

Testimony of Henry Garrido
Assistant Associate Director of District Council 37,
AFSCME, AFL-CIO
Before the Committees on Fire and Criminal Justice and
Technology in Government
December 10, 2009

I am Henry Garrido, Assistant Associate Director of District Council 37. Our union's mission is to represent our members and to work with management for a more effective and efficient municipal government. The present breakdown of the 911 emergency response system is both alarming and disturbing to any New Yorker.

I would like to take an opportunity to share with you the problems we have found with the ECTP Program from the time of procurement to the implementation of its various components.

In 2003, the Bloomberg administration decided to hire iXP to work toward merging the two systems. Soon thereafter iXP withdrew and HP was awarded a \$380 million contract, even though the city had reservations about HP's ability to properly do the project. Later it was discovered that the Canadian government had sued HP for failure to properly complete a large project. The lawsuit awarded the Canadian Government a large settlement. The city's awarding of the contract to HP was due to a flawed procurement process that used limited bidding pool. During this time, not once did the city ever consider doing the work in-house using DoITT staff. Some of the programmers for HP were getting paid over \$200 per hour while our own programmers get paid \$50 an hour plus benefits.

What is really disturbing about this whole process was that later on we discovered, through news reports, that both former Commissioner of DoITT Gino Menchini and First Deputy Commissioner Larry Knafo, the two top officials at DoITT who were both involved in the bidding process were now working for the companies contracted to do the merger. This leads us to believe that not only is the bidding process flawed, but that there is little if any oversight on the whole contracting out of work, and that the Conflict of Interest Law, although well applied to lower-rung workers, seems not to hold former Commissioners and Deputy Commissioners to the same standard.

During this development stage of the project neither our union nor our members were contacted for our input. Even though we have computer programmers in Local 2627, technical personnel in Local 375, and dispatches and their supervisors working in Local 1549, 2507 and Local 3621, no real consultation with in-house staff was ever performed. The city has at its disposal hundreds of dedicated employees who only want to see a better system put into place. But as we have seen time and time again, the Mayor has no use for consulting with the present workforce regarding ideas that will save money and maintain the safety of the city.

Never since the opening of the 911 system in New York City in 1968 has the system had such frequent breakdowns. It is unheard of to have the system go down three times in two weeks. And now, after frequent complaints from FDNY personnel, we are seeing the public being put at risk. Again, the warning signs were there but the Bloomberg administration

ignores the warning of the worker on the front line. As long as the proper PR could be spun to the press, all was right with the city.

Our union will be calling for an investigation into this matter. We ask the City Council to request a thorough audit of the process and of how those funds were spent on a failed system. And as DC 37 has pointed out many times that most of the contracting out did not produce savings or help bring in work products that result in higher productivity.

We ask that this body exercise its powers, granted by the City Charter, to investigate this matter. It is not only about saving money, but also about saving lives.