

The Legislature of Rockland County



JAY HOOD, JR.

Legislator – District 3

Chair, Public Safety Committee

Members Present:

Leg. J. Hood, Jr., Chair
Leg. T. Earl, Vice Chair (late)
Leg. C. Carey
Leg. E. Day
Leg. A. Paul
Leg. A. Wieder (late)
Leg. A. Wolfe

Others Present:

E. Yeger, Esq.
K. Sincerbox
M. Donovan
T. Austin
J. Rosenthal
F. Peverly
K. Campbell

MINUTES
PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE
TUESDAY, JULY 31, 2012
5:00 PM

ROLL CALL

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ADOPTION OF MINUTES, MEETING OF JUNE 12, 2012

**MOTION TO ADOPT:
CAREY/DAY**

UNAN

- I. REF. #5506 - CONFIRMING THE APPOINTMENT OF CHIEF WILLIAM BARBERA
TAPPAN, NEW YORK TO THE ROCKLAND COUNTY TRAFFIC
SAFETY BOARD
(C. SCOTT VANDERHOEF, COUNTY EXECUTIVE)

**MOTION TO APPROVE:
DAY/WOLFE**

UNAN

ADDED SPONSORS: LEGS. HOOD, JR., EARL, CAREY, DAY, PAUL, WIEDER, WOLFE, JOBSON

2. REF. #6704 - APPROPRIATION OF FEDERAL FORFEITURE FUNDS REQUESTED BY THE OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY IN THE AMOUNT OF \$100,000 TO PARTIALLY REIMBURSE THE VILLAGE OF SUFFERN POLICE DEPARTMENT FOR THE COST OF SUFFERN POLICE OFFICER ASSIGNED TO THE ROCKLAND COUNTY DRUG TASK FORCE FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY 1, 2012 THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2012 AND APPROVING INTERMUNICIPAL COOPERATION AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE COUNTY OF ROCKLAND AND THE VILLAGE OF SUFFERN POLICE DEPARTMENT IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$100,000 AND AUTHORIZING EXECUTION OF THIS AGREEMENT BY THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE (OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY) (\$100,000)
(THOMAS ZUGIBE, DISTRICT ATTORNEY)

MOTION TO APPROVE:
WOLFE/PAUL

UNAN
TRANSFERRED TO B&F 7/31/12

ADDED SPONSORS: LEGS. HOOD, JR., EARL, CAREY, DAY, PAUL, WIEDER, WOLFE, JOBSON

3. REF. #5327/
6704 APPROPRIATION OF FEDERAL FORFEITURE FUNDS REQUESTED BY THE OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF AND THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE TO BE APPROPRIATED TO THE OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF TO PURCHASE ITEMS AND SERVICES RELATED TO THE NOVEMBER 17, 2012 POLICE EXAMINATION (OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF AND THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE) (\$34,500)
(LOUIS FALCO III/THOMAS ZUGIBE, SHERIFF AND DISTRICT ATTORNEY)

MOTION TO APPROVE:
DAY/PAUL & CAREY

UNAN
TRANSFERRED TO B&F 7/31/12

ADDED SPONSORS: LEGS. HOOD, JR., EARL, CAREY, DAY, PAUL, WIEDER, WOLFE, JOBSON

4. REF. #9472 - *DISCUSSION ITEM:* FOLLOW-UP ON PRIOR DISCUSSION REGARDING ROCKLAND'S RESPONSE TO HURRICANE IRENE
(HONS. JAY HOOD, JR., EDWIN J. DAY, DOUGLAS JOBSON)

Mr. Frank Pevery, Vice President – Operations for Orange and Rockland Utilities gave a handout to the Committee members (see attached) which contained information regarding O&R's emergency response and recovery plan enhancements.

Leg. Day stated that after the October 2011 storm, he was concerned about two specific items: Communications and downed power lines. Mr. Pevery said they have addressed both these issues, details can be found in the handout.

Chair Hood, Jr. thanked the representatives from Orange and Rockland for acknowledging there were problems and moving quickly to correct and improve their response to emergencies.

MOTION TO ADJOURN: 6:05 PM
WOLFE/DAY

UNAN

"The Rockland County Legislature is committed to full compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. To that end, the Legislature is committed to creating an accessible environment for all. To request accommodations that you may require, please call Damaris Alvarez at 845-638-5248 (845-708-7899 for TTY/TDD). Please request these accommodations three (3) days in advance so that we can seek to meet your needs."

**Francis W Peverly Remarks
Rockland County Legislature
Public Safety Committee
Tuesday, July 31, 2012**

Good evening, I am Frank Peverly, Vice President - Operations for Orange and Rockland Utilities.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Committee members, for the opportunity to allow O&R to discuss its multitude of emergency response and recovery plan enhancements. These improvements are already paying dividends in accomplishing our most important mission after a major incident, and that is to restore the basic operations of the communities we serve so they, in turn, can serve their residents.

I came to Orange and Rockland in 1989, after serving a few years at another upstate utility. Through 2006, when I went to Con Edison, I served in a variety of supervisory, engineering and operational capacities working closely with many of our local and County Emergency Service providers. I might add that the County has some of the finest and professional emergency services providers I have worked with and it is certainly fortunate to have such a group of dedicated individuals in its midst.

Further, they have been available and assisted us in many incidents over the years and I publically thank them for their guidance and support.

I returned to O&R late this Fall as Vice President. While I was not here during Hurricane Irene, I was in Con Edison's corporate response center supporting Con Edison's and O&R's response. I returned to O&R as Vice President during the snow storm and experienced the challenges first hand O&R worked through. As a resident of Orange County, I also saw firsthand the impact both events had on our communities and customers.

Hurricane Irene was the worst natural disaster to ever occur in O&R's service territory in the company's more than 100-year history. Unfortunately the October Snowstorm came soon thereafter and eclipsed that mark. Hurricane Irene cut power to over 120,000 of O&R's 300,000 electric customers or about 40 percent of the utility company's electric customer base. The October snowstorm dumped as

much as 19 inches of snow in some communities, knocking out power to more than 134,000 O&R customers.

In both disasters, the sheer extent of damage to the communities' infrastructure and the O&R electric system impeded O&R damage assessment, blocked access to many damage locations and slowed extremely labor-intensive repair work. The volume of customer calls and outage reports caused by each disaster overloaded utility systems throughout the region. O&R's call center and customer information computer systems were no exception and were not capable of handling the call volume these disasters generated.

Both were simply catastrophic events however events of this magnitude are rich in lessons learned for all. These were no exception. More important we heard the frustration of all our stakeholders.

Maybe as the new guy, but certainly as the head of operations for O&R, I led an internal task force of 15 experts from disciplines across the Company. The task force's work in part was guided by benchmarking as well as feedback from extensive O&R outreach to public officials, the emergency services community, customers and employees

Our mission was simple:

- Enhance our ability to better process customer calls and inquiries
- Improve our ability to provide more accurate and consistent estimated restoration time
- Develop a new storm recovery blueprint designed to improve the mobilization, deployment and management of field repair resources.

The bottom line objective is for customers to be able to better provide and receive outage and damage-related information and for the Company to use that information to accelerate its restoration efforts

As of today over 90% of our total solution is up and running. What remains are drilling, exercising, and some additional process enhancements transparent to our customers.

So what are these changes? Highlights of the new program include:

- New and upgraded automated telephone call and information processing systems that have the capability to handle both normal storms and extreme weather events like those that occurred last autumn.
- Enhanced computer systems and applications that take the data from those calls and turn it into repair assignments and outage reports,
- A next-generation web and mobile-web based Outage Map application that features the visual display of outages down to the single-service level,
- New models and supporting systems analysis to provide for more accurate and consistent projected electric service restoration times and
- A new storm-response blueprint based on Emergency Services ICS principles to provide us the scalability and capability to better manage any size event.

These programs do not mean customers will not have another power outage when a natural disaster hits. These programs means that when a natural disaster strikes, O&R customers can better communicate with us, we can communicate better with them, including giving them a clearer idea of when their power will be restored, and that our overall restoration process will be more efficient. We took a hard look at the lessons learned from Hurricane Irene and the October snowstorm, combined them with the newest in technology and emergency-response thinking, and built a platform from which we can successfully respond to the next disaster and the disaster after that.

Details of the new program include:

First our enhanced ability to answer calls. O&R's telephone system typically processes 800,000 calls per year. The same system received 266,000 calls in one week during the snowstorm and 210,000 in one week during Hurricane Irene. The peak volume of calls per hour reached 12,000 in each storm (7,000 were unique calls; the other 5,000 were repeat calls).

To address that issue, O&R has installed a new automated call answering service administered by Twenty-First Century Communications, Inc. (TFCC), an industry leader in call-center solutions. In an emergency situation, O&R will activate that system and the service will route the calls to an interactive voice response (IVR) system. There, the customer will receive a message with information about the event and will have the opportunity to report an outage and immediately receive Estimate Restore Time (ERT) information for their

account if it is available. O&R also expanded its daily customer call system from 92 incoming lines to 368 incoming lines

Next, transforming the data into information. To process the volume of data from the expanded incoming call lines, O&R also has expanded its Outage Management System (OMS). An improved computer program will transform data from automated calls into repair assignments and outage reports.

The information also will go to an updated Outage Map which, in response to emergency services and customer concerns, will display the street locations of single service outages that affect one customer as well as circuit outages which affect multiple customers. In addition to providing customers with a description of the cause of the outage, the Outage Map will be optimized for use on iPad and iPhone and Android phones.

For the approximately 30 percent of O&R customer callers who prefer to report their outages to a person, O&R also has initiated a plan by which overflow calls during a high-volume period would be automatically transferred to 100 Con Edison customer service representatives who will answer those calls and process outage information.

In addition, to provide an added level of reliability to the customer calling system, O&R is contracting for another TFCC service called MARS (Mutual Assistance Routing System), which taps excess customer service call-answering capacity at other utilities for those utilities that need them for high-volume call situations. This permits O&R to offer even more trained utility company customer service representatives to help those customers who wish to speak personally to a representative.

As part of its effort to more fully serve its customers, particularly during storms and other emergencies, O&R has embarked upon a campaign to obtain up-to-date primary and alternate phone numbers and e-mail addresses. The more contact information O&R has, the quicker it can identify a customer's account, and the quicker it can help that customer. With the up-to-date primary phone numbers and alternates on file, O&R can identify customers' accounts as soon they call. Looking forward, this effort also will enhance O&R's ability to contact customers pro-actively.

To better communicate more fully with customers, O&R also has contracted with TFCC for its Alert system. Alert, which is under development and is expected to

be online this summer, is a high-speed, high-volume outbound notification system that lets the Company send time-sensitive information to customers or employees on virtually any electronic device. The speed of this system is dependent on the length of the message and the capacity of the local telephone company switches to process the data. With Alert, O&R can send targeted messages to select groups or geographic areas by landline, cell phone, PDAs, pager, text, e-mail, fax and TTY/TDD machines. Alert also integrates with Twitter and Facebook where the Company now has an expanded presence..

More accurate service restoration times is a necessity. Damage assessment is a key factor in how O&R estimates service restoration times. Now, O&R will be refining that process by integrating damage assessment data into a formula that includes a number of other variables such as weather forecasts, storm path location, season, foliage, temperature and time of storm arrival, pre-storm resource planning, and historical knowledge and experience from prior storms combined with initial reports on the storm's severity (number of incidents, number of customers) to more fully develop a comprehensive picture of a storm's impact. That analysis will guide O&R in the development of its workforce mobilization timetables, and its equipment and staffing deployment, and as a result, more fully inform its decision-making and strategy about repair, restoration and recovery.

Once the extent of the event is determined and a solution is plotted and time-lined, the Estimated Restore Times (ERTs) are set. Those ERTs then will be communicated to the public through the full range of O&R communications channels, at a system, regional, local and incident level.

Finally, improved storm plan structure and processes were developed. In addition to customer information and communication system improvements, O&R examined every aspect of the Storm Plan from its organization protocols and activation timing to its staffing needs and its cooperative relationships with state, county and local agencies.

As a result of that intensive study, a number of steps are being taken to streamline this process including a revision of the Incident Command Structure (ICS) to organize the overall effort better, the creation of a municipal storm priority matrix to help clear downed wires and open key roads quicker, the adoption of an improved incident information process for police and fire departments to report damage sites more completely and the development of alternate equipment and personnel staging locations that are closer to the damage to help make the actual repair, restoration and recovery process faster.

That revision also includes new protocols designed to activate more internal and external storm response resources sooner, to create a wider span of control over those resources to utilize them more fully and to tap more quickly materials and staffing resources available from Consolidated Edison of New York, O&R's sister company in the Consolidated Edison, Inc. family of companies.

One thing we all at O&R are committed to and that is continuous improvement. We will continue through the year refining and adjusting our processes so we can provide the best service possible when an unfortunate event occurs. As I stated earlier, we cannot prevent outages from occurring, but we certainly can make the inconvenience less disruptive and bring our communities back more efficiently.

Thank you and I welcome your questions now.