

Town of Clarence

Public Crisis Informational Briefing

Clarence High School 2/15/09- 13:00hrs

Dave Bissonette opened with a moment of silence.

Members of the Panel: Scott Bylewski, Town Supervisor; Dave Bissonette, Town of Clarence Disaster Coordinator; Steve Bengart, Town Attorney/Town Prosecutor for Town of Clarence; Major Chris Cummings, State Police Troop A Commander; Tim Howard, Erie County Sheriff; Jerry Sentz, Erie County, current Commander of the County EOC; Bonnie Fraiser, Erie Co. Emergency Services -Coordinating Mental Health; Dan King, NYS Department of Conservation of Buffalo; Mark Kowolski, Erie County Dept. of Environment & Planning and Nancy Blaschak, Executive Director of the American Red Cross in Greater Buffalo.

The purpose of this forum was to make sure that all the needs and concerns are being addressed by the various agencies involved. Mr. Bissonette added that this is the opportunity for the community to come forward with any issues they may have, anything that may have fallen through the cracks, anything that may not be done properly, or not at all. Anyone present who wanted to address any issues or with any questions were invited to come forward to the podium, write your name and phone number on the sign in sheet. If there were no immediate answers to the questions today, they hope to get the answers and back to you via name and phone number.

Dave explained a brief agenda that will cover the Property, (access and concerns), especially for the people that live in the immediate area of the crash site. Future traffic, health concerns – physical, environmental remediation, stress management and physiological health concerns.

The police agencies will be here as long as necessary to protect the residents and

Public Speaker Comments:

- 1.
- Many thanks.

- 2.
- Q: Airline flight path changes after an event like this, can the airport redirect the flight pattern to not go over the area for a day or two days after such an incident?
 - A. This concern will be passed on to the airport operations personnel to see if there can be any changes, perhaps, some type of rotation based on operations in the future.

- 3.
- Q. What kind of assistance is being provided for the family of the house that was involved?
 - A. The Red Cross has set up a case file and will attend to the families needs. The Red Cross is not clear on what the airlines responsibility is at this time. The community is welcome to do what they feel is appropriate. The Red Cross will continue to work with the families.

- 4.

- Q. What is this going to cost and who will pay?

A. This will be looked at through various avenues for reimbursement for the Town as well as the other agencies involved. As for personal issues for damages, the first course of action should be private insurance companies and Global. Submit soon so that a claim file can be opened as soon as possible.

- 5.

- Q. - Are the fire departments able to go about normal business?

A. The fire departments are up and running at 100%. No one is working without equipment. All of the equipment will be replaced in a timely fashion and be back in the Town fire departments as soon as possible. Town Fire mutual aid plan in place.

- 6.

- Q - Is there anything that the community can do to help the family on the ground?

- A. - The Clarence Central School Federal Credit Union (CSSFCU) has established a fund for the Wielinski family. For information call (630-0888) or e-mail them (www.ccsfcu.com).

- 7.

- Q. What is being done to address the concerns of younger children?

A. There is a notice on the Clarence Central Schools regarding outreach services. You can call 407-9102 or 759-7775 or use the website (www.clarenceschools.org/news.cfm) if you would like information on how to help, if you have special concerns or if you need any counseling services for children. You will be put in touch with outreach services. These numbers can be accessed now and in the week in between when school is in recess and after school resumes on February 23rd.

- 8.

- Q. Can't counselors come to the children in the area instead of giving out phone numbers to contact...kids want to talk to their friends...can we open up the schools or the coffee shop to get together?

- A. Parents and teachers need to be the eyes and ears of the community and watch for signs that may be anything out of the ordinary and give that information to the counselors. It would not be a good idea to send counselors out to make a stressful situation more stressful.

- 9.

- Q. How do you start to talk to your kids and address the issues and concerns?

A. It is normal to want to shield your children from these sorts of situations. Let them express their concerns and be up front and with them about what happened. You do not have to go into details. Be open and be honest. Spend time, take the time to talk to them and let them ask questions. You may not have the answers, let them know that. You can pray for the victims and their families together. Watch for unusual and changes in behavior.

- 10.

- Q. - Concerned about normal necessities about mail, garbage, other services?

- A. Residents of Long Street can contact the Town Hall with these concerns (741-8930). Arrangements are being made for the Clarence Center area for coordinating mail delivery on a case by basis. The Clarence Center postmaster has communicated with the Supervisor and this can be coordinated through the Town Hall.

- 11.

- Survivor fund set up by the Clarence Chamber of Commerce.

- The Clarence Chamber of Commerce has established a survivor fund and a memorial fund for the survivors. Any one interested may call the Clarence Chamber office at 631-3888. or the Bank of Akron at 759-9580

- 12.

- There is a 211 information service that can be called for information. Callers can be directed to the appropriate numbers to call regarding questions they may have. People are encouraged to use this number first.

- 13.

- Q. Concerns about safe areas around the crash scene?

- A. Environmental concerns have been addressed from the start and continue to be addressed. The DEC has addressed concerns about exposure and provided assurances about issues regarding releases. Smoke, air and water concerns and remediation will start by week end barring the weather. The DEC and the State Health Department will be working together on these issues. The Town will be involved with and be kept up to date regarding these issues and will be part of any decision making. Reports will be given on a regular basis during the duration

of this event. There will be a reportable item even if there is nothing new from when the last report was given.

- 14.
- Q. Is there an approximate time frame when we will first hear about any environmental health concerns as a result of this disaster?

A. In terms of the remediation time frame, the best guess would be that it will start towards the end of this week. The lead team will start showing up on Monday to keep things going. There will be preliminary samples taken for testing. Information will be coming out when available.
- Information will be available on the Town of Clarence website and updated as often as needed (www.clarence.ny.us.)
- Minister Mike Bowers thanked everyone involved for all they have done and are doing, above and beyond, and offered the Clarence Church of Christ on Old Goodrich Road for youth of the Town to gather to use the gym or for use of the resident of the Town use for whatever may be needed. The number is 741-3030.
- The Red Cross added that anyone who was evacuated is welcome to come to the Clarence Senior Center at 4600 Thompson Road.
- A closing prayer was given by Pastor Karl.