



The City of New York
Borough of Queens

Community Board 8

197-15 Hillside Avenue
Hollis, NY 11423-2126

Tel: (718) 264-7895

Fax: (718) 264-7910

E-mail: qn08@cb.nyc.gov

Website: www.queenscb8.org



Chairman, Alvin Warshaviak

District Manager, Marie Adam-Ovide

Public Safety Committee Meeting Minutes

Date: Monday, June 29, 2015
Location: Community Board 8 Office
197-15 Hillside Avenue
Time: 7:30 p.m.

Chaired by: *Mark J. Lefkof, Chair of the Public Safety Committee*

Board Members: Allen Eisenstein, James Gallagher Jr., Marc A. Haken, Mohammed Tohin

Also in attendance: FDNY Battalion Commander, Paul R. Tauber
FDNY-EMS Deputy Chief, Martin Braun
Patrick Ovide, Observer
Olivia Ovide, Observer
Marie Adam-Ovide, District Manager CB8
Alma Karassavidis, CB 8 Staff

Mr. Lefkof called the meeting to order at 7:31 p.m. and asked each attendee to introduce himself/herself.

Mark J. Lefkof – Following our last meeting in October 2014 there was a meeting in December 2014 at Hillside Fire House with Councilman Rory Lancman and many people from different ranks in FDNY, including the Deputy Commissioner. It was a very positive meeting. I think there was a misinterpretation of some of the issues that were brought up at the October meeting. The December meeting helped clear the air and brought about some positive interaction.

Mr. Lefkof asked Chief Braun of EMS to address the questions at hand.

EMS response time for 2014:

Chief Braun prefaced reporting Citywide numbers by saying that they go by segments 1-3 which are the high priority calls. They do not look at the response times of low priority calls.

Mark J. Lefkof – What do you classify as a 1-3 call?

Answer (Chief Braun): Segment 1 would be a patient who is not breathing and other types of trauma calls. For example, if the receiving operator has information that the patient was struck by a car or has been shot. Segment 2 would be difficulty breathing. Segment 3 would be a person being unconscious or having chest pains.

Marc A. Haken – When a fire truck responds rather than an ambulance where do those numbers come in? The first responder is usually the local FDNY rather than an ambulance. **Answer (Chief Braun):** That is typically a 4 or 5 minute response time. When the engine responds, it is because the assignment is within their catchment area.

Marc A. Haken – Where do those numbers come from, the FDNY or EMS?

Answer (FDNY BC Tauber): They come into FDNY. Those are the numbers that we read at the monthly DSC meetings; EMS, non fire emergencies and medical emergencies. What we realized in the Department is that they are very understaffed. They have to place their ambulances in specific areas; so we supplement that. **Answer (Chief Braun):** FDNY responders process the first couple of minutes: they can defibrillate, do CPR, give oxygen and do a lot of critical stuff.

Mark J. Lefkof – So we are only working on ambulance response time?

Answer (Chief Braun): Right.

2014

<u>Citywide:</u>	6 minutes 50 seconds
<u>Borough of Queens for 2014:</u>	7 minutes 9 seconds
<u>Community Board 8:</u>	7 minutes 42 seconds

First quarter of 2015

<u>Citywide:</u>	7 minutes 21 seconds
<u>Borough of Queens for 2014:</u>	7 minutes 50 seconds
<u>Community Board 8:</u>	8 minutes 36 seconds

First 5 months of 2015

<u>Citywide:</u>	7 minutes 16 seconds
<u>Borough of Queens for 2014:</u>	7 minutes 38 seconds
<u>Community Board 8:</u>	8 minutes 21 seconds

Mark J. Lefkof – Overall it has gone up almost 45 seconds. Last year we were also very high. We discussed that last year and we were not happy. We still are not happy. Is there a reason that CB8 response time is so high?

Answer (Chief Braun): Certain neighborhoods in the city have attributing causes to response times. What you have here in Queens, is similar to what I had when I was in Staten Island/ Brooklyn South. It is the emergency room turn-around times. Queens has been affected disproportionately by hospital closures. I can think of 5 hospitals that would impact just this area; Mary Immaculate, St. John's on the Blvd., Peninsula, you would think it's the Rockaways, but all those patients are coming up to Jamaica and Queens General now. Parkway Hospital, St. Joseph's on Union Turnpike (Hillcrest) were all places where we could discharge patients and get back into service. Now the bulk of the patients from CB8 are probably going to NY Queens Hospital, which has a lot of issues. We have an automatic redirection policy. Once a certain number of units are tied up at a hospital for a certain amount of time, we make the units bypass and go to further hospitals. The hospitals get backed up. Unfortunately our call volume is never steady. It always comes in bursts. On hot days and Mondays in particular, the call volume skyrockets. People tend to put off all weekend what they don't want to deal with until Mondays. Mondays we go into horrible backups.

Marc A. Haken – Compared to the other boroughs where do we rank in response times?

Answer (Chief Braun): Probably around the middle. **Marc A. Haken** – Are we #3 borough-wide?

Answer (Chief Braun): 3 best, yes I would say about that. I would have to get more detailed information. Typically it's the turnaround time. We spend 8 minutes getting to a call, maybe 10 minutes

on scene and another 10 minutes getting the person to the hospital. Now we are spending 60, 70, 90 minutes at the hospital. **Marc A. Haken** – Are you saying that the patient is sitting in the ambulance before admittance for the 60 minutes? **Answer (Chief Braun):** No, they are sitting in the ER on the EMS crew stretcher waiting for triage staff to come and take their vital signs and have them registered and then find an empty bed to be transferred onto. **Marc A. Haken** – How long does the EMTs have to stay in the hospital? **Answer (Chief Braun):** They have to stay until they get a signature on their patient care chart, which basically transfers the liability for that patient from the crew to the hospital staff. Sometimes even after they get signed for the patient care report, they could wait an hour and a half for the hospital to send their stretchers back down to the ER. Hospitals spend millions of dollars to run 911 ambulances and then their ER Departments turn them away and force them to go to competitors' hospitals. Why spend all that money running ambulances and then have your ER Department say we don't have room, send them over to the competition. What I have seen in other boroughs but have not seen yet in Queens is turning the closed hospitals into free standing ER Departments. They would cover everything other than trauma patients. If you need to be admitted you would be taken to another hospital. **Mark J. Lefkof** – Would the ambulances respond to that location? **Answer (Chief Braun):** For our purposes it's a hospital. We bring them there, they get seen, they get stitched up, EKG's are given. There might be only 2 of these in New York State right now. One of them is St. Vincent's in Greenwich Village which re-opened as North Shore LIJ Healthplex. If you went in there you would think you were in a top notch ER. The only difference is that they don't actually admit the patients. 90 percent of patients get treated and released. They would never know there were no beds upstairs. Another high profile hospital closure in Brooklyn was LI College Hospital. That was re-opened by NYU Langone as a free standing Emergency Department. For our purposes that is a hospital. They are open to virtually all categories of emergency patients except for Level 1 trauma. Patients that need long term care get admitted and they get transferred by an inter-facility ambulance to other hospitals. I have not seen them in Queens. It would be great to re-open Peninsula or Parkway hospitals this way. It does not even need to be a former hospital. It could be any sight where you could put up a free standing ER.

Jim Gallagher – Just a point of information. I serve on the NY Hospital Advisory Board. They are changing ownership this summer. It will be NY Presbyterian-Queens (*formerly Booth Memorial Hospital*). **Answer (Chief Braun):** They have been affiliated for some time now. Originally they were Booth Memorial, the last hospital run by the Salvation Army.

Status of EMS facility on the Queens Hospital Campus

Answer (Chief Braun): I have gone by it a couple of times. It is looking really good. It's coming around. They anticipate completion by February 2016, which is the bottom line for that project.

Al Eisentein – They are opening up First Meds/Urgent Care Facilities all over the city. I know ambulances cannot take patients there. **Answer (Chief Braun):** Right, it is a Department of Health law thing. **Al Eisentein** – People just may go there instead of taking your ambulances. **Answer (Chief Braun):** If people who have non-life threatening medical emergencies or minor medical emergencies would go there that would be great. It's hard because our service is fast and free for most people.

What are the locations of the EMS units?

Mark J. Lefkof – Are they staged at strategic points within the community? **Answer (Chief Braun):** You have three locations within your Community Board. Only one is run by the FDNY out of Station 50 on the grounds of Queens General, Unit 52H. This is a BLS unit which runs 24 hours a day. Two units from NY Queens Hospital. One is a paramedic unit, Unit 50X runs 24 hours a day. The other is a basic life support unit, Unit 52D which runs 16 hours a day. Units that run 16 hours don't run on the overnights. Those are the only three units that have cross streets within your boundaries. **Mark J. Lefkof** – So the call comes in and goes to whoever is in the area? **Answer (Chief Braun):** Yes we are looking at a new system now. The computer system will shift units around like chess pieces. It is now being piloted in Staten Island. It's called the Move-Up Module. The computer looks at one year's worth

of past data and can predict when a call is going to come into a particular area and it will start sending messages. The units will shift around strategically based on probability of a high priority call; Level 1-3, coming in at a particular cross street.

Mark J. Lefkof – Any other questions for EMS before we move to Chief Tauber of FDNY?

Marc A. Haken – You mentioned that the biggest problem has to do with hospitals. Maybe next year we can call a meeting and put together a resolution or something to focus on that particular problem.

Mark J. Lefkof – We will look at it. **Answer (Chief Braun):** I know Queens General has done a lot to increase their capacity, but other than the 5 other hospitals we discussed, I don't really know any other

hospitals. **Marc A. Haken** – You left out Flushing Hospital. It's a receiving hospital. **Answer (Chief Braun):** Metasis has a lot of financial problems. Brookdale, Flushing, Jamaica; some of these hospitals really need to increase their capacity. I understand that hospital reimbursements under the new Obamacare is actually going to financially punish hospitals. If someone is treated for asthma and they don't go to your clinic for outpatient and follow up and they come back to the ER, at some point the hospitals will start losing money on them. The focus is on getting the patients out of the emergency rooms, which is great for us, and having them followed up at clinics, getting routine medical treatment instead of waiting until they have acute issues.

Building condition of all three fire houses in CB8 including the fire house on 197th Street in CB12 since they do service our community.

FDNY BC Tauber: Annually there is a Deputy Chief who comes around and does an annual inspection. First thing they ask for is any work orders that have been put in for the house. Semi-annually, a Battalion Commander along with the Captain of the house will do a safety inspection, not only for gear apparatus but for any major safety issue within the house. It is an ongoing visitation that we do to examine the fire houses. Plus the officers are responsible because every day, every tour (2 tours in 24 hours) they have to sign in the company journal that the quarters are in good order. If it is not in good order they have to file paperwork. Right now in the Hillside Avenue House - 298/127, 50 Battalion, we did have a couple open. Everything has been fixed. We did have an out of service Nederman system that has been fixed. We had a problem with the backup sewer in the basement which has also been fixed. **Marc J. Lefkof** – That was all subsequent to our meeting? **FDNY BC Tauber:** The range hood cleaning in the kitchen is done on a schedule as is extermination. We did have problems in the officers' bathroom, which was fixed. **Marc A. Haken** – Wasn't there a rat problem there also for a long time? **FDNY BC Tauber:** That was years ago. That was due to the construction of the house plus the construction on the subway system. That was a very bad, rainy summer and all our "little friends" [rats] came down. That has been taken care of and is not an issue anymore. There is no problem in 298/127. My quarters are in that fire house, the 50 Battalion. The Utopia Parkway House - 299/152 does have some open work orders. They are installing a security camera, because we do have people that break into the firehouses and they are worried about the equipment. A lot of the fire houses pay a bi-monthly house tax, which means we pay for our upkeep of the house. A lot of the fire houses put their own stuff in. They put a work order into the Department but that is not one of their high priorities. That will happen sooner or later. **Marc J. Lefkof** – Does Union Turnpike and Hillside Avenue have cameras? **FDNY BC Tauber:** Hillside has cameras but we put them in ourselves. The Union Turnpike House - 315/125 has a camera. **Marc J. Lefkof** – So it is just 299/152 that needs the camera then? **FDNY BC Tauber:** Right. That work order is open they put that in about a year ago in 2014. So we will see. It's not a high priority, it's a normal priority. There are things that have to be done right away. **Marc J. Lefkof** – Is there any high priorities on the list? **FDNY BC Tauber:** No, none. We had a clogged bathroom on the second floor but it has been fixed. That is almost instantaneous and if it is that bad, the building maintenance would call an outside contractor. If the front apparatus door does not work, it is fixed within 4 or 5 hours. There is an open work order for a leaking faucet on the second floor, but that is normal. It really is not a high priority. The highest priority is to fix the lock on the female

bathroom door on the second floor. We have a protocol that if there is a female bathroom in quarters, which there is, it can only be dedicated to females even if the fire house does not have any female firefighters. Male members cannot use the bathroom. 315/125 has no open work orders on Union Turnpike. They do have a little problem with the masonry in the basement. Some patchwork, but that was fixed. **Allen Eisenstein** – I remember last year there was a problem with the paint. They needed a paint job because the paint was peeling? **FDNY BC Tauber:** The City Fire Department has 2 painters. You know how it is. We have to use the Department mechanics, so it takes a very long time for them to circulate. They do it on the work order that comes in. 298/127 is having a plaque dedication for one of the firefighters that just succumbed to 9/11 injuries. The members painted the apparatus floor by themselves. It is really not the thing to do, because there is a union shop within the Fire Department that does the painting, but if it comes to a point, they will do it themselves.

The only problem in 301/151, because of the weight of the apparatus, the floor where it meets the apron is cracking. This is an open work order. The tower ladders are so heavy that when it comes from the supported quarters to the outside sidewalk, the apparatus starts to crack the sidewalk. That is a common thing, we just had it replaced. That's almost seasonal. You get about 4 or 5 seasons and then the apron is going to crack. **Marc J. Lefkof** – So it is the sidewalk that is collapsing, not the floor in the house. **FDNY BC Tauber:** No, not the floor.

Age and condition of fire engines and trucks (replacement schedules)

FDNY BC Tauber: Eng 298 is due to have a new rig in 2022. Their rig is only 4 years old. Ladder 127 their rig is 8 years old, they will get one in 2 years. **Marc J. Lefkof** – It is on a 10 year replacement? It had gone up to almost 11 years didn't it, at one point? **FDNY BC Tauber:** They are pushing the envelope, it's usually 10 years, but you have to realize that 298/127 do a lot of responses. In 10 years their apparatus really takes a beating. Eng 315 is only 5 years old. They will get a new rig in 2020. Their truck is brand new, only 2 years old. Eng 299 is brand new, it's only 6 months old and the truck is 2 ½ years old. **Marc J. Lefkof** – So most of them have fairly new equipment except for the truck at 127. **FDNY BC Tauber:** 150 has the oldest truck. It's probably 9 years old. They will get theirs in 2017.

Marc A. Haken – What about the other response vehicles, Chief's cars and things like that? **FDNY BC Tauber:** They go on a 10 year rotation also. We just went to 250 pick-up trucks with the extended cab.

Status of emergency equipment (Jaws of Life etc.)

FDNY BC Tauber: All of our Emergency Equipment is tested. Every truck company has a Hurst tool. All squads and rescues have them. All truck companies have air bags. All equipment is tested twice in a 24 hour period.

FDNY wish list for Fiscal Year 2017 – Capital and Expense

Marc J. Lefkof – What would you like us to put in as a high priority from CB8. I would assume a camera at Utopia Parkway House. **FDNY BC Tauber:** If the work orders that are in and not finished could be completed. Our Department frowns on us coming to the CB for help. If we could get monies to complete the open work orders I would be happy. **Marc A. Haken** – Does the house on 197th Street have cameras? **FDNY BC Tauber:** It's not in my Battalion. That is the 54 Battalion.

Marc J. Lefkof – We will put in the camera and the work orders. Do you have any questions for us?

FDNY BC Tauber: It would be good if the 54 Battalion Chief would attend CB8 meetings. 299/152 is not my Battalion, so I can't comment on those numbers. **Marc J. Lefkof** – I would take the suggestion

and invite the 54 Battalion Chief to DSC meetings. **FDNY BC Tauber:** Does an invitation go out to the EMS? **Marie Adam-Ovide:** They are on our list. Sometimes they come to the meetings.

Marc J. Lefkof – Chief Braun give us your information and you will be put on the mailing list. You can delegate it to whoever can attend once a month to the DSC Meeting.

Jim Gallagher Jr: Thanks to everyone from the community for the FDNY 150th celebration. So many people went and there was a lot of great feedback in the Utopia Parkway house. **FDNY BC Tauber:** Our biggest hit in my Battalion was on Queens Boulevard 305/151. They packed them in. There were about 60-80 people at a time. **Jim Gallagher Jr:** Last year we brought up the issue of the sump pump in the basement of the Utopia Parkway house which was running 24/7. Is that still an issue? **FDNY BC Tauber:** Again, that's not my house. I would love to have that information, but It's not my jurisdiction.

Marc A. Haken – Would DEP get involved with that?

FDNY BC Tauber: No. **Marc A. Haken** – They get involved with the school right around the corner.

Marc J. Lefkof – So how do we get DEP involved? **Jim Gallagher Jr:** We could ask Karen Ellis from DEP to look into it. **FDNY BC Tauber:** If that is a constant problem that could be brought up. The way the houses were built, some of them are old. There is a high water table where we are. It is a big problem.

Marc J. Lefkof – We could put that on the Capital Budget to eliminate flooding in the Fire House.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:12 p.m.

*Respectfully submitted,
Alma Karassavidis, Community Board 8 Staff
July 13, 2015*