

OEMC Executive Director Guidice's Budget Remarks

Good Afternoon, Chairman Dowell, Vice Chairman Silverstein, and members of the City Council.

My name is Rich Guidice and I am the Executive Director for the Office of Emergency Management and Communications (OEMC). It is my honor to be here with you today to answer your questions and any concerns you might have regarding OEMC.

As you know, OEMC manages the 9-1-1 Center, the 3-1-1 Center, Emergency Management, and the Traffic Management Authority for the City. Many of you are familiar with our role in providing public safety planning and coordination, as well as conducting exercises and drills, for everything from large-scale special events to public safety emergencies. 2020 marked the 25th anniversary of our department, and it has been a historic year to say the least. This year, the OEMC led coordination efforts alongside our City partners in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, civil unrest, flooding, high lake levels, and even a tornado. I am extremely proud of the dedicated professionals at OEMC who work 24-7 to ensure the safety and well-being of all Chicago residents.

Since January, OEMC, in partnership with the Mayor's Office and Chicago Department of Public Health, has been coordinating the citywide response effort to COVID-19. This includes the establishment of the COVID-19 Task Force and the longest running activation of our Emergency Operations Center (EOC) in OEMC history. Throughout the City's ongoing response, the EOC has hosted hundreds of meetings on key tactical priorities; handled over 2,000 citywide resource requests; established an Emergency Food Dispatch Center at Malcolm X College; organized a donations distribution hub at the United Center; coordinated a pop-up food pantry program in partnership with the City's Racial Equity Rapid Response Team; managed logistics around the City's mobile and static COVID-19 testing sites; and established hundreds of isolation, quarantine, respite, and shelter decompression beds across different facilities.

In addition to OEMC's coordinating role around the COVID-19 pandemic, [the OEMC, in partnership with CPD and the Mayor's Office, established the Summer Operations Center \(SOC\) for weekends over the summer to support citywide coordination around violence reduction. The purpose of the SOC was to provide strategic oversight and coordinated citywide deployment of public safety personnel and assets. The SOC facilitated information sharing and helped coordinate and deploy resources between City and partner agencies citywide in areas of special attention throughout the summer.](#)

The OEMC has dedicated a significant portion of the year developing plans with our public safety and infrastructure partners in response to the civil unrest and looting incidents from this past summer.

Over the last few months, the OEMC, CPD, CFD, and our infrastructure departments have conducted drills and workshops to enhance citywide efforts to protect residents and property throughout the City. This includes both retail corridors in the Central Business District and throughout the neighborhoods. These drills and planning efforts have informed the extensive citywide planning leading up to this year's general election. The OEMC has hosted several workshops and citywide meetings to coordinate the City's preparedness efforts leading up to November 3rd.

Additionally, throughout 2020, OEMC has focused a significant amount of effort on the lakefront in light of historically high lake levels and record rainfall. We continue to coordinate citywide response efforts, monitor weather conditions with the National Weather Service in Chicago, and work alongside our infrastructure partners to ensure our lakefront is fortified. Most recently, OEMC developed a new emergency text alert group, called CHILAKE, to keep lakefront residents and businesses informed regarding weather advisories, watches, and warnings impacting the lakefront.

Building on our efforts to enhance communication to the public in emergency situations, OEMC, in partnership with BACP, launched an emergency text alert program for business owners this summer, called CHIBIZ. Through this program, business owners now have the ability to opt-in to receive citywide and location-specific text alerts related to public safety incidents and weather-related emergencies tailored to the business community. Both CHIBIZ and CHILAKE build upon our existing Notify Chicago and Reverse911 tools.

As reported last year, OEMC is focusing efforts on upgrading our 9-1-1 Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) System. This new technology will integrate seamlessly into the City's existing systems, from security cameras to gunshot detection sensors, providing every first responder in Chicago with a 360-degree view of every incident, increasing situational awareness, and improving officer safety. Implementation of this very important upgrade is happening now with expected completion by the end of 2022.

We continue our efforts to increase voluntary enrollment in the free SMART911 Program as part of our efforts to strengthen the accurate and timely dispatch of emergency resources in crisis situations. Through this program, 9-1-1 operators have the ability to initiate a two-way text message in cases where the caller is unable to communicate in an emergency incident for safety reasons. Similarly, we continue to encourage the public to sign up for our CHI311 app, which launched in December 2018, and provides another mechanism for residents to enter city service requests, in addition to calling 3-1-1.

In closing, 2020 has been a year like none other and I would like to thank the men and women who work at OEMC for their dedication and commitment to our city and its residents. Again, thank you, Madam Chairman and members of the City Council. I look forward to answering any of your questions.

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