

# ***Emergency Response Oversight Committee***

*May 25, 2022 (In-Person / Zoom)*

## *Meeting Minutes*

*Facilitator: Jessica Verfuss, Deputy Director, Department of Emergency Response*

*Notetaker: Geri Lockwood, Department of Emergency Response*

**In-Person Attendees:** Jessica Verfuss, TC Department of Emergency Response (TC DOER)  
John Halaychik, TC Department of Emergency Response  
Geoff Dunn, TC Department of Emergency Response  
Greg Potter, TC Information & Technology Services (IT)  
Jeremy Zigenfus, TC Sheriff's Office  
Seth Littlejohn, NYS PD  
Jerry Wright, Cayuga Heights PD (CHPD)/Village Police Chiefs  
Julie Holcomb, City of Ithaca  
Faith Vavra, City of Ithaca  
Tom Parsons, Ithaca FD  
Rob Covert, Ithaca FD  
Joe Nelson, Trumansburg PD  
Tim Bangs, Commercial Ambulance Service, Bangs Ambulance  
Tom Dunn, Ithaca College  
Mark Conrad, Cornell University (CU)

**Virtual Attendees:** Chris Saxon, TC Department of Emergency Response  
Justin Vann, TC Department of Emergency Response  
Matt Van Houten, TC District Attorney  
Rich John, TC Public Safety Committee  
Chris Jordan, Volunteer Fire/EMS  
Vince Monticello, City of Ithaca Police  
Alan Karasin, City of Ithaca Public Information and Technology (IT)

Call to Order: Jessica Verfuss called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

Changes to Agenda (if necessary): No changes.

- a. Approve 2/23/2022 Meeting Minutes  
Motion to approve by Julie Holcomb, seconded by Tim Bangs.

### Old Business:

- a. COVID-19 – Status:
  - Jessica Verfuss stated that Tompkins County is recommending wearing masks, with no other changes.
- b. Reimagining Public Safety:
  - Jeremy Zigenfus announced that new staff will begin at the TC Sheriff's Office in June to handle calls. John Halaychik requested that this person spend some time sitting in the Dispatch Center.
  - Faith Vavra added that the City of Ithaca's Dashboard is up and running and is live.
- c. Policy Updates / Approval:
  - Jessica V. stated that she has not moved them. She also announced that TC DOER purchased PowerDMS, and EROC Policies will be moved to the system. She added that the "Closest Car" Policy should be updated.
- d. Cyber Security – NetMotion:
  - Jessica V. announced that we are working on getting Touch back for everyone – waiting for grant funding. There will be limited licenses, at \$130/year each. Tom Parsons inquired about agencies paying for their own users, rather than waiting for grant funding. Jessica responded that it's possible. A discussion took place about it.

### New Business:

- a. Towing:
  - John Halaychik announced that there have been issues with Rushlow Towing, and that there will be a joint meeting scheduled with DOER, City of Ithaca (Julie H.), and the tow companies.
  - Mark Bell inquired about local companies versus out-of-town companies, due to safety concerns when waiting for the tow company's arrival. John H. responded that, per TC policy, they have 30 minutes to arrive from the time they're dispatched, and 20 minutes in the City. He requested that he be contacted regarding continued issues with late arrivals, etc., and he'll handle them on an individual basis.
- b. City Call Times:
  - Vince Monticello stated that there have been changes made to the City of Ithaca's call times, and that ESChat is being added to specialty units.
- c. Ithaca Festival 2022:
  - Julie H. stated that the festival will be held from Thursday, June 2<sup>nd</sup>, through Sunday, June 5<sup>th</sup>, and the IAP has been submitted.
- d. Grassroots:
  - Jessica V. added that Grassroots is back on, as well as area Olde Home Days, etc.

### Standing Sub-Committee Reports (Members):

- a. Law Enforcement (LE):
  - No meeting.
  - Jerry Wright stated that the Closest Car Policy needs to be updated.
- b. Fire and EMS:
  - A Chiefs Meeting was held last night. A new EMS group will be meeting opposite months from the Chiefs Meeting.
  - Tim Bangs stated that the flow for the Medical Examiners (ME) body removal calls have all been going directly to Bangs Ambulance. Previously, unless a Funeral Home (FH) was pre-arranged, an on-call rotation of FH was used for unattended deaths, then Bangs was called, if no FH's were available. He would like the FH rotation reinstated. Discussions are ongoing with EMS. John H. added that Brenda Grinnell Crosby, from TC Health Department (TCHD), has stated that FH's have stopped doing this, and he will follow up with her. TCHD establishes a list, and DOER Dispatch Center follows the list. A discussion followed regarding past and current practices, with Tom P. responding that IFD should not be removing dead/decomposing bodies, and Jeremy Zigenfus stating that law enforcement does not leave until the body has been picked up. Brenda is working on the procedure. John H. requested that law enforcement be reminded that they go through the Dispatch Center for documentation and accountability purposes.
    - Tom P. stated that the Mutual Aid Agreement is outdated and needs to be sent out for review. Justin Vann is working on getting it done, and Mike Stitley would like to review it. Jessica V. asked that it get out within the next two weeks.
- c. Dispatch:
  - John H. announced that TC DOER has completed an internal staffing review of the Dispatch Center and is working with TC on staffing.
  - John H. also announced that 988, a Federal mandated suicide hotline, will go live on July 16<sup>th</sup>. NYS is planning on releasing NYS's Best Practices two (2) weeks before then. Sharing information and privacy are issues to be worked out. NYS Mental Health says it's okay to share information. 988 calls for multiple Counties will be taken by the TC Suicide Prevention & Crisis Service. John H. added that a Crisis Stabilization Center is opening on North Triphammer Road, across from McDonald's.
- d. Training:
  - No updates.
- e. Information Technology Administration – Greg Potter provided the following information:
  - The NetMotion server upgrade has been completed.
  - Coordination is in process with CU for fiber at the Back-up Center (BUC).
  - The TRAX upgrade is scheduled for June 13<sup>th</sup>.
  - A Flex patch is scheduled for June 28<sup>th</sup>.

Announcements (Personnel, Events, Projects, etc.):

a. BUC:

- Jessica V. stated that Motorola is working on there end of the project.
- Mark Conrad added that CU is working on Verizon on the infrastructure, which is on track for the end of the year.

b. CHPD Staffing:

- Jerry W. announced that another full-time position has been approved, who will eventually be on the 3-11 p.m. shift, hopefully in July.

Adjourn:

- Next meeting scheduled for August 17, 2022, 10:00 a.m., DOER Lee Shurtleff Conference Room, in person.
- Jessica V. adjourned the meeting at 10:55 a.m.