions when you're done.

COMMISSIONER ANDERSON:

Okay. Thank you. Briefly, DPW learned a lot not only, you know, through working with FRES but through experience. Obviously we had Irene, which hit two years ago. And from that we learned quite a bit on dealing with debris management. When Sandy was moving up the coast and we knew it was pretty certain that we were going to get hit to some extent or another, we reached out to contract -- the contractors we used under Irene and to make sure that they were in place for, you know, immediate presence after the storm depending on how hard we got hit, the extent of the damage, their ability to get in and help us.

Once the declaration of emergency was made, the contractors primarily, Philips and Jordan, but others, we put to immediate use in helping us deal with the amount of debris that was -- that occurred because of the storm. Wherein Irene we had about 100,000 cubic yards of vegetative debris, under Sandy we had 1.2 million cubic yards of -- of debris. What we did and how we dealt with it was a combined effort through FRES. We had daily phone calls, coordination efforts with the local representatives of each municipality. We set up staging areas. And we brought in not only the curtain burners but also a number of tub grinders to place them throughout the County.

What was done in a matter of order was that immediately after the storm, obviously we -- our presence during the storm was minimal only because you want to get everybody out of -- out of harm's way as much as you can, we -- our crews went out and we started clearing our roads. As soon as our roads were cleared -- it basically it just meant taking all the stuff, pushing it off to the side, you know, moving what you can, but for the most part getting it -- getting the road clear so that not only emergency services but LIPA, in this case, could get to the areas that they needed to

get to.

We then offered our services to the Towns to say if they needed help, because realistically the County roads are much larger, are much wider. Our trees tend to be farther away from the actual travel zone. So we were able to -- you know, our roads were generally clear very quickly within a day or so.

We then, barring the live-lines -- obviously if there were live-lines on the road, we couldn't touch that until LIPA could come in and clear those, then we remove the material. In the case of Huntington it was a significant time period, our roads up in that area. But after we did that, after we helped where we were asked to be, you know, to help as far as removing material from the roads, each of the communities including ourselves were -- brought the debris to staging areas. There were staging areas created by the Town, by the County, throughout the County. That was where they took the trees and the vegetative debris off the road, they brought it into a clear area, if you will, an area that could be worked.

The material was then further reduced so that it could be either disposed of through a tub grinder or it was brought over to the Town of Brookhaven's landfill where there were burn units. We had four curtain burners that we used for an extensive period. And the curtain burners, as we had discussed, were very effective in removing or reducing the volume of the material by 98%. But -- and that's really what, that was the whole program, it really was just taking the stuff, either chipping it down or burning it and -- and taking the ash and placing that at a landfill.

We -- we worked for quite a few months to -- to remove the material. I believe it was in March when we -- when we finally turned off the last burner. It was -- after the turn of the year we reduced the amount of burn units, the time that they worked, and slowly, and in fairness after community concern about the amount of burn units and their impact, we started reducing those -- that number and eventually turned it off in March.

We are now in the process of establishing the -- the program for the next storm. At the present we're going out to bid for contract and services. We are going out to purchase horizontal grinders. We use -- we use horizontal grinders. They're a little -- they're different than a tub grinder. A tub grinder we found to be generally pretty ineffective. A horizontal chipper is a very, very large chipper. It's very effective in reducing the amount of volume. Not as good as a -- as a curtain burner, but certainly, you know, can be used and can be placed in various locations.

We've established at least two staging areas on County facilities so that we can run our operations in each of the zones. There's three zones, highway zones, throughout the County. And we're -- we were just actually talking about setting -- sitting down with FRES to -- to codify what we're doing.

We will obviously still need contractors, you know, a storm especially of Sandy's size, God forbid we have to do that again. You know, the contracting services that were provided were very much needed. The Town forces, our forces, weren't any match for a storm of that size. And they were needed, you know, payloaders were used on not only roadways, but down on -- in Southampton along the dunes to try and dig out Dune Road. You know, there were a number of operations that went on.

But, as I said, we are in the process now of -- of procuring services, procuring equipment and, you know, it's our hope that we will purchase our first grinder this year and then subsequent grinders annually. In the meantime, we will utilize our contracting services as we need them.

CHAIRWOMAN BROWNING:

Okay. Just a real quick -- because I know that we have a lot of trees. And I have heard this from a lot of residents about the trees that should have been trimmed or cut; that maybe if they were

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taken care of before a storm maybe, you know, the power lines wouldn't have come down. Has there been a pre-storm analysis of trees in the County to basically have them cleared, trimmed, whatever, you know, before any new storms coming forward? Or is it now we got so many trees cleared, that, because they came down, that it's not going to be as much of an issue?

COMMISSIONER ANDERSON:

Actually, I thought the very same thing after Irene that, you know; but, again, the County road system, most of our roads, I mean, there are exceptions, Vanderbilt Parkway, things like that. Most of the roads have a 30-foot minimum clear zone on the sides. So that, you know, cars can pull over, they can get off the road, they can be safe. As such our trees are that. Informally, we have been looking at that. We do look as to where, you know, where there is a -- a tree that's dead or there is -- but there is, in fairness, there is still a lot debris out there that we pushed into areas that, you know, wooded areas, that we haven't -- we haven't gotten to.

So, informally yes, we are looking at that. We are, you know, constantly keeping an eye on that. We did if after Sandy. We've done it after Nemo, you know, we are working towards that where we can.

CHAIRWOMAN BROWNING:

Okay. And I see we have our CERT representative here. And I, you know, I have to say the work that they do as volunteers is phenomenal. I -- I did have some questions from a constituent of my district in the Mastic Beach area. Because the question was more, well, what do they really do? Because they had said that they're, you know, they know that they've been doing a lot of phone calls, answering phones and, you know, I know you mentioned it, but could we get a little bit more information? Then we'll go to questions on CERT's responsibility, what their functions are when they're called out.

And I do want to say a special thank you because I -- I know I have a lot constituents in my district who are CERT volunteers and, you know, it never seems to feel, no matter what the situation, you always see you guys everywhere. So, thank you for all your volunteer work.

MR. BROWN:

Thank you very much. My name is Tony Brown. I am the President for Suffolk County CERT. CERT has been here for well, eight, nine years in Suffolk County. And one of our primary purposes that we do, especially when it comes to storms, is we do handle, we do go to the call center at the EOC and we handle the pet-friendly shelters. We do the people side of the pet-friendly shelters, which is what you may have seen, a lot of your constituents from Mastic Beach were our repeat customers, Irene and Sandy.

Our basic purpose that we try and teach people to how to take care of themselves in events such as Sandy where they cannot rely upon first responders getting to them in a timely fashion. So that's what -- what our primary purpose is. We also fill in the gaps when FRES needs us for various operations, we'll be there for them. We're doing things right now with the cooling centers where they're assisting the County with the cooling centers. During Hurricane Sandy we assisted the Town of Babylon in doing building analysis; damage-building analysis. We had CERT teams of engineers who went out to the field and did assessments on houses.

CHAIRWOMAN BROWNING:

We will continue to start with questions. DuWayne, do you want to start?

LEG. GREGORY:

Thank you. And, again, thank you all for coming here and presenting. You know, one of the issues -- you had mentioned a website and updating that as far as far as providing shelter locations. I think one potential concern with that is, depending on where you are, and you never know, it's

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hard to plan exactly because there's so many variations, as you guys know better how a storm can happen. But one of the issues in my community or a good portion of my community is we didn't have electricity, we weren't electrified so people didn't have access to the internet. So how -- pre-storm that's fine and it's a fluid situation. How do constituents and us as representatives, how are we, is there -- how best can we provide the information to constituents especially when things are changing rapidly and people don't have access to the internet? Have we thought about maybe doing mailers, like a postcard or like a -- I don't know, even if it's part of the CodeRED system somehow? Or --

MR. JORDAN:

We've done -- last year we did a mailer. I believe it was called -- it was called Ready Suffolk. That went to everybody in the County. We've done mailers to coastal communities, vulnerable populations with regard to flooding and things like that when FEMA flood maps came out, stuff like that. But emergency preparedness is a state of mind. So something that we offer and I know that several Legislators have taken -- taken advantage of it. I know Legislator Horsley, you know, personally in my previous position when I worked in OEM, I've done a presentation. We do emergency preparedness presentations. And what we do is we come out and we talk to community groups, civic associations. The fourth precinct utilizes us several times a year to talk -- they host community adverse, things like that, and we come out and we -- we do events all the time. We do it, you know, throughout the year and that's all actually done with grant funding so it doesn't cost the County any money.

And we also have a partner program with libraries throughout the community. And we put up information in libraries, stuff like that. So really it -- you know, knowing your district, if you know that there's a vulnerable area, if one of your staffers wants to give us a call or give me a call, we could put, you know, OEM in touch with them and they can schedule presentations. And we can get out and -- you know, the whole thing is emergency preparedness is state of mind; it's knowing what to do before if happens. You know, when it happens, sometimes it's too late.

LEG. GREGORY:

Even if there's information that can be distributed to the various offices because people may be more familiar with or have the ability to get to our offices, our office locations as opposed to, you know, Suffolk County, you know, to the Dennison Building or whatever, it may make it more easy for them.

One other issue, I know it was throughout Suffolk County, but I know particularly in my office because there's a gas station right in front of my office, and, you know, there was a line -- people waited an hour -- you know, hours. And I got stuck in the line myself. (Laughter) It's kind of funny now. Have we addressed that? Have we -- I know there's a committee, I forget the exact name of the committee that kind of plans this and coordinates and talks about those types of things, you know, what-if scenarios. Have -- I know we had some kind of afteraction, for lack of a better term, kind of meetings. And some of the people from LIGRA were there and others. And you thought they weren't included. Have we kind of addressed that issue?

COMMISSIONER CHU:

Well, there have been various pieces of proposed legislation for mandating, but what has been done through -- through New York State is the availability of some funding, potential grant funding for -- for transfer switches, which allow for easy -- easier hookups for generators in the event that a -- a gas station does have gasoline, which we found, but didn't have power. And we are going to circulate that information to the gas retailers once we're confident on how to best communicate it.

LEG. GREGORY:

Okay.

COMMISSIONER CHU:

And the -- because the County does license all the gas retailers in the County so we'll be able to get that program out once it's finalized.

LEG. GREGORY:

Okay. I know I'm jumping around a little bit. Mandatory evacuations: I know it's mandatory but it's not really mandatory.

MR. JORDAN:

Well, technically, I guess, in the eyes of the law it's mandatory, but the problem is -- is you would have to go physically door to door and actually physically arrest the people and remove them from their homes. And that's, you know, that's not possible. So what we do is we provide the public, you know, we try and -- we try and accentuate the urgency, hope that they trust the decisions made and hope that they heed the warnings and evacuate. But ultimately, you know, we give them a cutoff time, like people on -- folks on Fire Island that didn't evacuate.

LEG. GREGORY:

Right.

MR. JORDAN:

You know, when the waves were crashing we were actually there trying to get the people to change their mind.

LEG. GREGORY:

Right.

MR. JORDAN:

And, you know, we had water inundating the roads and the infrastructure to get there. And we did our best to get as many people -- we got 16 extra people off the Island that had changed their mind while the storm was hitting.

LEG. GREGORY:

Right. In that -- in that scenario I was thinking that very same thing, the ferry at that point stopped because evacuation, you know, they're not doing ferries. And we had County emergency personnel putting their lives in jeopardy because people didn't necessarily make the right decision. We were trying to still yet rescue people or trying to encourage them to rescue themselves before if got too dangerous. You know, do we want to go through that again? I mean, I'm not, you know, you don't want to abandon people, but obviously, but --

MR. JORDAN:

I don't know how that --

LEG. GREGORY:

Is there any other methods that we can kind of use to kind of just really --

MR. JORDAN:

I think through public education, which, you know, we're always actively doing, we just need people to -- I think -- I think some folks have lived here so long and nothing's happened, you know, generations where they didn't feel anything. And they've been warned before the storm; and then the storm zigs when it should have zagged, you know. And folks were kind of numb to it. I think -- I think, you know, certainly in -- on the bay side in communities that have never been inundated like, you know, Lindenhurst and Mastic, things like that, I think people will -- will heed the warnings a lot more.

LEG. GREGORY:

Right.

MR. JORDAN:

You know, on the barrier islands, you know, I don't know. They're, you know, they're used to -- they're used to that life out there. You know, and some folks just, you know, and some folks, even, you know, even on the Island, the mainland, they just -- they just don't heed the warnings. They just don't listen, you know.

LEG. GREGORY:

Just one more question and then I'll yield. I guess the other big elephant in the room with LIPA, kind of just, you know their situation up in the air, and, you know, the transition to PSE&G, where are we if at this moment if were to get hit with a storm, are they ready, are they transitioning out, are they prepared to kind of handle, you know, a situation? Do you have any level of comfort?

COMMISSIONER CHU:

I can speak to the interactions, I know they're in a -- they're phasing into transition. And we've been -- we participated in several forums that included LIPA so it's not as if they have been absent and they've actually facilitated several forums on their own with the intent of being better prepared and to specific issues like in their response, you know, the severe flooding that we had in this last storm, there's been an active process, that I've been actively involved in, and making sure that there's a process that has been convened all the municipal officials or at least invited all the municipal officials that have the jurisdiction over building functions to allow for an emergency protocol that will allow for a more uniform implementation of -- of, you know, water intrusion. In fact, today I -- I just got the first draft of a curriculum that would be available and expect that it could go into pilot and this is -- and LIPA is going to make it available in pilot in the next coming weeks that will actually train first responders, electricians, to make sure that all the assessments or any inspections are done in a uniform manner following the same procedures. So that process has been very active because I think LIPA more than anybody, doesn't want to see that process repeated and we have been participating in supporting that effort in any way we can.

LEG. GREGORY:

Okay. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRWOMAN BROWNING:

Okay, John.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Thank you, Madam Chair and likewise thank you for being here on this subject. I want to go a couple of particulars, I guess, with each of you in your various categories and I'm going to relate them to experiences that I had in the district going back to the storm. John, let me start with you, the issue the about cots, if you recall, you were very helpful with us when we had to put that crew up in Nesconset in a firehouse. But, the protocol, tell me a little bit about the protocol. I don't want to drill down and micromanage this, but it appears that requests have to go through the Town to you or -- that's the part that became a little bit confusing.

MR. JORDAN:

Correct. That's -- if you want to call it a national model that's what we follow. The resource requests come through the Town. So your -- so if you had a specific request for a fire department or, you know, one Town -- inside the Town, the Town emergency manager or the Village emergency manager would speak to the Town, you know. And we follow that model. And then they would speak to us, put the request in. And it's just to streamline stuff and organize stuff and make sure -- basically we close the loops so that we have one -- one window coming in. All the resource requests go to Logistics. And we know and we track them to see which ones are filled -- or if we

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can fill them, we can't fill them. And it's just for tracking to close the loops, that kind of thing.

LEG. KENNEDY:

And the Villages follow that same process also, they're interacting at the Town level?

MR. JORDAN:

They're instructed to. Sometimes we'll get a phone call from the Governor's office saying, you know, a Village or a Town reached out direct, but they're instructed to follow -- they should go through the Town, the Town would come to us. And if we can't fill the resource -- what we expect is the Town to fill the Village's resource first. If the Town can't, they come to us. If we can't, we go to the State. If they can't, they go to FEMA.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Now, likewise, with cots, you know, people were scrambling, everybody was screaming bloody murder for generators. And it's that same process to get to you guys to actually get the generators out for -- I mean, we had nursing homes, we had many different types of entities that were, you know, lo and behold everybody's supposed to be independent, self-serving, and, of course, we found they were not at all.

MR. JORDAN:

Correct.

LEG. KENNEDY:

So -- so is that the same process through you or over through you, Gil?

MR. JORDAN:

No, that would -- that would go through FRES. Any resource request would go through FRES. And then we would job it out. We would say, you know, "Gil, do you have" -- take Nemo, for example. You know, when we got resource requests from the Towns for heavy equipment to move snow, we were working shoulder-to-shoulder with -- with, you know, out of the EOC with DPW. If we couldn't fill their resource request, we pushed it to the State.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Well, we had it with the -- with Sandy too. And as a matter of fact, that's why I said I wanted to go back and forth because you'll recall you were very helpful with the Village of the Branch, not only -- I'm sorry, Lake Grove; not only soon in Sandy, but also in Nemo as well. And -- but again, the ability to get the equipment, to get it down there, and then even a little bit of the mop up, got a little bit, not confusing, but just, you know, took awhile. Took the calls and --

MR. JORDAN:

I understand, I understand, because it's all going the same time. And it's all being funneled through that one room, the EOC, you know, which essentially becomes the alternate seat of government when --

LEG. KENNEDY:

So who do I jump up and down and try to get through, you or you or both of you?

MR. JORDAN:

Start with us and then we'll push Gil in front of you.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Throw him right in front of the bus, huh. *(*Laughter*)*

COMMISSIONER ANDERSON:

And I -- you know, as John said, there's a protocol that the Federal, you know, FEMA has established. And what FEMA doesn't want to deal with is, you know, 20, 30 different municipalities within the County reaching out to them. You know, it's just a -- a chain of command, if you will, and it's not for anything other than communication purposes.

We have -- in both storms, actually including Nemo, we have done everything in conformance with FEMA guidelines to put us, again, in the best position to receive, you know, reimbursement. And actually it was announced this morning that we're going to be getting 14.89 million back from the Federal government in response to the debris management.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Good, good.

COMMISSIONER ANDERSON:

Yeah.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Hallelujah. And then, if I can, one more question, Sam, and, I guess, I'll go to you with this one, maybe it's a question for John as well.

You know, following Sandy we had several hundred displaced seniors that came into John J. Foley. Today, we're in a different situation. We don't have John J. Foley -- well, staff, I don't know, there may be, you know, an ability to bring people in. That was the primary evacuation point or -- I'm angling the term, but I --

MR. JORDAN:

Special -- it's was designated a special needs shelter.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Okay, there we go. That's it. Thank you very much. What has been designated since then at this point?

MR. JORDAN:

What we're doing is we're following the Federal model. The Federal model is cohabitation. So they call them functional needs shelters. So, you'll have general population as well as functional needs folks in one building. So where the 25 predetermined -- the first -- I don't know if you were here for that part. The Red Cross has 25 shelters that they've determined as their top 25.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Okay.

MR. JORDAN:

With conex boxes with supplies at each of those 25 shelters.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Okay.

MR. JORDAN:

So what we're doing is, we have -- we own some, we're purchasing more special needs cots, special need supplies, things like that. And we're putting that equipment into those shelters. And then if we activate those shelters, we'll staff those shelters with medical reserve corps volunteers, which are doctors, nurses, things like that. That's another volunteer group that's administered through FRES. And we would staff those shelters so the American Red Cross would -- would deal strictly with the general population. We would deal with the functional needs folks. Just like the SPCA would deal

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with the animals, CERT would deal with the humans in the pet shelter, so to speak. So everybody has their predetermined -- you know, we still have the ability to use Foley if we need.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Uh-huh.

MR. JORDAN:

It's just been mothballed, it's not, you know, the stuff is still there.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Okay.

MR. JORDAN:

So if it happened today, we could still use Foley. But we also have assets in the County. We have two mobile hospitals that we could erect. You could actually do surgery in them. They're big structures. We have them at FRES and we bought additional supplies for those if need be.

LEG. KENNEDY:

What do we do up here in Smithtown, John? I had a situation with, ironically, a 63 year-old woman on Chemo across the street from an 86 year-old man right over here in Hauppauge, neither of them wanting to leave their home. And I almost had them convinced to get out, but then they didn't want to make the drive out to Foley. So what has the Red Cross established up here in this area?

MR. JORDAN:

You know, I can't say off the top of my head the -- the name, you know, which shelter it would be.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Okay.

MR. JORDAN:

They could go -- you could instruct them, if they have access to the internet or they could just call out to us and we'll -- we'll instruct them, you know.

LEG. KENNEDY:

How about if I go one more: How about if you furnish to me, actually all 18 of us, we'd probably want to know where those sites are by LD. That would be helpful to us.

MR. JORDAN:

We could send you those lists, but you just have to be mindful that they may not all be open, they may be open basic -- you know, specific to a -- to geographical area, things like that. They're opened on necessity and also the Red Cross' manpower, availability, things like that.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Who opens them up? Is it -- is it the County Executive or is it the Town supervisors? Who actually opens up the Red Cross centers?

MR. JORDAN:

In conjunction with -- with the decisions made in the EOC.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Okay.

MR. JORDAN:

So -- what -- what we are looking at also, and we've gone -- visited these sites several times,

centralized locations throughout the County, the County community college buildings --

LEG. KENNEDY:

Uh-huh.

MR. JORDAN:

-- we've been looking at those buildings, we've been working with their staff to --

LEG. KENNEDY:

Good.

MR. JORDAN:

-- identify portions of those buildings for general populations for special needs and also a pet sheltering.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Putting up linemen too.

MR. JORDAN:

I'm sorry?

LEG. KENNEDY:

Putting up linemen. As a matter of fact, you recall a couple of storms ago we had a bunch of them over there in -- the Grant campus when they were coming in from out-of-state.

MR. JORDAN:

We've experienced that several times with LIPA that they are looking for shelters last minute for the, you know, "we have 800 people coming in, can you help us put them up?" We have experience in that. You know, they're -- they're supposed to be self-sufficient, but we have experienced that.

LEG. KENNEDY:

And the other piece with PSE&G, I mean, LIPA we talked a little bit about it, they made an effort to do it, but I don't know if they ever really grasped it, an external way to find out about individuals with specific medical needs would be working with the Town and the Village Tax Assessors for those folks who have the physical disability assessment reductions. Of course, like everything else, you only find it out in the emergency. There's somebody in the neighborhood who's on oxygen or there's somebody in the neighborhood who has some, you know, medical need to have that, you know, electrical current and -- and really no backup or redundancy whatsoever.

So maybe you want to pass that on to the PSE&G folks that they might want to pursue that with the assessors or look at that as another way to get the --

MR. JORDAN:

If you have any constituents that you know of during an emergency that need, you know -- you know, fall into that criteria, stuff like that --

LEG. KENNEDY:

Well, we get them during the emergency. The key is to get them before the emergency.

MR. JORDAN:

Correct. But most of -- these people, you know, LIPA has a registry where they know, you know, these folks are supposed to register, that type of stuff.

LEG. KENNEDY:

You're right, they're supposed to, but all things being equal they don't.

MR. JORDAN:

That's why I'm saying, during an emergency if you have folks that you've become aware of, you could call down to the EOC and we have a LIPA rep there and we can interact, we'll send somebody directly to them and say this is the situation, you know, at this house. Whether it'll do any good at the time I can't speak to that.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Sure.

MR. JORDAN:

But, you know --

LEG. KENNEDY:

Okay.

MR. JORDAN:

-- that option is available to you at that time.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Good. Thank you. All right, thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRWOMAN BROWNING:

Kara.

LEG. HAHN:

Hi, there. Thank you so much to everyone for all that you've done both during the storms and now since to prepare for the next one because there will be a next one.

I want to talk first about communications. I have kind of a background in communications. And I think everything we're doing on technology is really important. I do think cell phones, when people have them charged, you know, that's valuable. I know some of the issues obviously are power, when your -- your cell phone might go on for a couple of hours, your computer, your laptop, will be down with -- or even, yeah, will be down with the power. But also if you another kind of portable device like an iPad that might require your Wi-Fi, that doesn't work either during the power. And also phones, like home phones, more and more people have now the chargeable wireless handsets that many people don't wind up with something that's working. It works through the cable or whatever and -- and when that goes down, their home phone doesn't work either.

So I think the communication plan has to be comprehensive including both the latest technology for those who are lucky enough to have the smart phone and -- and have a way to charge it, you know, when power's out; but also something as simple -- and I've said this before and people laugh, but when the LIPA truck -- trucks go out, when the DPW trucks go out, when the fire trucks go out, and they're in the neighborhoods and they have a clipboard with copied fliers on them, you know, that can -- can actually get out into the neighborhood, if it's, you know, at the local -- there are fliers for people that they can just grab them at the local gas station. You know, we have to be thinking about all levels of communication, even the most rudimentary. Because things go down, you know, the technological solutions go down.

I think -- I'm not so sure about the departments represented here, but DSS and Health Department, etcetera -- things like people have been keeping e-mail addresses and the snail mail addresses kind of have gotten lost in the latest technology because it's expensive to mail, but you need someone's

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home address if you're going to reach them, like if you know that they have a disability and you want to be able to reach them. So making sure all of our contact lists for those kinds of individuals who have special needs, in addition to the e-mail contain -- and their phone number, contain their home address because that -- that continues to be important.

And so also, you know, maybe working with the local volunteer ambulance companies, fire departments, that throughout the year as they encounter, and they do, the individuals who they know might need some kind of special help in these kinds of storms, emergency scenarios, if there's some sort of flier that they can give out like, register with CodeRED, register with JEEP, register with, you know, register with LIPA, you're definitely a candidate for special help and doctors' offices. We know if we just make sure we're including everyone who interacts with those people and they hear it over and over again, that might be, you know, another way just to reach them ahead of time and actually prepare.

And then I'm going to switch gears, if you don't mind. Generators: I just heard several times recently, I have a senior community in my neighborhood that's, I guess, it's basically like a condo complex, house after house, really close together, 55 and over, and how do, you know, there were a number of people in that community that had the kind of special needs oxygen, their medication that has to be refrigerated, they're, you know, they're -- have no way of getting out. They're not mobile. They rely on individuals getting to them to take them places or get them their food, etcetera. Do -- in any of the planning that you're doing for things like the overly-demanded generators, I mean, are there ways for communities like that to get grants for things like generators?

COMMISSIONER CHU:

As Legislator Browning mentioned earlier, a good portion of our -- our senior staff is up in Albany today participating in the CRZ kickoffs, which is the Community Recovery Zones, which we think we -- we applaud the State's approach to making sure that the communities, these individual communities, representatives from those communities have an opportunity to express what they most, what they feel is most important to both recover as well as be prepared for future events.

We have -- we've been actively participating and supporting in every way that's been asked by the State to -- to support those community conversations. So that -- I think that's the process that your -- your asking for. And it's -- it is happening now albeit, you know, we all would have liked it to happen sooner, but it is underway and representatives from all those communities are up in Albany today.

LEG. HAHN:

All right. And so, while I know, obviously --

COMMISSIONER CHU:

The funding will be impending from that process.

LEG. HAHN:

Right, right. And -- and -- but I just -- I just want to remind, you know, there are places where, I mean, 90% of our residences were out of power; correct? Like it -- it was such a significantly high amount of individual -- amount of homes that were impacted by this. And it wasn't just the coastal south shore community that had power outages beyond ten days, you know. They were -- they were everywhere. And so I hope there's consideration for seniors everywhere and what they face, you know, regardless of how close they are to the water, they still go out -- have power that gets lost when -- when these kinds of storms happen.

One other thing, I mean, I -- I try to keep constant communication during the storm with my local Village Mayors. And there was, you know, on-again, off-again complaints about communication

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between County EOC and the Town EOCs. You know, I'm sure you're constantly working on how to better make sure that communication works better. And I just wanted to mention that.

COMMISSIONER CHU:

An early recommendation that's come from our -- our after-action review is putting together a predetermined conference call times for all elected officials that would allow -- wouldn't have you having to look for notification on when the next call is. So everyone would know just to "tune in this time", whether it's a -- a ten-minute call or a one-hour call, at least everybody would know to get on the call at that time. And if they want regular information, that'll be predetermined well before, you know, or in the thick of the event.

MR. JORDAN:

An additional avenue that -- that we encourage the Towns and villages, we have almost monthly meetings with the Town Emergency Manager. And we -- it's very important -- some towns religiously take advantage and -- and send a rep to the EOC. And we ask every Town to send a rep to the EOC so the Villages can communicate to their Towns what their needs are and the Towns can communicate it through the rep sitting in the room. And it's a captive audience. You know, unfortunately not all the Towns do send reps to the EOC. And, you know, and it's -- it's a manpower issue, it's logistics, you know, you have an area that's harder hit than in another area. It's not as easy for them to spare a person, you know, a body, 24 hours-a-day. But as long as that communication is there, we -- we have certainly, you know, conference calls, like Commissioner Chu was saying, the conference calls exist. And sometimes we have multiples, depending on the subject, a day with the Towns and Villages on -- on various topics.

So, you know, again, sometimes an area harder impacted gets consumed with that -- their operations and they don't always, you know, have that -- that, you know, conduit for information sharing back and forth, but, you know, we're in -- we're in one place. So, you know, everybody knows where to find us.

Again, I'm not saying it's always easy because, you know, like I said, we're -- we're changing our communications internally because it's not always easy to get in touch with somebody. Or if you're in another meeting, you know, it becomes about meetings and conference calls and information sharing and all -- and all that stuff, so. But the easiest way, I would say, to a Town or Village that -- that wants, you know, that has that concern, certainly they can call us and we can open up those communications. But send a rep to the EOC and they'll -- they'll definitely have -- there'll be a voice at the table.

LEG. HAHN:

During the storm or did you say you had monthly meetings of the EOC? So going on now?

MR. JORDAN:

We have manager meetings monthly, which go on -- there's was just one Tuesday. Tuesday was our latest one.

LEG. HAHN:

So can Villages send reps to that --

MR. JORDAN:

Sure.

LEG. HAHN:

-- meetings? Okay. I'll talk to you offline about whether our -- you know, they're doing that now. And if we can send out that, you know, make -- send out that invitation. Thank you.

CHAIRWOMAN BROWNING:

DuWayne, you have another one?

LEG. GREGORY:

I guess this question's for you, Sammy. One of the issues as well during the previous storm was with employees. Like, you know, there's some people that obviously knew that they were emergency personnel and they had the word that they were like at the EOC, but there were others, say, in DSS, some didn't know they had to go to work, some knew that they had to go work. What type of system do we have to notify -- you know, when I was in the military, you know, it was a pain in the butt that sometimes you get a call at 3 o'clock in the morning, but we would do training, you know, train, you know, go through your, I forget what we called it, but it was like a phone chain, you know, the -- the commander would call the X -- XO, the XO would call the, you know, the -- the platoon leaders, the platoon leaders would call the sergeant, platoon sergeant, the platoon sergeant would call the squad leaders and the squad leaders would call the members in their squad and, you know.

Do we have something in place where, you know, Bellone calls you, "Sammy, get off your butt," you know; then it trickles down to the commissioners. And the commissioners call the, you know, you know -- you know how -- you know what I mean. So that people know that you're required for duty and this is where you report to duty. And so that we don't have -- I mean, we have 8,000 employees, that's eight -- potentially 8,000 cars on the road after a storm or maybe even during a storm that may not necessarily have to be there, you know. So, have we implemented that type of mechanism?

COMMISSIONER CHU:

Well, in addition to using systems that are in place, which is CodeRED, that was -- that's a significant portion of a -- a significant portion of the questioning for the after-action review as the -- the departments that are represented here are actively involved and have a critical primary role in storm response. We recognize that, you know, other departments can play a role that we have significant human resources that can definitely be put to better use and even perhaps have alternate functions and roles during the storm event. We know that there's a significant need for -- for human resources that, in the previous -- during Sandy we saw deployment of, you know, I guess should say civilian employees, from clericals to administrative employees that were deployed to the response centers.

So, that again, is a significant portion of the after-action review. And we intend to -- from a product of the after-action review that is predetermined will be an administrative plan to make sure we're putting best use of all our resources together. And that, of course, is going to involve effective communication.

LEG. GREGORY:

Okay. All right, all right. Thank you.

CHAIRWOMAN BROWNING:

Okay. I did have a couple, before Rob goes. I do want to recognize in the room, we do have a Lieutenant John Rung from the Sheriff's Department. Thank you for coming. And also we have our Chiefs of Police James Reed from Shelter Island and David Hegermiller from the Riverhead Police Department. So I appreciate you coming. And being that you're from the East End, the radio station, WLNG, has been advertising that this is going on. So encouraging people to pay attention. So I appreciate you coming all the way out, especially from Shelter Island. So, with that, Rob, go ahead.

LEG. CALARCO:

Just a quick question, Gil, you were talking quite a bit about the vegetation removal and -- and

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dealing with all that debris. Have we looked at alternative methods of disposing of this material, maybe dumping it offshore to help create reefs or putting it in the dune structures? I know over -- I was over at Davis Park not too long ago and they were mentioning how they used to put the Christmas trees in the dunes. Any of those kind of things where you could harden the dune structures with the vegetative material so it's not causing an economic -- or an environmental problem in doing that? Or is it something we're not permitted to do at this point?

COMMISSIONER ANDERSON:

Well --

LEG. CALARCO:

Especially when you're talking about that volume, to be able to just dump some off in the ocean and create a reef might not be a bad thing.

COMMISSIONER ANDERSON:

We did talk about that with DEC. It was generally not a favorable response because of eventual decay and, you know, at some point, you know it -- it erodes away, so -- but we did discuss that with them. And anything like that would have been -- required a permit.

LEG. CALARCO:

The sand seems to erode away pretty quickly, too.

COMMISSIONER ANDERSON:

Yeah.

CHAIRWOMAN BROWNING:

Okay. I have a couple of questions. I was hoping that most everything would be asked while I'm sitting here. But, Sammy, you mentioned about the warming centers and you're working with Legislator Horsley. We just read the paper that he may not be around for much longer. So are you designating --

COMMISSIONER CHU:

He better hurry.

CHAIRWOMAN BROWNING:

Say again.

COMMISSIONER CHU:

He better hurry then.

CHAIRWOMAN BROWNING:

So, you know, as far as the warming centers are concerned, I know that we get -- all of us would get calls at our offices, too. So do you have plans to reach out to the Legislators and their districts to say "we're going to work on warming shelters" or how are you doing this?

COMMISSIONER CHU:

Lisa's been actively working on this so I'm going to ask her to answer the question.

CHAIRWOMAN BROWNING:

There's -- I know there's probably a few more chairs somewhere, Gil, they could slide one over. Trying to get out of the way, are you? (Laughter)

MS. SANTERAMO:

Lisa Santeramo. It's my understanding that Legislator Horsley has been working with Tom Ronayne

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in our Veterans Department because a lot of these warming centers are American Legions and VFWs. These are situations that have been pre-identified in the past; this isn't something new. This is something that we'd just be reactivating. And is our hope that, you know, very shortly we'll be able to put out lists of ones that will be able to participate in this. And this way the community will know before a storm that God forbid if all communications go down they know, *okay, I can go to my American Legion up the street or whatever the identified location is and get information there and get updates.* But this is something we are working on. It's my understanding, I think a feasibility study was either introduced to this Legislature or passed to look at those by the Legislature. I think you all already have looked at that legislation.

CHAIRWOMAN BROWNING:

Yeah, we -- we passed that a couple of months ago, I think. So, okay, I appreciate it.

The special needs, again, with the JEEP applications. I think, you know, at any time there's an event in my district that I go to, we -- we encourage people to sign up with JEEP. And the -- the CodeRED actually, couple of events, and I think when I'm there I'm going to encourage the CodeRED sign-ups.

There was an issue with the last storm. I was over at John J. Foley and they had the temporary tents set up. And there were some of the -- the out-of-state volunteers that came and said that they were doing the round of phone calls, now. It was pretty close to a week into, you know, after the storm. And they were telling me that some of the people they were calling had not yet been called. So do we have something different? I mean, do we have somebody designated for those JEEP calls to -- and how soon out are we going to -- before a storm comes are we going to try and reach out to all of them?

And, again, I know that people sign up, they move, they disconnect a phone, they change phone numbers. So I know that there -- that issue exists. But there were some people who weren't reached out to and it was the first time. So do you have anything different in place?

MR. JORDAN:

All I can say is that they -- they probably were either not home or didn't answer the phone when they got called. Our Community Emergency Response Team, that's one of the -- one of the big things we use them for. And it could be just for a minor snowstorm. We do -- we call it a JEEP call-down list. And what used to take, you know, eight hours, these folks would come into the call center and they'd make the phone calls for a whole day, they've gotten good at it. And we make a pre-scripted statement so everybody gets the same message.

And basically they call down that list and they say, you know, *I'm -- they state their name, I'm calling from Suffolk County, we wanted to check on you because you're -- you're a registered, you know, JEEP applicant, etcetera.* And that's done several times a year for various events, you know. Anything that's going to be on the news that we think may make these folks -- because they are seniors, you know, we make them nervous, we do a JEEP call-down and call them so it doesn't have to be a significant event. It certainly doesn't have to be a disaster for us to call those folks. We do that frequently. So, and we use the -- the Community Emergency Response Team to do that

CHAIRWOMAN BROWNING:

Okay. And again, now, 911, you know, we have had some issues with staffing and we talked about, I think it was called TORT.

MR. JORDAN:

{TERT}.

CHAIRWOMAN BROWNING:

{TERT}, okay. And we had looked at trying to get them. Because they just worked with the dispatchers over in FRES. They -- they did backup for them. Have we figured out trying to get them over to the 911 system?

MR. JORDAN:

Well, what they did for us is they -- they worked in the call-taker room with the Community Emergency Response Team. They didn't do any dispatching. They took -- they took calls. If the police department would like them and, you know, for the next activation or whatever, yes, it's just -- it's just a simple request and we notify the State to activate the plan and the State will, you know, send additional, you know -- if we're using ten and they want ten, they'll give them ten. You know, and we're responsible to house them and feed them and all that good stuff. But there's certainly, you know, no reason they couldn't.

CHAIRWOMAN BROWNING:

Okay. I don't know, Sammy, Lisa, I know Tom, you know, you've been to the Public Safety meetings and you've heard that comment. And we've talked about it in the previous meetings that -- with the -- I know we've got -- 911 operators are getting trained up. But when we have an emergency they, you know, they're going to be understaffed again, so have -- have you worked with the police department?

MR. VAUGHN:

We have been having constant conversations with the police department. {TERT} is actually an area I -- I know that it was brought up very early in this conversation. I do need to go back and have a followup with Scott Mastellon, who we're working with over in Performance Management. Unfortunately, he and I have been like two ships passing in the night. I was out sick last week and he's out on vacation this week. However, he and I will be getting together to discuss this. And actually we have a tentative meeting set up with Miss McBride for next week as well. So it's an issue that we remain committed to.

CHAIRWOMAN BROWNING:

Okay, thank you. Another one. Our fire departments and ambulance companies are volunteers. What is the chain of command with them? Who -- you know, I'm assuming there's meetings going on with them, and forgive me if I missed anything, but I'm assuming that there is a chain of command. Who are they -- you know, you're doing preparations for a storm. Obviously there's some kind of communication going on with them, you know. I know for the Mastic Beach area, I know, and DuWayne's district and the Babylon area -- who are they in touch with and working with for upcoming preparations?

MR. JORDAN:

There's several areas of communications that we use with them. We do our FRES notifications, which I think all of you -- we do that constantly. We blast fax out constantly. We're developing a more comprehensive e-mail list to communicate with them. But when a -- when a significant storm or a disaster that we see coming is happening, what we do is we communicate with the town emergency managers, they communicate with the Villages, things like that.

For the fire departments and ambulance companies, what they do in each township is they'll have an active chief's meeting. And they'll say this is what the County's doing now. And we send reps to them sometimes; sometimes they do them absent us. And basically it's an information-sharing. And they develop a plan of attack, so to speak, for what they're going to be doing. You know, and -- and all that information is -- is deciphered or disseminated there. And then if they have any additional questions they could reach out to us. If we're there, we'll answer it. But typically we communicate through the town emergency managers, you know, and they'll attend those meetings and -- and inform the fire service of things that we haven't informed them of already.

CHAIRWOMAN BROWNING:

Okay. And, you know, Gil, I was reading the paper about the -- the money that was being provided for the Fire Island Inlet. And I -- I know you know what I'm going to ask you. And obviously, you know, those shores are being shored up before another storm. And as you know, I have a community that's very close to the ocean these days, where there's washover and the dunes do need to be replenished, you know. So where is the priority for our County beaches?

COMMISSIONER ANDERSON:

Okay. Just -- just to -- okay. The Fire Island Inlet has been being worked on for a number of years now. It's had -- it's had a significant backup for at least two to three years to the point where the Coast Guard's been concerned on it. So this wasn't a project that was initiated after -- after Sandy or even Irene. This is something they've been working on. They've gotten to that point where the funding's in place, they can actually do it, take advantage of all the sand and, you know, and re-nourish the beaches along there. We have, as a County, submitted the permits for the Smith Point dunes. And those are in with the DEC.

As far as the overall Army Corps project, they are still in a holding pattern waiting for direction from the Federal government. I don't know where, but from what I'm told it's imminent that the approval and the funding will be in place. One of the first projects they will be looking at -- again, they'll be looking at from the Rockaways all the way out to Montauk. One of the first projects they will be looking at is the Robert Moses to Moriches barrier beaches and the restoration of same, so.

But, I mean, I would caution, too, that it's pretty unlikely that you'll -- you'll see any type of work go on during this dredging season, but at least for the next one you will see the Federal government -- I could be wrong. They could actually have everything in place. We don't have that level of detail.

CHAIRWOMAN BROWNING:

It's just when you read it --

COMMISSIONER ANDERSON:

I know. Yeah, I saw that and I went --

CHAIRWOMAN BROWNING:

-- it gives the impression. And I kind went, oh, here we go.

COMMISSIONER ANDERSON:

Yep.

CHAIRWOMAN BROWNING:

Because it gives the impression that this was specifically, you know, post-Sandy restoration.

COMMISSIONER ANDERSON:

Correct, right.

CHAIRWOMAN BROWNING:

And, you know, so that -- that was my concern. So we need to make sure that the right message is getting out.

COMMISSIONER ANDERSON:

Yes.

CHAIRWOMAN BROWNING:

And there is another issue. And I think it's probably more -- John, maybe you can respond to this

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one. We did say at the beginning, you know, in the event of an emergency, you know, government's not responsible for everybody, you know. Everybody has to be responsible for themselves when it comes to evacuations. And, you know, we are there to help those who can't help themselves, especially our special needs, are senior citizens.

But in evacuation cases and I'm -- I think, DuWayne, you probably had the same problems when people were being told to evacuate, there was the issue with now somebody knows, you know, Joe Smith knows now that a certain area's being evacuated. And, guess what? It makes a field day for people to loot and rob homes. And that's a concern of mine.

And I know that that was -- there was -- a lot of people did not leave. And I know we have our police chiefs in the back that, you know, maybe they have something in plan when it comes to -- when those kinds of things -- I'm assuming maybe Shelter Island may not be so difficult to do that. *(*Laughter*)*

However, you know, people don't want to leave because they're afraid they're going to get robbed. And we have to, I guess, with our public safety, we need to set something in place so that they're comfortable. You know, my vision is, is you know what? Every street should be barricaded off where it's evacuated and no one should be allowed in there. And, you know, is that something that can be done? And, you know, being that our police department's not here, I don't know -- I don't want to put the burden on you to have to answer that because I know we had the -- you know, we had the National Guard, we had State Troopers, we had the Deputy Sheriff's, we had the Suffolk County PD. And, you know, we had that problem. But they came in after some of those incidents occurred. So, do we have something set in place to give people a better sense of security that they're going to be okay to leave their homes?

MR. JORDAN:

Unfortunately, I can't answer that. I'm not -- we've had conversations during the activation. The police department handled, you know, all that. It was a concern. They realized peoples' concerns and they dealt with it, you know, tactically how they, you know -- I don't really know what they did to alleviate those concerns, but I know that it -- it didn't seem like they were thinking it up as they were going along, so to speak. I'm sure they do have a plan, but I just can't speak to it. I don't know what it is. That would be something if it was a -- if it was a concern from a Town, you know, we would pass it off to the police department sitting in the room to say, "this is what's going on, you know, basically here's the call, you know, you carry it." So I can't speak to how they would handle that.

CHAIRWOMAN BROWNING:

Because I know we have certain areas, pretty much zones, where you say, *okay, this zone is being evacuated*. And I just wanted to be sure that, you know, we're not going to have people saying "I'm going to stay in my home because I don't want people stealing my stuff," you know. They're not going to be able to replace it or, you know, just -- it's very sad to hear that people don't want to leave, that they're worried about their material items more than their lives. But, I guess, I'll -- I will reach out to the police department maybe at the next Public Safety meeting we can get them to give us a -- a quick brief on what their plan is.

But I don't think I have any more questions. I think we've probably beat this to death. Anybody else? No? Okay.

So, I appreciate it. I know that this is, you know, things will happen -- one last question is, is there anything that you can tell me that you have made major changes to because of your Sandy experience to improve response? Is there anything significantly different or major that you've done?

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MR. JORDAN:

I can speak to FRES, I mean, we've added a lot of equipment and we've doubled the size of our warehouse. We have a lot, you know, we're -- I can honestly say that we're -- we were very well prepared for Sandy and we're even more prepared in 2013 for whatever comes our way.

CHAIRWOMAN BROWNING:

Okay, good. Anybody else? Nope. Okay. So I really thank you very much. Sorry, Sammy.

COMMISSIONER CHU:

I'll just add on that note. I want to thank you again for convening the hearing. And we also look forward to presenting the findings of the after-action review, which we do expect will -- will suggest some major changes in terms of how we administer and coordinate amongst the department. So, thank you.

CHAIRWOMAN BROWNING:

And if you feel the need -- because I know Public Safety can drag on pretty long, but if you feel the need to have a special meeting for that, I'd be happy to accommodate.

COMMISSIONER CHU:

I think that would be appropriate and we appreciate that. Thank you.

CHAIRWOMAN BROWNING:

Okay, thank you. So motion to adjourn and we're adjourned.

**THE MEETING CONCLUDED AT 1:35 PM
{ } DENOTES SPELLED PHONETICALLY**