

**COMMUNITY BOARD NO. 8 BRONX
MINUTES OF THE HEALTH, HOSPITALS & SOCIAL SERVICES
COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON MAY 16, 2011**

PRESENT

Steven Froot
Michael Heller
Phil Friedman
Joyce Pilsner
Steve Balicer
Sylvia Alexander
Xaxia Sanchez
Diana Gonzalez
Dana Lennon
James Booth
Roger Montesano
Jacqueline Berridge
Denise Hudson

AFFILIATION

Committee Chair
Committee Vice Chair
CB8
CB8
CB8
CB8
CB8
Leake & Watts
Community resident
Division Chief, EMS Division 2 (Bronx)
Director, FDNY Community Affairs Bureau
Administration for Children's Services
Bronx Coordinator, HRA Community Affairs

The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:40 pm.

The Chair introduced the following speakers:

- James Booth, Division Chief, EMS Division 2 (the Bronx), and Roger Montesano, Director, FDNY Community Affairs Bureau;
- Jacqueline Berridge, Administration for Children's Services; and
- Denise Hudson, Bronx Coordinator, HRA Community Affairs

Presentation: FDNY Emergency Medical Service (EMS)

Mr. Froot explained that FDNY/EMS representatives were prepared to address questions that had arisen at the Community Board over the years and recently in an article and an editorial in the Riverdale Press regarding the relationship of the ambulances serving CB 8 and the location of the restocking stations to which those ambulances are assigned, and the effect on EMS response times. The removal of the satellite restocking station at the 50th Police Precinct is imminent, and the transfer of responsibility to a newly built restocking station in Woodlawn on East 233rd Street, located several miles outside of CB 8, is the newest development.

Suggestions have been made by members of the community over the years to locate an EMS restocking station within CB 8, and the Board has made this a capital budget request item at various times. The issue is whether having ambulances stationed in CB 8 restock at a station outside of CB 8 adversely affects our community, and whether

a new, permanent restocking station located within CB 8 would optimize response times in our community.

Division Chief Booth began by describing what the imminent relocation to the new Woodlawn restocking station would mean and complimented the Board for having a good grasp of the situation. The present plan is for EMS to take possession of the new Woodlawn station (station 27) and move in late June. The 50th Precinct always had two Basic Life Support (BLS) ambulances that restocked there. There are currently four FDNY ambulances stationed (i.e., waiting for calls on the streets within CB 8): three BLS units and one Advance Life Support (ALS) unit, which is staffed by paramedics, in addition to an ALS unit that operates on contract out of Montefiore Medical Center. The resting locations of the units are as follows: FDNY ALS unit at West 254th and Broadway; FDNY BLS unit at West 254th and Henry Hudson Parkway; FDNY BLS unit at West 246th and Henry Hudson Parkway; FDNY BLS unit at West 231st and Bailey Avenue; Montefiore ALS unit at West 242nd and Broadway. All five ambulances are working under the 911 system. The Bronx (EMS Division 2) currently has 25 FDNY ambulances deploying out of 9 stations.

The new Woodlawn restocking station will serve as home base for the two relocated BLS ambulances from the 50th Precinct, as well as the two other units serving CB 8, for a total of four ambulances. The new station 27 is operationally superior (CB 8 ambulances will be better equipped with supplies) to the satellite facility at the 50th Precinct, which took space away from the NYPD. The new station will serve only the four CB 8 units (it was designed to serve six), although it should be kept in mind that ambulances, regardless of where they start out or go to restock, can be called to respond to the nearest emergency call, including emergencies near station 27. Ambulances deliver patients to the closest, most appropriate hospital. Some cases require specialized units, such as trauma (St. Barnabas or Jacobi), stroke or burn units. Patients can be transported extra distances to specialty hospitals if appropriate, and hospitals in Yonkers are not off limits and can be authorized. Much depends on time, traffic flow and authorization. If ambulances are shifted from one area due to demand and an area is stripped, the EMS command center will redeploy ambulances from outside the area to compensate.

Mike Heller asked whether a longer trip for restocking/decontamination to the new Woodlawn station could increase response time in CB 8. Chief Booth stated that it should not make a difference, because ambulances are cleaned at EMS stations closest to the hospitals they just reported to. In addition, because the ambulances that restocked at the 50th Precinct were, for the most part (other than minor wipe downs) not decontaminated there, eliminating the 50th Precinct as a restocking station should not affect response time. For larger decontamination situations, CB 8 ambulances currently go to EMS stations at 183rd Street and Jerome Avenue, or 230th Street and White Plains Road.

It is the case, however, that because the ambulance crews start shifts at the new Woodlawn station, they may be the closest ambulances for calls nearest that point

during the time before they arrive at their posts in CB 8. Chief Booth stated that after the relocation to station 27, he will carefully monitor response times to see if turn-out time (travel time from station to post) is adversely impacted.

The issue arose as to why city-owned property within CB 8 was not used for the new restocking station. Sylvia Alexander provided background on the possibility that a lot next to PS 37 (West 230th Street and Tibbett Avenue) could have been used as the site of a new station, which was impacted by a variety of factors – plans for a new shopping center near that location, local elected officials who wished to replace the Woodlawn firehouse that was closing with a new FDNY facility, and concern by PS 37 parents about locating a decontamination facility adjacent to a school. Mr. Montesano stated that construction was already underway at the lot adjacent to PS 37 when the project was cancelled.

Chief Booth said EMS would not be opposed to locating a CB 8 station within CB 8. He mentioned that he had identified city-owned property suitable for a station at the Department of Transportation depot within Van Cortland Park off the Park service road at Broadway and Mosholu Avenue, leading to the Van Cortland stables. Such a station could operate out of trailers. Joyce Pilsner and Phil Friedman led a discussion of how decision to site a new station would play out, including such factors as support from the Mayor and emergency service benefits. Some members voiced concern that construction of new facilities may not be likely during a time of budget constraints and fire house closings.

There was also discussion concerning (1) how fire truck emergency response interfaces with EMS response to emergency calls, and what sort of care fire fighters can offer as first responders, given that they normally arrive within an average of four minutes; and (2) recent call and response statistics for CB 8.

Mr. Froot summarized the two instances in which the distance travelled by a CB 8 ambulance to new station 27 in Woodlawn could affect response time to an emergency within CB 8: (1) departing the base at the beginning of a shift, at which point the unit might have to respond to a call outside of CB 8, which would take the ambulance away from its CB 8 post; and (2) a minor restocking situation that previously could have been accomplished at the 50th precinct, but will now require the unit to return to station 27 in Woodlawn. The discussion concluded with agreement to further examine feasibility of siting a new station at the Van Cortland DOT site, which could involve several Board committees participating in developing recommendations. It was the sense of the Committee that establishment of a new restocking station in CB 8 should continue to be a capital budget priority in the next cycle.

Presentation: Administration for Children's Services (ACS)

Ms. Berridge is the ACS manager who covers CB 8. She indicated that CB 8 represents the lightest ACS case load in the borough. Ms. Berridge described how ACS

serves families in crisis and directs them to available providers of services – counseling, parent education, housing, medical care, mental health care. The division of child protective services investigates accusations of child abuse. As to the latter, ACS determines whether or not cases are substantiated; investigations must be concluded within 60 days. ACS case workers may have up to 17 cases instead of the desired 12, which creates problems. Truancy comes under ACS responsibility; lately, ACS has been working to alleviate problems created by the high school selection process, because assignments to distant schools can cause problems for children attending school due to excessive travel time. ACS frequently refers families for “preventive services” to social service agencies such as Leake & Watts and the Jewish Board. A discussion ensued regarding various types of cases ACS addresses, and how children enter foster care.

Presentation: Human Resources Administration (HRA)

Ms. Hudson described a range of social services offered by HRA in the areas of cash assistance and work support, food stamps, Medicaid, adult protective services (over 18 years old), child support enforcement, domestic violence, HIV/AIDS, home care and family planning. They work closely with ACS, which had previously been part of HRA. She mentioned that they have funded teen RAPP in the past. She also mentioned TeenLink, a micro-site that works with teen issues. CB 8 ranks 11th out of 12 Bronx community districts in terms of cash assistance, Medicaid and Food Stamps program participation. (She provided the Committee with 2010 statistics subsequent to the meeting.) Ms. Hudson noted that numbers of those receiving food stamps were increasing. She also noted that there had been some consolidation of service centers that requires clients to travel longer distances, but that there is always the possibility that community-based organizations could become facilitative enrollers (for example, a Legal Aid office that provides the opportunity to enroll in Food Stamps on site). Ms. Hudson said that she regularly attends district service cabinet meetings so she is familiar with local needs.

The minutes of the April 13, 2011 meeting were considered and approved following the guest presentations, with the following correction: Ms. Alexander clarified that she does not advocate siting a restocking station in CB 8 in any particular location, and asked that the minutes so reflect.

Chairperson's Report

The Chair announced that a conference on suicide prevention would be held at Jacobi Medical Center on May 26, 2011, from 8 am – noon, and that a rally for World No Tobacco Day for middle school and high school students would take place on May 2, 2011 from 2:30 – 4 pm in Union Square Park.

Diana Gonzalez announced Family Day at Leake & Watts, on June 18, 2011, from 12 noon to 4 pm. In addition to games and food vendors, their Community Day will provide an opportunity to meet Executive Director Alan Mucatel and tour the Leake & Watts campus.

Follow-up Business

Budget priorities: It was determined that the request for an additional ambulance is no longer worth pursuing based on information gathered by the Committee this year, but that a capital budget request for the establishment of a new restocking station in CB 8 should continue to be a priority.

Urgent Care Centers: Dana Lennon, who is Director of Planning at Morris Heights Health Center, reported that Morris Heights Health Center operates an urgent care center after hours on Burnside Avenue, and may be interested in opening urgent care centers in other areas of the Bronx.

The meeting adjourned at 10:15 pm

Next month's meeting will take place on Monday, June 20, 2011, at the Board Office.

Prepared by Michael Heller, Vice Chair
Approved by Steven Froot, Chair
Health, Hospitals & Social Services Committee