



# City of Chicago



Or2014-157

Office of the City Clerk

## Document Tracking Sheet

**Meeting Date:** 4/2/2014

**Sponsor(s):** Sposato (36)  
Fioretti (2)

**Type:** Order

**Title:** Commissioner of Office of Emergency Management and Communications authorized to investigate and prepare remediation plan for alleged shortage of Chicago Fire Department ambulances and paramedics

**Committee(s) Assignment:** Committee on Public Safety

Public Safety

ORDER

WHEREAS, On March 25, 2014, The local Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS) television outlet's investigative reporters in conjunction with the civic advocacy organization, the Better Government Association, issued a warning concerning an apparent shortage of Chicago Fire Department (CFD) ambulances and paramedics; and

WHEREAS, If such shortages are proven to exist, the delays this would cause for patients needing emergency care puts them and the entire city the department is mandated to protect in immediate and extreme peril; and

WHEREAS, In its analysis of proposed 2011 budget recommendations for public safety spending, the City of Chicago's executive branch Office of the Inspector General (OIG) recommended the conversion of 20% of Fire Suppression Apparatuses (fire trucks) to Ambulances At that time, the OIG argued that the collective bargaining agreement with the city's covered fire department personnel allowed a "variance" that would allow for this provision. If this option had been implemented at that time, the city would have saved an estimated \$41.5 million taxpayer dollars and added an additional 31 Advanced Life Support (ALS) ambulances to the Fire Department's fleet; and

WHEREAS, In October of 2013, the OIG completed an audit that determined the CFD is not meeting the response times required by National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Standard 1710. It also found that CFD's internal reports lacked the elements necessary to accurately assess whether the Department was in fact meeting or exceeding those national standards that the department had always affirmed that they <sup>did</sup> meeting or exceeded. Since the issuance of the OIG audit findings, the CFD agrees that it is not strictly meeting NFPA standards, arguing that these standards are merely guidelines rather than stringent requirements; and

WHEREAS, In light of the CBS and BGA investigative team's disclosure of an internal memo it has obtained written by a supervisor at the Office of Emergency Management instructing dispatchers to "avoid terminology like 'We have no ALS ambulances available,'..." The memo tells the dispatchers in the field to use ambulance numbers to instruct staff to send a basic life support ambulance to the scene and a fire engine with a paramedic on board when no ALS ambulances are available, adding "Hopefully we can get the message across without highlighting the fact that no ALS unit is available" as well as conceding that, "We all realize that certain times we are inundated with runs and lack of resources"; and

WHEREAS, It behooves this legislative body to expeditiously investigate and ameliorate this apparent breach of public safety it is charged with promulgating and preserving, now therefore it is

ORDERED, That the Commissioner of the Office of Emergency Management and Communications or his designee be authorized and directed to immediately investigate and prepare a remediation plan set forth in the aforementioned allegations for submission to and testimony at the next public meeting of the City of Chicago City Council's Committee on Public Safety.

*Mark Sparto 36TH*

*Rand W. [Signature]*