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COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

3

JOINT COMMITTEES ON LEGISLATIVE

4

OVERSIGHT AND PUBLIC SAFETY

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Room 400, City Hall
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Monday, December 4, 2006
1:10 p.m.

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PRESENT:

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COUNCILMAN JAMES F. KENNEY

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COUNCILWOMAN DONNA REED MILLER

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COUNCILMAN W. WILSON GOODE, JR.

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COUNCILWOMAN JOAN L. KRAJEWSKI

15

COUNCILMAN FRANK RIZZO

16

COUNCILMAN DANIEL SAVAGE

17

COUNCILWOMAN CAROL ANN CAMPBELL

18

COUNCILMAN JACK KELLY

19

COUNCILMAN WILLIAM GREENLEE

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RESOLUTION 060745 - Resolution authorizing
City Council's joint Committees on Public
Safety and Legislative Oversight to hold
hearings on whether the City should establish
a 311 Constituent Contact Center to unburden
the current 911 emergency call center and make
Philadelphia more responsive to its citizens'
concerns.

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COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Good

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afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. This is

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the joint Committee of Legislative

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Oversight and Public Safety. We have

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members here from both committees,

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including the Chairman of the Public

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Safety Committee, Councilwoman Donna Reed

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Miller, Councilperson Joan Krajewski and

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Councilperson Dan Savage, and myself,

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Councilman Kenney, who is the Chairman of

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the Legislative Oversight Committee,

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along with Councilman Goode, who is a

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member of the Legislative Oversight

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Committee.

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Today we are having a hearing

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on Resolution No. 060745, which is a

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resolution authorizing City Council's

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joint Committees on Public Safety and

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Legislative Oversight to hold hearings on

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whether the City should establish a 311

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Constituent Contact Center to unburden

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the current 911 emergency call center and

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make Philadelphia more responsive to its

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citizens' concerns.

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2 Good afternoon. Today's
3 hearing will examine the benefits of
4 implementing a 311 Constituent Call
5 Center in Philadelphia. In 1997, the FCC
6 designated the code 311 as a
7 non-emergency police and other government
8 services telephone number. While the 311
9 classification did not obligate
10 municipalities to implement the
11 non-emergency number, it provided the
12 option.

13 Since then, many cities have
14 instituted 311 call centers that provide
15 the public with easy access to all
16 government services and city information.
17 Cities with 311 call centers are able to
18 service their constituents more
19 efficiently by dealing with individual
20 problems and by tracking calls to
21 recognize neighborhood and citywide
22 concerns.

23 Furthermore, cities with 311
24 call centers can use this system as a 911
25 backup and in conjunction with the city's

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2 emergency office for events and crisis
3 situations.

4 While Philadelphia has numerous
5 departments and programs to assist
6 constituents with service needs and
7 information, navigating through the web
8 of City phone numbers can be
9 overwhelming. In some cases, the
10 difficulty in contacting the appropriate
11 department may even discourage residents
12 from seeking help.

13 In addition to the multitude of
14 City numbers, Philadelphia burdens the
15 911 emergency call center by directing
16 non-emergency calls to 911, such as noise
17 violations. In 2005, 911 operators
18 received 3.28 million calls, many of
19 which were not emergencies and could have
20 been handled by a 311 call center.
21 Certainly this added stress placed on 911
22 operators' responsiveness to real
23 emergencies.

24 From the City's perspective,
25 the current system is inefficient and

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2 outdated. The lack of technology limits
3 the City's ability to utilize the
4 information collected through calls.
5 Under a new system, information could be
6 coordinated to create a comprehensive
7 tool compatible with identifying trends,
8 ongoing problems and concerns among
9 residents. And the response time to
10 combatting these concerns would be much
11 quicker with one central database. These
12 factors highlight the need to streamline
13 our City's accessibility to benefit
14 constituents and improve City
15 responsiveness and insight.

16 I'd like to thank Lisa Allen
17 from the City of Baltimore and Kristin
18 Gonzenbach from Dekalb County, Georgia,
19 who are here today to offer insight into
20 how a 311 call center can transform
21 constituent service into a tool to
22 improve quality of life for City
23 residents.

24 We actually have three
25 witnesses. One will also be Deputy

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2 Commissioner James from the City's
3 Communications Department. We also have
4 written testimony submitted by the City
5 of Chicago, the City of Columbus, Ohio
6 and the City of New York, who also have
7 similar systems, and that testimony will
8 be offered for the permanent record. In
9 addition, we have Councilmember Rizzo,
10 who is also here to listen to testimony.

11 So I'd like to call at this
12 time Lisa Allen from the City of
13 Baltimore to please take the witness
14 stand, identify yourself for the record
15 and proceed with your testimony.

16 Good afternoon.

17 MS. ALLEN: Good afternoon,
18 everyone. Again, I'm Lisa Allen and I'm
19 the call center Director for the City of
20 Baltimore under Governor-elect Martin
21 O'Malley.

22 I have in your packet a
23 PowerPoint presentation which you can --
24 I kind of follow through, but I kind of
25 go off the beaten track. If you have any

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2 questions, again, feel free to ask.

3 But you mentioned in your
4 testimony --

5 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: I'm sorry.
6 Is someone operating the --

7 MS. ALLEN: No. I did it this
8 way so it would just be easier for you.

9 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Okay.

10 MS. ALLEN: Just for a little
11 history of the City of Baltimore, we
12 actually received a grant in 1996 from
13 the Department of Justice, who they were
14 studying the impact of 311, what it would
15 have on 911. So Baltimore was the first
16 city to actually use 311 as a
17 non-emergency number, and we advertise
18 urgency but not an emergency. And from
19 that grant, we found that when we
20 first -- we kicked it off in October of
21 1996. We found out that immediately once
22 our constituents got familiar with 311
23 instead of 911, it actually took a third
24 of the calls off of 911 and decreased the
25 hold times almost 50 percent. So really,

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2 in essence, 311 in Baltimore in '96 was
3 used as a non-emergency number.

4 When Martin O'Malley came to
5 office as the Mayor, he ran on the
6 platform of accountability. So he told
7 the constituents of Baltimore that he
8 promised that he would make the
9 government accountable and he would know
10 just how long it takes for city services
11 and things like that.

12 The Mayor had a few goals. It
13 was to make Baltimore a safe and clean
14 city; increase the educational, cultural,
15 recreation opportunities for children;
16 create stable and healthy neighborhoods;
17 strengthen the economy; and, again, make
18 government responsive, accountable and
19 cost effective.

20 Now, that was a little
21 different than how government used to
22 run, because we kind of knew what we had
23 to do and we kind of had City Council
24 hearings, but he really wanted to put
25 some numbers to those. So to do that, he

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2 came up with some tenets, which was
3 accurate and timely intelligence shared
4 by all, rapid deployment of resources,
5 effective tactics and strategies, and
6 relentless follow-up and assessment.

7 Now, that was kind of new.
8 You'll see on the next page the old
9 government tenets that the City of
10 Baltimore maybe when I go to places and
11 talk, I see people shaking their head
12 like, Yeah, that's kind of how we do
13 things or used to do things, but remember
14 the things that said -- if the Mayor
15 really wants to know, we can find out,
16 but we got to take all our people off
17 their jobs, and hopefully we can compile
18 that information by the next fiscal year,
19 because we had to go around and look for
20 those numbers. And it will take a while,
21 because you know budgets are always cut,
22 and they were cut last year.

23 How about, "That's the way
24 we've done it." "We've always done it
25 that way." "We tried that and it didn't

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2 work." Those, again, are all government
3 tenets. And then, "We really hope that
4 the Mayor and the City Council forgot
5 about what they ask us to look into until
6 the next budget hearing."

7 So one thing that the Mayor
8 said is, he had to compile all of the
9 city services and information so that we
10 would know what we were looking at in one
11 system. We actually started a CitiStat
12 process, which is in the back of your
13 packet, which I will go over a little bit
14 briefly, but really the call center was a
15 by-product of the CitiStat effort. And
16 CitiStat really looks at every aspect of
17 Baltimore, every call that comes into the
18 center and how long it takes to do that
19 call. Again, in the old days, we had
20 what we call call-takers all around the
21 city in the various departments, in the
22 Water Department, in the Department of
23 Public Works, in the Health Department.
24 They worked from 8:30 and I say to 4:15,
25 because around 4:15 we had to start

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2 getting all our stuff together so that we
3 could go home by 4:30.

4 They really answered the phone.

5 They went outside and smoked a cigarette
6 and came back and answered another call.

7 Or if it was Sue's birthday, they all got
8 up and went to lunch with Sue.

9 So there was no way to really
10 capture how many calls we were getting
11 into Baltimore and what people were
12 asking for and how long it was taking us
13 to respond to them. So, hence, beginning
14 in March of 2002, after 18 months -- it
15 took us 18 months, because it mandated
16 that this process be done in 18 months --
17 the first call was taken in the 311 call
18 center. And to do that, we had to share
19 the number with the police, because they
20 had already been using 311. So now when
21 citizens call Baltimore and they call
22 311, they get three options, either they
23 wanted 911 for an emergency, they wanted
24 311 for non-police emergency or they want
25 No. 3 for city services or other

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2 information services.

3 And you'll find that when your
4 citizens get used to calling 311, they'll
5 call it for anything. They call us and
6 they ask us who the Ravens are playing on
7 Sunday, how to get to City Hall. So they
8 ask a lot of questions once they call
9 311. And our mission is that they can
10 answer one call to City Hall. So we do
11 make sure that we try to resolve all of
12 the issues that our callers have. We
13 only transfer five percent of our calls
14 in Baltimore, and most of those transfers
15 go to health services where there's
16 confidential information that needs to be
17 taken.

18 So when a customer or a citizen
19 calls 311, we actually create a service
20 request, and you see samples of that
21 service request in your packet. And
22 after any and all service requests -- we
23 have about 300 -- and people still call
24 us and ask us some miscellaneous things,
25 we give all of our callers a service

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2 request number. We encourage them to
3 write it down, because we also give them
4 an estimated time that it would take for
5 us to complete what they've asked for.
6 If they'd like a dirty alley cleaned, we
7 tell them that could take about 17 days.
8 Well, after 17 days and one minute, they
9 can call us back and give us that service
10 request number and we can let them know
11 what's going on with that call.

12 So it's kind of a cycle. Not
13 only do we keep track of what the
14 citizens are wanting, we also keep the
15 agencies accountable by measuring how
16 long it's taking them to do that, because
17 they then have to go back into the system
18 and they have to take that call and tell
19 us exactly what they did with it.

20 Sometimes calls can't be
21 completed because gates are locked, for
22 example, and they can't get the bulk
23 trash or whatever there is for the
24 customer, but we can let them know that,
25 because the agency goes back into the

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2 system and tells us exactly what they're
3 going to do.

4 So really, again, I want to
5 just stress that the CitiStat process
6 really was the first process for Mayor
7 O'Malley's accountability program. And,
8 again, to go through the CitiStat process
9 very quickly, it was those four:
10 accurate and timely information,
11 relentless follow-up, deployment of
12 resources and effective strategies.

13 By having a call center in
14 Baltimore, we really use that information
15 to know all of the stuff. We can put the
16 workers on the spots where we're getting
17 more calls for specific services. And
18 before we had a call center, we really
19 didn't know. We're able to compile that
20 information in one neutral spot, which is
21 separate of Department of Public Works,
22 which is separate of Department of
23 Transportation. Again, it's the Mayor's
24 Office of Information Technology. So we
25 want the work done.

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2 No longer do customer service
3 agents give you really solutions to these
4 issues, but they do take your call in
5 professionally and courteously, and we do
6 track those calls.

7 So, again, just to go -- if you
8 later go through your slides, you'll see
9 really the CitiStat process and how the
10 call center partners with CitiStat so
11 that we can actually have accurate and
12 timely information.

13 We map things. We can take the
14 service request number and the service
15 request type and we can put dots on the
16 map to where these customers are calling
17 and what they're calling for. So, again,
18 that allows managers to track performance
19 and it also makes sure that we're doing
20 good customer service.

21 So we gather the information,
22 we've analyzed the information, and we
23 found that there are quite a few benefits
24 to have a consolidated call center,
25 because we want our citizens to be

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2 treated like customers. If our citizen
3 base moves out of the City of Baltimore,
4 then we have no tax dollars to do our
5 work. I know you all understand that.
6 We improved service delivery. We
7 consolidated about 200 phone numbers,
8 literally.

9 I don't know about
10 Philadelphia, but in Baltimore, we had
11 the White Pages, and you had to skim
12 through all those White Pages to find out
13 exactly who you needed to call, and a lot
14 of times you had to make two or three
15 calls and that was after you called your
16 Councilperson because you felt that was
17 the only person that can help you. And
18 now in Baltimore even our Councilmembers,
19 when they get calls from constituents,
20 they ask them for their service request
21 number, because if you don't give us a
22 chance to try to do it or give the agency
23 a chance to try to at least fix the
24 problem, then it's kind of not fair to
25 call your Councilperson. Let us try to

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2 handle it.

3 We improved and made visual
4 agency performance levels. So we're able
5 to tell our constituents we know exactly
6 how many of this call we get a month and
7 we know exactly how long it takes by
8 average to get this call completed. So
9 we just really feel like we improved
10 customer service.

11 Now, customer service and
12 service delivery are two different
13 things, so the call center still partners
14 with the agency, because we rely on them
15 to do things. In our experience, when
16 311 first came out in Baltimore, 311 was
17 blamed for everything. "I call 311 and
18 it doesn't work." It does work, because
19 we got your call. We have it in a
20 centralized location and we know exactly
21 when and how long it took to be done. On
22 the same token, we partner with service
23 delivery. That's who we make sure that
24 we partner with to make sure that it's
25 done.

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2 In terms of start-up costs, our
3 start-up cost was about \$2.5 million.
4 That included also our customer service
5 management tool that we employed through
6 Motorola to make sure that we're
7 capturing all the calls, and right now
8 our annual operating cost is about \$4.6
9 million. A million dollars of that,
10 though, is on our ASP or our system at
11 Motorola so that they can govern and they
12 can manage our CitiTrack system or our
13 electronic system where we capture all of
14 the information.

15 We feel through the process of
16 the call center and the CitiStat process
17 that we really have saved over three
18 years \$70 to \$90 million, and we count
19 this in by overtime, by knowing that
20 we're effectively deploying resources to
21 where they need to be. So, again, all of
22 this information is housed in the call
23 center.

24 We get about 4,000 calls a day.
25 The Mayor's office now does answer also

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2 the police non-emergency call. Our
3 abandonment rate is less than two
4 percent, and we answer all of our calls
5 in less than five seconds.

6 I've concluded kind of all of
7 my information. If you look in the back
8 of your packet, my e-mail address is on
9 your last page. You can feel free to
10 e-mail me if you have any additional
11 questions.

12 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you
13 very much for your testimony.

14 I'd also like the record to
15 reflect that Councilwoman Carol Ann
16 Campbell and also Councilman Kelly have
17 joined the panel.

18 Could you tell me how Baltimore
19 informed its residents of the existence
20 of 311 and also how did they encourage
21 citizens to use it and understand what
22 its purpose was?

23 MS. ALLEN: And, again, in
24 Baltimore, we were pretty lucky because
25 we were already familiar with 311, but it

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2 was for non-emergency police situations
3 at first. So they were very used to 311,
4 so we really didn't have a lot of budget
5 to lay out for this fancy campaign, and
6 so our biggest advocate was the Mayor.
7 The Mayor is on television two or three
8 times a day, and even now he'll still
9 tell our citizens whenever he gets a
10 chance to make sure they call 311.
11 Sometimes he tells them to call 311 for
12 things we don't do, but we can truly
13 direct everyone to the right place.

14 So really we didn't have a lot
15 of advertising layout.

16 And I'll give you another
17 little secret that we did that I share
18 with other cities. Those 200 or so phone
19 numbers that we had, we analyzed them, we
20 pointed them to 311 and we also
21 disconnected quite a few of them and put
22 recordings to call 311. So even though
23 some of our residents were very used to
24 dialing ten-digit numbers, they could
25 dial that ten-digit number, but they were

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2 coming into the call center.

3 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: The sheet
4 that you have relative to the costs
5 involved, start-up costs and annual
6 operating costs, how did you come to the
7 conclusion that the cumulative benefit
8 over three years has been a \$70 to \$90
9 million savings, as the first costs?

10 MS. ALLEN: Sure. The reason
11 we kind of -- and that's a universal
12 Baltimore statistic that we say, and we
13 really think the benefit is more. But
14 when you start in the benefit of the
15 CitiStat program and then have the call
16 center actually recording every call,
17 making sure we've documented that we've
18 reduced overtime, we've made our
19 employees more efficient because we've
20 taken that information that we get from
21 the call center and we deploy our
22 resources where they need to be deployed.
23 We've changed -- I don't know if you call
24 it trash boroughs. We've changed that,
25 based on the number of residents that

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2 call, the number of residents that want a
3 type of service. So we're able to know
4 that we've reduced overtime. We've made
5 our troops more efficient, and we've also
6 cut down on operating costs in having
7 calls going all over the place and then
8 having to get those calls all together.
9 So that's kind of how we come up with
10 that.

11 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Have you
12 found, for example, in the Streets
13 Department, do you bundle kind of your
14 pothole requests, for example, into one
15 area so that the trucks go out in one
16 area and do maybe 15 or 20 at a time as
17 opposed to filling a hole, going back,
18 going to another section of the city,
19 doing something there? Are you able to
20 coordinate the actual completion of the
21 service requests in an efficient way
22 because you have the information?

23 MS. ALLEN: That's exactly
24 right, because by our citizens calling
25 into the call center, it's also a work

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2 order management process. So our
3 agencies out in the field can also access
4 our CitiTrack system and they can better
5 deploy their resources and schedule their
6 work. So it does eliminate the back and
7 forth.

8 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Is the
9 system centralized or is it spread out
10 throughout the city? Is it in one
11 location?

12 MS. ALLEN: The call center is
13 centralized in one location, but everyone
14 in the city has access to what, again, we
15 call our CitiTrack system, which is just
16 the name for our customer service
17 management tool. Anyone can put in a
18 service request if the need arises. So
19 it is accessed all over the city, but our
20 calls are taken in one central location.

21 COUNCILMAN KENNEY:
22 Approximately how many call-takers or
23 customer service reps do you have, and do
24 you run it three shifts of eight hours or
25 it's only available certain times of the

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2 day?

3 MS. ALLEN: No. Our center is
4 open 24 hours a day, seven days a week,
5 365 days a year. We are split again into
6 two segments. One is city services and
7 information, and the other is police
8 non-emergency.

9 We have about 47 customer
10 service agents for city service calls and
11 30 for police non-emergency. And
12 depending on the time of day and the day
13 of the week, you'll see the variation of
14 customer service agents on the phone.

15 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Is the
16 information that's generated shared with
17 District Councilpeople?

18 MS. ALLEN: Yes, it is. In
19 fact, we've actually trained the City
20 Councilpeople to go into CitiTrack, and
21 we have developed very easy queries where
22 you can actually see everything in your
23 district, because we've broken them down
24 into district.

25 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: And,

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2 finally, before I move to another
3 Councilmember, have there been customer
4 satisfaction surveys or constituent
5 satisfaction surveys, and what have been
6 the results, and how often do you try to
7 gather information on satisfaction in
8 order to tweak the system?

9 MS. ALLEN: I'm glad you asked
10 that. We do do a customer satisfaction
11 survey, where a group in the call center
12 makes outbound phone calls to ten percent
13 of the service requests that were closed
14 the previous day. We just ask three
15 simple questions. First we ask how your
16 interaction with the call center was,
17 then we ask did you think that your
18 service was done in a timely manner, and
19 was it performed at all. So we do
20 typically score very high on all three.

21 If we come up with a person
22 that says, No, my service request is
23 closed but I'm still looking at that pile
24 of trash, that call is immediately
25 escalated to the deputy of that

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2 department or agency, and they have 24
3 hours to get back in touch with my agency
4 with regard to what happened. And
5 sometimes it's new trash, sometimes it is
6 that an employee may have closed
7 something out with the intention of doing
8 it the next day, which is not the way we
9 do things.

10 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: For this
11 round of questions, I'd like to end with
12 me and then go to Councilwoman Miller,
13 who is the Chairman of the Public Safety
14 Committee.

15 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Hi. Good
16 afternoon.

17 MS. ALLEN: Hello.

18 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Thank you
19 for coming.

20 MS. ALLEN: You're welcome.

21 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: I have a
22 couple of questions. Customer
23 satisfaction, have you gotten any
24 feedback from District Council or
25 Councilmembers, and how has this system

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2 either helped or improved --

3 MS. ALLEN: Well, I have to be
4 honest with you --

5 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: -- their
6 office?

7 MS. ALLEN: -- at first the
8 Councilmembers weren't really gung-ho
9 about the program, because they were used
10 to wanting their constituents to call
11 their office, but that really wasn't the
12 most effective way to do things for
13 either the city or the Councilmembers,
14 because you all are very busy with doing
15 other things. But it is very -- it's
16 been very well received now. It took
17 about a year or so. And I'm a very
18 candid speaker, which is why I speak in a
19 lot of places. It was very difficult at
20 first to get 311 off the ground in
21 Baltimore, but what I tell other cities
22 and even people in other countries is,
23 you must have the Councilmembers and the
24 leadership behind you. And Baltimore was
25 very successful in doing this in 18

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2 months because Martin O'Malley, who now,
3 again, is the Governor-elect, but the
4 Mayor, Martin O'Malley was very adamant
5 about this being done.

6 So the Councilmembers now are
7 very much -- and not because of the
8 Mayor, but they see the benefit now of
9 how they can really service their
10 constituents. And as I spoke of before,
11 they can literally look in our system and
12 look right in their district and see what
13 their major concerns are in their
14 district that people are calling about.
15 So they really like it.

16 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: So I
17 guess it's decreased the number of
18 constituent service calls to the Council
19 offices, because now I guess it's more
20 shared between their office and 311.

21 MS. ALLEN: They still get
22 their share of calls, but to make it
23 easier, they are on board with asking,
24 and even their assistants and
25 administrative assistants know how to put

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2 in a service request, so they are in tune
3 to asking, What is your service request
4 number or Do you have a service request
5 number.

6 I don't think it cut down on
7 the amount of calls to the center, but I
8 think it did cut down the amount of
9 constituent calls to City Councilmembers,
10 because they do give the city a chance by
11 calling 311 first.

12 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: And how
13 long have you had the 311 non-police?

14 MS. ALLEN: Non-police started
15 in 1996, and it was at first answered by
16 off-duty, retired, light-duty policemen.
17 Then we shared the number and opened up
18 city services in March of 2002. And then
19 in an effort to get policemen back on the
20 street and also make sure that customer
21 service was consistent throughout the
22 city, we took over the answering of the
23 police non-emergency as well in July of
24 2005.

25 So 311 was in the city since

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2 1996 as police non-emergency and then it
3 spanned off into city services in March
4 of 2002.

5 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Okay.

6 Thank you.

7 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Does your
8 system have the ability for a 911
9 call-taker to immediately transfer a call
10 to a 311 number if in fact, one, they're
11 starting to hear the request, they know
12 it's a barking dog and it goes elsewhere?

13 MS. ALLEN: We do. In fact,
14 when the Mayor asked -- we started
15 studying about the Mayor's office taking
16 police non-emergency calls, that was a
17 big issue. And believe it or not, we can
18 transfer between 311 and 911 very easily,
19 and that call actually goes to the top of
20 the line and the 311 agent is to stay on
21 the line if it's a 911 call until the 911
22 operator answers. But the percentage of
23 that happening -- and we didn't know at
24 first, and it was a concern that we did
25 not have trained 911 operators possibly

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2 getting ready to answer a call from
3 someone that accidentally pushed 311
4 instead of 911, but the percentage has
5 proved to be very, very low.

6 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Councilman
7 Rizzo.

8 COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Thank you.
9 Thanks for coming to visit us.

10 MS. ALLEN: You're welcome.

11 COUNCILMAN RIZZO: I want to go
12 to the costs associated. Years ago we
13 had a non-emergency number on all the
14 police cars, I think it's 231-3131, a
15 seven-digit number, which basically
16 relieved the 911 system.

17 Nothing in technology today is
18 quite expensive. Could you tell me what
19 your local telephone company charges you
20 a month for the 311 system?

21 MS. ALLEN: And that comes up a
22 lot. We are charged per call in
23 Maryland. I know a lot of states you may
24 hear a charge per call. Also, because
25 311 piggybacked off of the police

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2 non-emergency number, we were protected
3 by some homeland security costs and
4 supplements and things like that.

5 I will keep in mind and forward
6 to you the exact breakdown of how that
7 works. I don't have it with me offhand.

8 COUNCILMAN RIZZIO: Every
9 telephone subscriber -- and Joe James can
10 shake his head yes -- residential and
11 business, pay a dollar a month for the
12 911 service, and I know when I was
13 looking at this many years ago, that
14 Verizon, our provider, indicated there
15 would be significant monthly charges,
16 maybe not per call but a fixed charge.

17 In our city, we must have a
18 dozen, without exaggerating, customer
19 service units, Water Department, Streets
20 Department, this department, that
21 department, and I know the Administration
22 was talking about developing a customer
23 service operation. That I like, where we
24 can collapse all the customer service
25 operations into one, push 1 for water, 2

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2 for this, and have an expert that really
3 knows how to deal with everything, but if
4 there's a specific issue, they can have a
5 person that has a lot of experience in
6 the area of water.

7 Just having a 311 system that
8 would relieve police, I'm not in favor of
9 that, but if we could develop a customer
10 service operation with tracking -- and we
11 could do that with a seven-digit phone
12 number. We have a City Hall switchboard,
13 686-1776, which could accomplish the same
14 goal if we chose to develop a customer
15 service operation. And 311, if that's
16 going to spread throughout the country,
17 it would be nice if we had visitors that
18 would know if they needed something, they
19 have 311 that might not know about a
20 seven-digit phone number.

21 But I think that what I'm
22 hearing today is good if our plan would
23 be to incorporate all of the various
24 operating departments like you mentioned,
25 I think you used the word customer

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2 service representatives, that would be
3 able to handle almost everything. I
4 mean, our utility company, PECO Energy,
5 has both gas and electric, and when you
6 call, you can get a representative that
7 knows a lot about gas, a lot about
8 electric and be able to satisfy the
9 customer.

10 So I'm pleased to hear that,
11 and maybe when Commissioner James comes
12 forward, we'll find out what exactly
13 Verizon would charge us a month for that
14 service.

15 Again, thanks for enlightening
16 us.

17 MS. ALLEN: You're welcome.
18 And I have been in cities where they've
19 chosen 311, but I've also been in cities
20 where the city was made up of various
21 municipalities and they had to use a
22 ten-digit number. So the idea of how it
23 happens works even if it is another
24 number. The idea is just to consolidate
25 all the calls into one central location.

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2 COUNCILMAN RIZZO: I believe
3 that that was the initial plan. We have
4 a switchboard that answers the calls --
5 this is the funny part. You call City
6 Hall and you say that you want to report
7 a pothole, like Councilman Kenney said,
8 and they immediately just transfer it off
9 to the Streets Department. Wouldn't it
10 be great to be able to call 1776 and have
11 the person that answers the phone say,
12 Can I help you, I'll take care of that
13 problem?

14 MS. ALLEN: Absolutely.

15 COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Thank you,
16 Mr. Chair.

17 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you
18 very much.

19 And, again, from a subjective
20 political standpoint, I know that there
21 may be some concern that a reduction in
22 the flow of calls to a District
23 Councilman or At-Large office may have
24 some negative political implications, but
25 I would argue the other side is that a

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2 better service with a happier constituent
3 makes us all in better standing with the
4 public as opposed to trying to
5 troubleshoot normal constituent service
6 requests through the use of the political
7 process. We don't mind doing it. It's
8 part of our job, but I've heard people
9 ask many times before, Why do I have to
10 call a Councilmember to get a trash bag
11 picked up. It shouldn't be that way, but
12 we will accommodate them and make sure
13 that bulk trash gets picked up. But
14 something like this long term may wind up
15 giving city government a better
16 reputation and all of us who run it a
17 better reputation than the way we do it
18 now.

19 MS. ALLEN: And I have to tell
20 you, from my perspective, that is exactly
21 what will happen. Again, I work very
22 closely with the City Council President,
23 and constituents call the City Council.
24 And really what you all do is, you all
25 have a direct number to the agency head.

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2 It kind of frees you up to make sure
3 that, again, give that caller a chance to
4 get it done. Because sometimes I know
5 you all get calls where if they didn't
6 give you a chance to get it done, they're
7 just so used to calling you, and I
8 know -- I mean, I'm a public servant,
9 too. I'm out in the public all the time
10 trying to satisfy all the constituents of
11 Baltimore. But, again, it gives you a
12 chance to look and see exactly what's
13 going on in your district, because you
14 don't have the ability or time to
15 consolidate all of these calls from your
16 district.

17 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Have you
18 also found anecdotally whether or not you
19 can nip rumor problems in the bud when it
20 comes to people calling for the same
21 request? I've heard this, I've heard
22 that. If it's in one particular
23 neighborhood, what was -- I see on blog
24 sites now, "What was that helicopter
25 hovering around my house, the police

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2 helicopter, for two hours last night?
3 What was that all about?" And as being
4 able to go someplace and get an answer as
5 opposed to whispering down the lane and
6 it becomes even more of a problem
7 potentially than getting a direct answer
8 to someone. Have you found instances
9 like that?

10 MS. ALLEN: Yes, we do. And we
11 do have, especially in police
12 non-emergency, the exact instance that
13 you're talking about, and sometimes it's
14 nothing, but sometimes constituents are
15 concerned. And even if we haven't been
16 in the loop, they can call us and we can
17 at least get the information and call
18 them back.

19 Also, in gathering specific
20 calls for specific types -- now, I know
21 people don't like and they say sometimes
22 this is kind of like -- and I'm using
23 this cliché -- the "big brother"
24 syndrome. We can identify and have even
25 been asked by citizens to identify

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2 certain addresses that they have the same
3 problem over and over. So we can look at
4 that crew and see is it something you're
5 not doing in this address or is it
6 something the citizens need to be
7 educated about.

8 Recycling, we had a whole
9 borough that it looked like we just got a
10 whole lot of calls that their recycling
11 was missed. Well, after some looking
12 into it and calling some of our
13 customers, we found out they had a wrong
14 sheet of paper and they were putting
15 their recycling out on the wrong day.

16 So it goes twofold. We also
17 can educate our citizens and things that
18 we find that may be a problem.

19 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Great.
20 Thank you.

21 Any other questions for
22 Ms. Allen?

23 Councilwoman Miller.

24 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER:
25 Ms. Allen, how often do you monitor?

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2 When you just said we're able to look at
3 and make an assessment that so many calls
4 are coming in, does that happen daily or
5 is it ongoing?

6 MS. ALLEN: It happens daily,
7 but depending on the situation, I often
8 say when I talk to agency chiefs, if I
9 manage the agency, it's realtime. I
10 would look at it all the time. But
11 depending on the agency and the frequency
12 of what they do, they have different
13 requirements in the agency to when they
14 look at this.

15 But it's realtime. As soon as
16 a service request goes in, it is in the
17 system, and if you wanted to pull up the
18 Water Department -- we have a lot of
19 water main breaks in Baltimore. The
20 infrastructure is very old and here comes
21 the time of year where it gets cold, hot,
22 cold, hot. They can look realtime and
23 see how many water main breaks we had
24 through this cold spell or from when we
25 went last week from 70 degrees to 30

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2 degrees and they can look that right up.

3 So it's realtime.

4 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: And you
5 still have a switchboard, though, do you?

6 MS. ALLEN: We do have a
7 switchboard. We have talked about
8 several times rolling that switchboard
9 into 311, but the office has dwindled
10 down a little. I think there are only
11 like seven switchboard operators now, and
12 their main function is, if you wanted to
13 really call and speak to an agency head
14 in the City of Baltimore, you would need
15 to go through the switchboard and they
16 would be able to put you in touch with
17 their assistant or the Councilperson's
18 assistant instead of going straight to
19 their phone. It's not that we're not
20 trying to make these people accessible,
21 but if you call 311, if you have an issue
22 and you want to speak to an agency head,
23 you'll speak to a customer service
24 supervisor first, because they can at
25 least gather the information for the

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2 agency head or the Councilmember and look
3 at the system and see how many times this
4 person has called before you're hit
5 blind-sided with that call.

6 So our switchboard is now
7 really open standard hours, Monday
8 through Friday. They are also in place
9 for other internal purposes. If I were
10 to call and say I needed to speak to an
11 agency head after hours, they would
12 contact and patch us together. That now
13 has really turned out to be their major
14 responsibility.

15 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: All
16 right. Thank you.

17 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you
18 very much, Ms. Allen, for your testimony.
19 Thank you.

20 MS. ALLEN: You're welcome.

21 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Kristin
22 Gonzenbach, please.

23 Are you going to do your
24 testimony from there? Because do you
25 need to operate your --

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2 MS. GONZENBACH: I'm so used to
3 standing when I --

4 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Whatever
5 you're comfortable with.

6 MS. GONZENBACH: Can you hear?
7 Yes, you can hear me.

8 Thank you for having me here.
9 My name is Kristin Gonzenbach and I work
10 in Dekalb County, Georgia, and we are
11 very excited to have been invited to come
12 up here and happy to tell you a little
13 bit about our 311 implementation. And
14 what's going to differentiate my
15 presentation from Baltimore is, as you
16 heard, Baltimore was the very first 311
17 implementation in the country and they've
18 been around nearly ten years now. We're
19 in the process of our implementation.
20 We're live with our pilot, and I'll talk
21 a little bit about that in a minute.

22 But some of the questions that
23 you've come up with already, you might
24 see some answers in my presentation. So
25 I just want to tell you a little bit

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2 about us.

3 We're part of metropolitan
4 Atlanta. Part of the City of Atlanta
5 bleeds over into Dekalb County. We have
6 a daytime population of about 1.1
7 million. We are the most diverse county
8 in the State of Georgia, speaking over 64
9 languages, and we're also adjacent to
10 Hartsfield, the largest airport in the
11 world. We're home to the second largest
12 airport, CDC, GBI headquarters and FBI
13 and IRS regional headquarters, and we
14 also have nine major facilities in Dekalb
15 County.

16 What most citizens are familiar
17 with in working with their local
18 government is what we call decentralized
19 confusion. And you see here a citizen
20 tries to call and ends up getting bounced
21 around to different departments before
22 hopefully they get their question
23 answered or their service request
24 resolved.

25 But I want to give you an

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2 example of something that happened to me
3 this year. I live in -- I won't name the
4 county, but I don't live in Dekalb. I
5 live in the adjacent county, and I wanted
6 to renew my firearms permit. It expired
7 this year. So I went to the Blue Pages
8 in our phone book. And Probate Court is
9 who handles firearms permits. So I
10 called the Probate Court number that said
11 "Firearms Permit," and I got a recording
12 that was a four-minute-long recording
13 telling me how to acquire a marriage
14 license. I had no option to opt out of
15 this recording or to speak with somebody.
16 I couldn't press zero. It was just this
17 recording. So I figured, well, after
18 they get done with the marriage license,
19 they'll tell me about the firearms.

20 After it got done with the
21 four-minute-long how to get a marriage
22 license, they hung up on me. So I went
23 back to the Blue Pages and I looked up
24 the next number under "Administration and
25 Probate." That phone rang and rang.

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2 Nobody answered it. Then I looked up
3 another number and it said "Central
4 Office." They transferred me to a voice
5 mail when I told them what I wanted, and
6 the voice mail gave me directions to call
7 another number. Now I've called four
8 different numbers so far and I haven't
9 talked to anybody yet. So now I'm
10 getting amused because I can't believe
11 this is happening. And so I started
12 writing all these down.

13 So I called the number that the
14 voice mail told me to call and it gave me
15 directions -- led me to another voice
16 mail to call another number, which led me
17 to an IVR, which gave me directions --
18 this is a true story -- to call another
19 number. The seventh phone call I made,
20 seventh, a person actually picked up the
21 phone and I got the answer to my
22 questions. So this is what happens
23 typically in a local government.

24 What 311 is going to do for us
25 is, it's going to give citizens a single

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2 point of contact. So you call 311, the
3 citizen calls in. They either have their
4 question answered, like I had a question
5 about how to renew my firearms permit, or
6 they have a service request. It's a
7 single point of contact for citizens to
8 call their government.

9 Why 311? Well, I think that
10 Lisa did a great job explaining why 311.
11 The only thing I want to highlight right
12 here is, on average 75 -- this is a
13 national statistic -- 75 percent of all
14 incoming calls that come into 311 centers
15 are handled within the call center and
16 never leave the call center. What does
17 that mean? To you that means that 75
18 percent on average -- and Lisa said in
19 Baltimore it's 90 percent stay in the
20 call center, which is incredible. That
21 means that 75 percent of the calls that
22 are coming in from citizens are handled.
23 They're either informational calls and
24 they're answered and resolved in the
25 citizens help center or a service request

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2 in a minute. And, again, I handed out a
3 packet which you'll be able to have to
4 look at later at some of these things of
5 why we would use 311.

6 Here's some anecdotal
7 information for you just to give you a
8 frame of reference, and you might be able
9 to use this within your own city.

10 Our Records Court is
11 basically municipal court and handles
12 traffic and minor citations. Our
13 Records Court takes in about 420,000
14 calls a year. Of those 420,000 calls
15 that come into this one department, we
16 answer about 90,000 of them. An
17 additional 50,000 calls are abandoned
18 during business hours. So in the call
19 center they get about 140,000 calls
20 during the day that are trying to get
21 into the system.

22 What was really interesting we
23 found out is that Records Court
24 operates 35 typical business hours in the
25 county. Two-thirds of the calls that

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2 were trying to get into the system were
3 coming in after 5 o'clock. Two-hundred
4 and eighty thousand additional calls did
5 not get through, did not get a response,
6 did not get answered because they were
7 coming in after 5 o'clock and nobody was
8 there, and they just -- the phone just
9 rang and nobody was there to answer them.

10 Well, I found out that they
11 only had three call-takers trying to
12 handle 420,000 calls, and obviously they
13 were successful in answering 90,000,
14 which I think is pretty remarkable for
15 three people. And what's interesting
16 about this department is that 75 percent
17 of the people that are calling into
18 Records Court want to know the answer
19 to one question, how much is my ticket.
20 And if we can tell them that, we might be
21 able to get our money sooner and we might
22 be able to get collections on municipal
23 traffic violations that we may not ever
24 collect.

25 I am not proud to admit that

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2 Dekalb County has \$20 million outstanding
3 in traffic warrants and citations, and
4 most of that money is going to be
5 uncollectible, because we don't have a
6 really efficient way of tackling the
7 outstanding warrants. We don't have an
8 appropriate method of collection, and so
9 that's a problem. But if we could answer
10 these calls, particularly the 280,000
11 that are coming in after business hours,
12 we might be able to start making a dent
13 at that \$20 million that's outstanding.

14 I wanted to point this out.
15 Because we haven't implemented Recorders
16 Court in our 311 center yet, so I'm not
17 there yet as far as being able to answer
18 the after, but I can tell you this:
19 Houston implemented 311 in 2001. In June
20 2001, they went live. Within two months
21 of going live, their Municipal Court,
22 which is the equivalent of Dekalb
23 County's Recorders Court, started seeing
24 a spike. It was in Municipal Court
25 collection of a hundred thousand dollars

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2 a month. That hundred thousand dollars
3 stabilized. And so they had a platform
4 where they were collecting, say, \$10 a
5 month in Municipal Court, and then all of
6 a sudden, that amount of money that they
7 were collecting jumped by a hundred
8 thousand dollars, whatever their baseline
9 information was, and it continued to be
10 consistent over time.

11 Now, can I say that that was
12 because of the implementation of 311?
13 Not really, but isn't it an interesting
14 coincidence that within two months of
15 their implementation all of a sudden
16 they're taking in an extra hundred
17 thousand dollars a year?

18 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Monthly.

19 MS. GONZENBACH: Pardon me?

20 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: A hundred
21 thousand a month.

22 MS. GONZENBACH: I'm sorry. A
23 hundred thousand a month. Exactly.
24 Which is wonderful.

25 So the Dekalb County 311 vision

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2 then became what you see up here on the
3 screen.

4 Now, what I want to point out
5 about Dekalb County and what we decided
6 to do with our 311 implementation is,
7 Dekalb County, as far as I know, is the
8 first county government, non-consolidated
9 county government, to implement a 311
10 system. Historically all the
11 implementations have been at a city
12 level. But what we decided to do -- and
13 I know that the City of Chicago also uses
14 their 911 center as -- I'm sorry; their
15 311 center as a 911 back-up. Dekalb
16 County, for different reasons that we'll
17 talk about later, has decided to also use
18 their 311 center as a multi-functional
19 facility. Chicago uses it as a
20 bifunctional facility, in that it is a
21 911 back-up, which they have had to
22 implement. They have had to implement
23 their 911 back-up center in Chicago at
24 least once that I know of.

25 And we've also decided to turn

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2 our center into a third function, which
3 we call an Emergency Facilitation Center,
4 and as a part of our homeland security
5 strategy in Dekalb County, we have
6 decided to take the 311 center and use it
7 as widely as we can as a resource. So
8 for an incremental increase in costs, we
9 can turn our 311 center not only into a
10 back-up 911 center, but we can also use
11 it as this Emergency Facilitation Center.
12 So, for example, say there was some kind
13 of catastrophic event in Atlanta, there
14 was a Syrian attack on MARTA, we had
15 severe flooding in South Dekalb or some
16 major flu epidemic that was just creating
17 havoc in the county. What we could do
18 is, we take out the call-takers, the
19 generalist call-takers who sit in the
20 chairs. We put in subject-matter
21 experts, whether it's Public Works
22 officials, Public Health officials, and
23 now citizens can call 311 and speak with
24 a subject-matter expert while the
25 emergency is occurring, and the

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2 subject-matter expert will be on the
3 other end of the phone and tell them
4 where to go, what to do, how to treat.

5 We're also working with GEMA,
6 which is Georgia Emergency Management
7 Agency, as well as we have a task force,
8 a homeland security task force, that
9 we're -- a regional task force that we're
10 working with, which includes all the
11 major hospitals, et cetera, to further
12 develop our Emergency Facilitation
13 Center. So we're getting the biggest
14 bang for our buck in the development of
15 this 311 center.

16 What I want to talk about a
17 little bit is what we in Dekalb County
18 have coined the 311 culture, and what
19 that is, is 311 -- we need to look at it
20 as more than just implementing a call
21 center. We're doing a lot more than
22 that. And not only Dekalb County, but
23 anybody that implements 311 is doing more
24 than just putting in a call center, a
25 place for somebody to answer phones.

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2 311 affects how you do things
3 in your department now, and what that
4 means is that the way that we currently
5 interface with the public is going to
6 change as a result of 311. How so?
7 Well, I just told you that we're going to
8 take 75 percent of the call volume off of
9 your department. So if you have a call
10 center in Dekalb County -- we had eight
11 independent call centers in the county
12 and we're consolidating them or reducing
13 the staff in most of them because of the
14 311 center. And so what does that mean?
15 That means the people that were answering
16 the phone and doing all that front-end
17 work are no longer going to be doing
18 that. We're going to give these people
19 an opportunity to work on their core
20 business functions.

21 So what does that mean? That
22 means we need to look internally within
23 our own department and say, Okay, this is
24 the way that we do things now, but how is
25 that going to change in the future when

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2 311 becomes our new administrative
3 assistant? And that's really what you're
4 doing, is all these departments are
5 now -- they're getting a partner, and
6 that's called 311. 311 is partnering
7 with them to take all of this front-end
8 work off of them and let them focus on
9 what they do best, filling potholes,
10 whatever they do. We let them focus on
11 what they do rather than having to do all
12 the front-end work, which a lot of people
13 end up doing that weren't hired to do
14 that. They weren't hired as
15 receptionists. They weren't hired as
16 call-takers. But everybody, from a
17 receptionist all the way up to a
18 department manager, ends up answering
19 phones and dealing with customers and
20 working with them to resolve their issues
21 or their questions, and that takes up
22 time.

23 We talked about saving money.
24 When you think about all the time that
25 you're not spending and your staff,

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2 particularly in the City Council or, in
3 our case, the County Commission, their
4 staff spends about 80-plus percent of
5 their time trying to look up information
6 for citizens that could easily have been
7 handled either within the 311 center or
8 it could have been light follow-up work
9 for a staff member in the Commission
10 office, because all the information has
11 already been done in the 311 center.
12 They've accessed the system. They find
13 out what the customer needs and they can
14 resolve it, or they can contact the
15 departmental representative fairly
16 quickly and get an answer on the phone
17 rather than having to do two days of
18 research to find out who the person was
19 that the citizen talked to and try to
20 work through it that way.

21 So we need to look at it from a
22 departmental perspective, Public Works
23 department, your Public Health. Every
24 department needs to be looked at. We
25 need to reexamine the way that we do

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2 business, because it's going to change.

3 One of the most important
4 things in the development of a 311 center
5 is the knowledge base. Your 311 center
6 is only going to be as good as your
7 knowledge base. I am not a Sanitation
8 Department worker. However, I should be
9 able to answer every question or just
10 about every question that comes into 311
11 for Sanitation. If the knowledge base
12 has been supplied with the significant
13 information from that department, I
14 should be able to answer those questions
15 for them. They shouldn't need to go to
16 Sanitation to be answered. You don't
17 have to be a subject-matter expert in
18 every department in order to have it be
19 good at the 311.

20 Councilman Kenney, I think that
21 you asked a question about, because I
22 wrote it down, about an event that
23 occurred. I wrote down what you said,
24 and I want to answer that question for
25 you. You talked about clusters and if

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2 there was a special situation that came
3 in. Say there was a water main break and
4 you were getting cluster calls or
5 something like that. What we do in the
6 311 center is, we have what we call a
7 "Hot News" page, and what the CSRs, if
8 something comes in -- we just had a
9 48-inch pipe burst about six weeks ago,
10 and the Water and Sewer Department called
11 us up and they said, This whole area is
12 out of water, no water is going anywhere.
13 We had hospitals that were out of water.
14 We had to send fire trucks over to
15 hospitals. We had a huge problem. What
16 they did was, Water and Sewer called up
17 the 311 center. Our liaison in 311 said,
18 I need you to get this information out to
19 the citizens because they're going to
20 start calling. So what we did was, we
21 very quickly front-ended an -- I don't
22 want to say an IVR. A voice response
23 onto the 311 and it said, We've had a big
24 water main break in this area and we're
25 aware of it and we know that nobody has

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2 water right now and we're working
3 immediately to try to remedy it. If you
4 need further information, you can press
5 zero, or whatever, and you'll get a live
6 person.

7 But there were several thousand
8 calls that came in in that afternoon when
9 it happened. Of course, it happened
10 about 4 o'clock in the afternoon when
11 everybody wanted to go home. But what
12 happened was, when these calls started
13 coming in, most of them were handled with
14 this front end. And we have, like I
15 said, a "Hot News" page, so when a CSR
16 logs onto their system, they can see
17 what's going on that's happening right
18 now, a problem in an area, we're having
19 roads blocked because of a parade or
20 whatever. They can take a look, so when
21 the phone calls come in, they can say
22 this is what's going on. When it's no
23 longer hot news, what they do is, they
24 just take it off. So that's a way to get
25 to that information.

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2 Process improvement. My boss,
3 I report to the County Manager, and he
4 says that 311 maximizes the opportunity
5 to implement enterprise-wide process
6 improvement. We talked about that a
7 little bit earlier regarding every
8 department as they roll into 311 really
9 needs to take a look at how they do
10 business and how it's going to change as
11 a result of 311.

12 I told you that 311 in Dekalb
13 County, we're in the roll-in process
14 right now. We're in the second part of
15 Phase III in our development right now,
16 which is a county-wide roll-out. We have
17 46 departments in our county. We've got
18 eight rolled into 311 currently. I've
19 got eight more being rolled in as we
20 speak, and we go live with the 311 phone
21 number -- and I'll talk about that in a
22 minute -- in June of next year.

23 So right now we're doing the
24 ten-digit dialing. All of the
25 departments that are rolled into our

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2 pilot call center are being routed
3 through the ten-digit dialing. So
4 citizens go in the Blue Pages, look up
5 the phone number for Water and Sewer or
6 Sanitation, roads and drainage, and they
7 get filtered right into the call center
8 right now.

9 So a little bit about our pilot
10 program, what happened. We had four
11 departments that we initially rolled into
12 311. And somebody at one of the -- I'm
13 sorry. I'm going to call you guys
14 Commissioners because that's what I have.
15 One of the Councilmen said earlier
16 that -- I think it was Mr. Rizzo -- asked
17 about the main number, if you still had a
18 switchboard in Baltimore. One of the
19 first departments that we rolled in, if
20 you want to call it a department, was our
21 switchboard. So we had four county
22 departments, plus the county information
23 line was the first group rolled into 311.
24 So all of our -- ours is 371-2000. All
25 of our county information calls are now

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2 being filtered into the 311 center. So
3 we no longer have a switchboard even
4 though we're not live with the 311 number
5 currently.

6 So we have five departments
7 that came in, and what we did -- and
8 we're talking about process improvement
9 now -- is, we hired a consulting firm to
10 come in and help support these initial
11 roll-in departments as far as how their
12 processes, business processes, were going
13 to change as a result of 311.

14 I only had enough money to do
15 three departments, and I had four
16 departments rolling in. We didn't do the
17 county operators. They didn't really
18 need to change in the process because we
19 were eliminating them, eliminating the
20 positions. So I only did three
21 departments, helped them with their as-is
22 and to-be business processes.

23 What happened? That fourth
24 department blew up on us. Unfortunately,
25 I didn't spend the money on one of my

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2 high call volume departments, which is
3 Sanitation, and we started getting about
4 a thousand calls a week for Sanitation,
5 and by the end of three weeks being live,
6 our service requests were backed up by
7 over 3,000. We also didn't do a very
8 good job of getting information into the
9 knowledge base.

10 The other three departments
11 actually was a fairly smooth transition,
12 because we went through this back-end
13 work with the department to help them
14 renovate their business processes. This
15 department in particular, Sanitation, did
16 not really fully engage on their own.
17 They weren't forced to engage because
18 they didn't have that support staff
19 working with them. They didn't
20 understand a lot of how the service
21 request would impact their daily
22 business, and they just -- we just had a
23 lot of difficulty -- they weren't trained
24 properly. They didn't understand how the
25 service request, if you didn't close them

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2 once you performed the work, how that
3 wouldn't go back into the 311 system, and
4 so we've got all these open service
5 requests when, in essence, some of them
6 may have been closed. We couldn't keep
7 track of that, because they just weren't
8 functioning properly. And one of the
9 things it says right here, that the
10 people in Sanitation did not factor time
11 in their day. They're all busy people.
12 The supervisors are out in the streets
13 with their road crews and everything, and
14 they never made time to work on closing
15 out these service requests.

16 One of the other things that
17 it's a phenomenon that will occur to
18 everyone is what we've dubbed the water
19 hose versus the fire hose delta, and I
20 think I explained that a little bit when
21 we talked about what happened in
22 Records Court. We have three
23 call-takers in Records Court, our
24 Records Court answering phones.
25 Four-hundred and twenty thousand people

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2 or 420,000 callers are trying to get
3 through every year, and we're answering
4 90,000. And that's just what we're able
5 to count hitting our ACD in our phone
6 system. That's how we've tracked these
7 numbers.

8 Now, what you need to
9 understand is that we may take a look at
10 one of your departments and say, Okay,
11 you've got about 5,000 calls coming into
12 the system a year in your department, so
13 I need one customer service rep to handle
14 those 5,000 calls from this department.
15 But what we don't know is what is trying
16 to get through that's either getting a
17 fast busy signal or not able to get
18 through. So you've got a water hose
19 right now, but you don't know what the
20 universe is of callers trying to get
21 through.

22 And one of the things that we
23 learned during our pilot program was that
24 Sanitation had five call-takers in their
25 call center and they were handling 500

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2 calls a week with service requests, 500
3 calls a week with five callers. Well, I
4 think I mentioned a few minutes ago
5 Sanitation -- or in the 311 center after
6 we went live, we were getting 1,000 calls
7 a week. So what happened? Well, I went
8 from having five people answering
9 telephones to 21. So now I can take the
10 universe of calls that are trying to get
11 through to that system.

12 And that's something that is
13 going to happen to every single
14 department. You don't know what you
15 don't know. You know what is hitting
16 your system because you can measure that,
17 but you don't know who is trying to call
18 who is not hitting the system and they're
19 not getting through or they end up
20 calling -- we have one -- I went and
21 spoke to the Tax Commissioners' offices.
22 I went around the county talking to all
23 the departments about our implementation
24 early on in the process, and the Tax
25 Commissioners' office, their call center

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2 people I spoke with, and they were just
3 thrilled that we were going to be
4 implementing a 311 and they said, Oh,
5 good, now we won't be getting those Water
6 and Sewer Billing calls anymore.

7 And I'm like, Why would you be
8 getting Water and Sewer Billing calls?
9 Because we have a Water and Sewer Billing
10 call center.

11 So the lady in the call center,
12 she said, Because they can't get through
13 to Water and Sewer Billing, so they call
14 us because they know we'll answer the
15 phone.

16 And I was just like, I just
17 can't believe that. Because our Tax
18 Commissioners' office has the second
19 largest call center or had the second
20 largest call center behind 911 in the
21 county and they are usually able -- they
22 are able to handle their incoming call
23 volume.

24 So people just want to talk to
25 somebody, and they'll even call people

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2 they know can't help them just so they
3 can talk to somebody.

4 So what happened here with
5 Sanitation is -- I showed this picture
6 earlier how everything is supposed to be
7 so perfect. They call into the call
8 center, the citizen calls. We get the
9 information to the county departments,
10 and then we close the loop here with the
11 service request being resolved. But what
12 happened was, it didn't work because
13 Sanitation didn't go through the process
14 of renovating their back-end processes,
15 and services suffered as a result.

16 Best practices. What we did,
17 after we did our pilot program and we
18 learned from the different things that
19 happened within the pilot is, we decided
20 to do a departmental checklist to start
21 preparing the departments a little bit
22 better for their future roll-in, and
23 these are some of the things on the list
24 that we worked very closely with the
25 departments on to acquire this

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2 information.

3 One of the big things,
4 departmental ownership. If the
5 department head is not engaged in this
6 process, it's going to be very difficult.
7 Some of the departments were sending
8 liaisons to -- we had weekly meetings as
9 their departments were being rolled in,
10 and if the department head wasn't
11 engaged -- the department head was the
12 decision-maker and would tell people
13 stuff that needed to be done, and they'd
14 say, Okay, and nothing got done, because
15 the department head was the only one who
16 could make a decision or the deputy or
17 whoever. A decision-maker wasn't
18 involved. And so one of the things that
19 we require is that the department head be
20 engaged in this entire process.

21 One of the most interesting
22 things that we learned out of our pilot
23 was that after cut-over, you need that
24 engagement of a high-level manager. In
25 Parks and Rec, which was one of our

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2 initial departments that we cut over, one
3 of the deputy directors used to go into
4 the CRM system, which is the customer
5 relationship management tool that we use
6 within the county for 311, and he would
7 go into the system every day and see what
8 service requests were outstanding in
9 Parks and Rec, and if something that he
10 thought should have been done that day or
11 should have been already handled and it
12 wasn't resolved, he'd call up the party
13 responsible and say, Why isn't this
14 service request resolved? And so it
15 became what we dubbed this phenomenon
16 after him. We called it the Marvin
17 Billups effect, because he was paying
18 attention, and at the end of the week, he
19 would go home on Friday with no service
20 requests open. And it was that
21 engagement with the high-level management
22 within the department that made their
23 department very successful in the earlier
24 stages of this, and he's still very
25 engaged as well.

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2 One of the things that I wanted
3 to talk about is just the methodology
4 that you choose for implementation just
5 needs to be calculated. You need to have
6 a plan for implementation, an approach,
7 and follow that approach. And we're
8 following our approach, but we're
9 tweaking it as we add more departments,
10 because we're learning from our
11 experiences before.

12 I think you brought up about
13 public education and marketing.
14 Critical. Critical to success. One of
15 the things that happened when I was doing
16 all the research on the development of
17 our 311 implementation, I visited a
18 couple 311 facilities, one of which was
19 in Chicago. And I was going from one
20 city building to another city building,
21 standing on a street corner with about
22 eight other people at a traffic light,
23 and all of a sudden, this city bus went
24 by me and on the side of the city bus, it
25 said "Escaped convict, dial 911. Escaped

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2 poodle, dial 311." And I'm standing
3 there by myself, and I swear -- I was
4 there to observe their 311 center and I
5 saw this, and it just struck a cord with
6 me. I got hysterical. I just burst out
7 laughing. And I'm standing on the street
8 corner by myself, and everybody on the
9 street corner was looking at me, because
10 it was almost like they had orchestrated
11 this bus driving by. And I said, That's
12 it. I said, Now I know the difference
13 between when to call 911 and when to call
14 311. And when I got back to Atlanta, I
15 called up the director of the 311 center
16 in Chicago and I told them the incident,
17 and I said, Do you have any more of
18 those? I said, They were great. I said,
19 That was great. So he gave me these
20 other ones.

21 Marketing is critical to the
22 implementation, because if citizens don't
23 know to call 311, obviously they're not
24 going to call it.

25 One of the major problems that

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2 we saw and that Baltimore and every other
3 implementation around the country has
4 seen is that nationally 50-plus percent
5 of the calls that come into 911 systems
6 are non-emergency police or customer
7 service calls. And that's horrible,
8 because the one time that somebody needs
9 to get through with an emergency call,
10 they're unable to get through because
11 somebody is calling about wanting
12 directions to the Falcons game or how to
13 get around traffic or something that is
14 really not an emergency or police, fire,
15 medical emergency.

16 So we really need to -- we've
17 developed a marketing campaign to get the
18 word out.

19 And another thing that we
20 learned is that it's not just a front-end
21 thing that you have to do. You have to
22 continually talk about what 311 is. It's
23 not something that you can just do as you
24 go to implement. You have to do it
25 ongoing.

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2 Another question had come up
3 about -- and I think it was Mr. Rizzo
4 that brought it up -- regarding Verizon,
5 your Verizon and how much the costs were
6 going to be for the phone system. In
7 metropolitan Atlanta -- and I had talked
8 to your staff about how the City of
9 Philadelphia was set up regarding this --
10 we have overlapping central offices in
11 the phone system, and what that means is
12 the COs, or the central offices, that
13 affect Dekalb County -- we have 26 of
14 them -- only three of them have Dekalb
15 County phone numbers in them.
16 Twenty-three of them have other
17 jurisdictions' phone numbers in them.

18 The way the state tariff
19 structure is set up in Georgia -- and
20 this is something you need to look at --
21 is that it is impossible to fully
22 implement 311 anywhere in a metropolitan
23 community because of the overlapping
24 central office issue. And what happened
25 was, the PSC was only going to give you a

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2 certain percentage of the COs that affect
3 your jurisdiction, which means nobody
4 could fully ever implement 311, which
5 obviously was not an option, and it's an
6 issue.

7 So when we learned of this a
8 couple of years ago, what we did was, we
9 convened a consortium of metropolitan
10 Atlanta communities called MAC 311 to
11 study the existing tariff structure and
12 to try to figure out a way around it so
13 we can implement 311 in our community,
14 not only in Dekalb County, but any other
15 metropolitan area faced this same issue.

16 So what we did was, we came up
17 with the need to create a location-based
18 routing solution in order to fully
19 implement. And I don't know if this is
20 going to affect you, but you need to know
21 about it, because depending on the tariff
22 structure in Pennsylvania, I mean, your
23 Public Service Commission or Public
24 Utility Commission is the one who assigns
25 a 311 number to your jurisdiction.

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2 We are now in the process -- we
3 had to go out to RFP and to come -- we
4 hired a firm to come in and create a
5 911-like database. So, in other words,
6 when you call 911 in the City of
7 Philadelphia, you don't get Dover,
8 Delaware's 911 center. You get the City
9 of Philadelphia.

10 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: If you're
11 in an area near the county line or near
12 the state line, you sometimes get that
13 bleed-over on occasion.

14 MS. GONZENBACH: Okay. But
15 usually these 911 databases are about 96
16 percent accurate, and that's what we're
17 going for here. But what the point is,
18 is that a database has been created in
19 Philadelphia and in every city and county
20 that has a 911 center. And the database,
21 what it does is, it pulls out your
22 jurisdictional phone numbers. We don't
23 want your adjacent communities, because
24 we don't serve that community and we
25 can't help you if you're calling for an

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2 ambulance. So we've built a database as
3 you have and everybody else has that for
4 911 that picks up your phone numbers.

5 And, like I said, most of these databases
6 are about 96 percent accurate. You can
7 also feed in numbers and pull out numbers
8 on a case-by-case basis if you need to.

9 So what we've done is, we've
10 hired a firm to come in and create a
11 911-like database that does the same
12 exact thing. It extracts our numbers out
13 of the COs, leaves behind Gwinnett's and
14 Atlanta's and Fulton County and Rockdale
15 County. It leaves behind their phone
16 numbers, so when they go to implement in
17 the future, they'll be able to take those
18 same phone numbers. And all this has to
19 be approved by the PSC, but it's the only
20 way around the tariff structure. It was
21 the only way that we could get around
22 that and be able to serve our entire
23 citizens.

24 So how do you choose a 311
25 system? Now, in talking about the system

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2 itself as far as what kind of a tool
3 you're going to use, a system tool, what
4 we did was, we looked at every
5 implementation that was live in the
6 country and we asked what kind of a
7 system that they were using. So we got
8 to know who all the players were, who
9 were the companies that sold CRM systems
10 and was that what we wanted. And then we
11 hired a vendor to help us implement the
12 system, somebody who had experience in
13 implementing 311 systems.

14 But basically what it comes
15 down to is, what are you looking for.
16 And it's really important, because
17 there's a city in this country that they
18 got 18 months into their
19 implementation -- it wasn't us, because
20 we're a county -- they got 18 months into
21 their implementation and about \$4 million
22 into their implementation and they
23 realized they had purchased a work order
24 system and they wanted a CRM. What the
25 difference is, is a work order system

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2 will take information for a service
3 request and get it to the department.
4 What a CRM is, a customer relationship
5 management system, what that is, is it's
6 a broad range of what it can and can't
7 do. And some of the things that Lisa
8 talked about earlier about being a
9 management tool, departments can take
10 information, pull information from a CRM
11 system and extract management information
12 to help them prepare for their budget for
13 future year. "We had an increase of 19
14 percent since last year in this area.
15 Maybe we need to know why." Maybe we
16 need to know when we go to budget that we
17 need more work crews because we're seeing
18 a significant increase in work volume and
19 we're not able to handle it in a timely
20 manner. If we have 72-hour turnaround
21 for a pothole, it took us two weeks to do
22 it last year and this is why. A CRM
23 system will allow management additional
24 tools to be able to work better. A work
25 order system does not have that

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2 capability.

3 So you need to pay attention to
4 what you're buying, because what happened
5 with this city that I mentioned, they
6 were 18 months into their implementation
7 and they said, Well, this isn't what we
8 want. We want to be able to get this
9 management information so we can track
10 trends and identify clusters and use it
11 as a management tool for doing better.

12 And they said, Well, that's not
13 what you bought. You bought a work order
14 system. That's all it does, is create
15 service requests.

16 They ended up firing their
17 vendor. They scrapped the tool that they
18 bought, the work order system, and they
19 purchased a CRM and then hired another
20 company to implement that. So you can
21 imagine how much money they wasted when
22 they just didn't plan enough to
23 understand the difference between a work
24 order system and a CRM.

25 Now, I know you were interested

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2 in how much it costs to implement, and
3 our information is fairly current because
4 we're still implementing. But we broke
5 this down into four phases, and what we
6 did was, we hired a vendor to come in and
7 help us implement during the first three
8 phases, and then in the beginning of
9 March of next year, the county will take
10 over with what we're calling Phase IV,
11 which is continuing that county-wide
12 roll-out.

13 So what we paid for in Phase I,
14 which was the plan to implement, was, we
15 paid 264,000. And then the pilot, which
16 was really the design and build of the
17 call center, design and build of all the
18 CRM configuration and then also producing
19 the pilot roll-out, was the most
20 expensive part of the project. We're in
21 the middle of halfway through Phase III
22 right now and we spent 1.3 million on
23 that. So we're looking at about \$5
24 million as far as our implementation
25 costs for start-up, and I believe that

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2 the department is going to run us -- I
3 think Lisa said about \$4 and a half
4 million they spend annually. That's
5 probably not too far off base.

6 In addition to the development,
7 you're going to have to think about
8 staffing models, and we talked about the
9 water hose versus the fire hose. And
10 what you need to do is, call-takers or
11 the amount of people that you're going to
12 have answering phones is going to be
13 dependent upon your call volume. That's
14 why the water hose/fire hose was so
15 important, is because we have to try to
16 grasp what we don't know is trying to get
17 through. And so there's different kinds
18 of formulas that you can calculate, but
19 the staffing costs are in addition to the
20 costs that I outlined on the last slide.
21 So that's something that you have to keep
22 in mind.

23 Currently, we have 22
24 call-takers. We have eight departments
25 implemented right now. In our pilot call

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2 center, we're going to be able to build
3 out to about 35 call-takers before we
4 have to move into our permanent facility,
5 and the permanent facility is in the same
6 building that we're in right now. 911 is
7 going to be moving out in about five or
8 six months into their new facility, and
9 we're going to be taking over the 911
10 center and building it out for 311.

11 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Were those
12 employees current county employees that
13 came from various departments?

14 MS. GONZENBACH: I'm sorry?

15 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Were those
16 employees that were staffing the call
17 center with the four departments that you
18 have now, did they come from those four
19 departments?

20 MS. GONZENBACH: That's a great
21 question, because we learned through the
22 school of hard knocks, and I'd like to
23 save you the pain here. What we did was,
24 we transferred positions, people, from
25 those pilot departments. And what we do,

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2 every time we roll in a department,
3 depending on their call volume, we're
4 taking a staffing position from every
5 department. And then if you have a high
6 call volume, we're taking more.

7 For example, Water and Sewer
8 Billing is a very high call volume
9 department, about 600,000 calls a year.
10 We just took seven positions from their
11 call center and moved the positions into
12 the 311 line item.

13 What we did in the pilot was,
14 we took bodies, we took people, and that
15 was a huge mistake, because there was a
16 lot of resistance on those people who
17 were forced, pulled away from their
18 department and thrown into this unknown
19 place called 311. And they are very
20 resentful and they've been -- most of the
21 trouble that we've had with CSRs in the
22 call center has been from this core group
23 of people.

24 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Did you
25 hire additional?

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2 MS. GONZENBACH: Well, what we
3 decided to do was take positions, vacant
4 positions. What we did, we would take
5 from Department A and move it to 311.
6 And we are also hiring additional staff
7 as well. So it's about a 60/40 split.
8 Sixty percent of the positions are
9 existing in the budget for the county and
10 about 40 percent of positions are
11 actually newly created positions, CSR
12 positions for the 311 center. So we're
13 absorbing 60 percent of the positions
14 from existing budget money right now.

15 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Did you
16 have union issues, jurisdictional issues?

17 MS. GONZENBACH: I'm sorry?

18 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Did you
19 have union jurisdictional issues?

20 MS. GONZENBACH: No. We're a
21 right-to-work state.

22 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Oh, okay.
23 That's a different world.

24 MS. GONZENBACH: I know. I
25 come from New York.

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2 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Because I
3 envision here in Philadelphia different
4 AFSCME local jurisdictions that govern
5 various departments. So, for example, if
6 you were moving an employee out of
7 District Council 47 in Philadelphia and
8 employees out of 33 into a call center,
9 who would represent them, or would they
10 just continue to be represented -- you
11 don't know the answer to this, but would
12 they continue to be represented by
13 their --

14 MS. GONZENBACH: If you can
15 take vacant positions, that solves a lot
16 of the problem. And we typically have a
17 vacancy rate in every department and so
18 we just started pulling positions. And
19 also, in Dekalb County -- I don't know
20 about here, but Human Resources is able
21 to reallocate positions. So, for
22 example, a Grade 19 is what a CSR is. If
23 you don't have any Grade 19's, you can
24 take a 21 or a 23 and reallocate it down
25 to a 19, and then we take the 19 into

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2 311. So we're able to do that as well.

3 We have to go through HR to do it.

4 One of the things that -- I

5 wanted to bring up funding sources,

6 because everybody is always looking for

7 money. How are you going to pay for this

8 is a question. Oh, by the way, somebody

9 asked about Council resistance or Council

10 approval as far as 311. Our County

11 Commission is so excited about 311, I'm

12 overwhelmed. When I had to go back to

13 the County Commission -- because they've

14 approved every step of the way. Every

15 single phase we broke down, I went before

16 the County Commission on every single

17 trip to ask for the money to approve to

18 move forward with the next phase. And so

19 the County Commission has been very

20 informed in this entire process, and they

21 love it because citizens love it. And

22 citizens are already coming up to them

23 and saying, Boy, this centralized call

24 center is the best thing since sliced

25 bread. And also it's quite a proud

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2 moment for our Commissioners who frequent
3 different events and different events
4 with leaders from other counties and
5 cities in the State of Georgia as we sit
6 in the State Capitol. And they all know
7 about what we're doing in Dekalb County,
8 and people are saying, Wow, you're doing
9 311, you must be really cool. And it's
10 very -- it's a proud moment for the
11 Commissioner to say, That's right, we're
12 bad, we are the first in metropolitan
13 Atlanta to implement. We had the guts to
14 move forward, and we're doing it and
15 we're doing it in a great way and we're
16 doing a great job.

17 So they are 100 percent behind
18 this implementation. And you can call
19 any of them and ask them, and they'll
20 tell you. I mean, I work on the sixth
21 floor with the Commissioners, so I bump
22 into them periodically up there and they
23 always are like, 311, we're there.
24 They're just really happy.

25 Funding opportunities are

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2 available if you use your 311 center as a
3 911 back-up, and we are, and we've taken
4 advantage of those funding opportunities.
5 Because if you're operating as a 911
6 back-up, 911 money is available to you.

7 Reallocation of funding due to
8 efficiency and effectiveness
9 improvements, consolidation of redundant
10 resources. We had eight call centers.
11 Now we're going to have 311, 911 and the
12 Tax Commissioner. The Tax Commissioner
13 is a constitutional office, so they're
14 going to do their own thing, and that's
15 fine. All the other call centers are
16 going to be consolidated or reduced.
17 Water and Sewer Billing, we're reducing
18 that because we're going to still have
19 customer-specific needs that have to be
20 addressed. So we'll still need people to
21 handle those service requests as far as
22 personally.

23 Homeland security money, we're
24 using our facility as an Emergency
25 Facilitation Center. It's part of our

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2 homeland security's plan, and so there's
3 money available out there for that part
4 of what you're doing in the 311 center.

5 Senator D'Amato in New York got
6 \$650,000 for two different towns in New
7 York to help them start with their 311
8 center. As soon as I saw those press
9 releases, I printed them off and wrote to
10 my Senators and I said, Senator D'Amato
11 did this for New York, can you do that
12 for us?

13 So there's earmarked money that
14 is available if you have a very loud and
15 persuasive Senator and successful. And
16 there's other grant opportunities that
17 may become available. Right now the
18 State of Georgia is going to put a bill
19 together that is talking about the scope
20 of its 911 and how some of the emergency
21 management money can be used. And I got
22 a call from one of my State Reps and he
23 said, I left it in there to make it loose
24 enough that you can slip in grant
25 opportunities out of this one. So I'll

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2 be following this bill through the
3 session when it starts in January, and
4 I'll probably be lobbying for it to hope
5 it passes, because that would give us an
6 opportunity to go for grants at the state
7 level.

8 We talked about the
9 reassignment of positions and
10 consolidating positions. We just took
11 seven positions out of Water and Sewer
12 Billing. They're not getting them back,
13 period, done. So that changes the
14 budget. Plus if you've got people doing
15 front-end work plus doing back-end work,
16 if you look at a lot of these people's
17 job descriptions -- and I'm not talking
18 just about departments that have call
19 centers. Everybody is a call center.
20 Everybody department is a call center,
21 because we all take customer calls. We
22 all respond to citizens. So we're all
23 call-takers. We're all CSRs.

24 If you are able to focus on
25 your core business function and instead

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2 of 40 percent of your time you're
3 spending on the phone talking to
4 customers trying to calm them down,
5 talking about issues, you're not working
6 on your core business, which creates
7 inefficiencies in your operations. That
8 is resolved through 311.

9 An enhanced revenue stream,
10 talked about that. If I can turn my
11 Recorders Court and be able to answer
12 these 400-plus thousand calls that are
13 coming in and I can tell people how much
14 their ticket is, I have a greater
15 opportunity -- and I'm just talking about
16 one department now. If I can answer the
17 calls -- I'm got Water and Sewer Billing.
18 We boast a 99 percent collection rate in
19 our Water and Sewer Billing Department,
20 but what we don't tell you is it takes us
21 almost six months to collect that.

22 What does that mean? That
23 means if I can get customers who are
24 calling to find out what their water bill
25 is, to find out what their court fine is

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2 and I can tell them, I have a greater
3 opportunity for payment sooner. I may
4 get it eventually, but I'd like it
5 tomorrow instead of six months from now.

6 And, of course, the old General
7 Fund is always the best way to fund your
8 311 system when all else fails. But we
9 are exploring all different kinds of
10 opportunities, as anybody else can.

11 Where we are right now, this is
12 our current status: We're operational.
13 We have 21 people answering phones.
14 We're going up to 35 by the end of Phase
15 III, which is going to be the first of
16 March we'll be up to 35 call-takers.
17 We'll have 17 departments rolled into 311
18 at that time out of 46, and most of those
19 are your very customer-facing
20 departments. So some of the departments
21 that we roll in later will be minimal
22 contact with customers, like Internal
23 Audit Or Finance. Some of those
24 departments have very little
25 customer-facing opportunity, so their

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2 departments won't be as significant as we
3 roll them in as far as call volume.

4 We're answering about 1,200
5 calls a day with eight departments right
6 now, and we're using the ten-digit
7 dialing, and I told you that hopefully
8 June 1st we're going live with the 311
9 phone number. It's all up to the Public
10 Service Commission. I go before them
11 with our call routing solution in two
12 weeks or less, ten days. So I'm crossing
13 my fingers that we get the assignment on
14 that date, that is.

15 Our call routing solution, I
16 told you what we had to do in order to
17 fully implement 311. That will be
18 complete in the first quarter of next
19 year, and all of the telephony work is
20 done.

21 This is a work chart of our
22 call center. That's something that is
23 very -- this is a typical work chart in a
24 call center, and it's working well for
25 us. We're going to be hiring additional

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2 supervisors, because I think you want a
3 ratio of like eight to one or something.
4 So we've got an additional supervisor
5 position in the budget for next year, and
6 we're also hiring an additional trainer.
7 So we'll have two trainers, two
8 supervisors and 35 call-takers.

9 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you.
10 Thank you for your testimony. I just
11 have a few initial questions. I don't
12 know if you're more comfortable sitting
13 or standing. It's up to you.

14 MS. GONZENBACH: I'll stand.

15 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: What type
16 of information sources do 311 call-takers
17 access to have the information available
18 to answer a wide range of questions? I
19 mean, if I was a customer service
20 representative out of the Sanitation
21 Department and I was removed and
22 reassigned to 311, what areas of
23 information would I be able to access
24 there that can allow me to answer a
25 question about the Parking Authority or

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2 the Police Department or the Personnel
3 Department?

4 MS. GONZENBACH: If you were in
5 Sanitation?

6 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: No, no. If
7 I were a current employee of the county
8 and I was one of the people that you
9 brought over to 311. So now I'm
10 answering questions not only about
11 Sanitation, but I'm answering questions
12 about the police, I'm answering about
13 Personnel, I'm answering about
14 applications for employment. What base
15 of data do they tap into to be able to
16 answer that question they wouldn't
17 normally know the answer to from
18 experience?

19 MS. GONZENBACH: That's part
20 of -- the 311 center is called a
21 knowledge base, and that knowledge base
22 starts off empty, and that's why the
23 roll-in process that we are taking with
24 only tackling four or eight departments
25 at a time is extensive, because we sit

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2 down with them and we need to know what
3 are your standard operating procedures,
4 what are your frequently asked questions,
5 what are the things that we need to know
6 about your department so we can answer a
7 question just as you would.

8 So it's up to the individual
9 department, in your example Sanitation,
10 to answer these questions and supply the
11 information to the 311 analyst to
12 populate the knowledge base with
13 everything we need to know about their
14 department. And it's kind of a live and
15 learn situation as far as you're never
16 going to get a hundred percent of the
17 information. You do as much as you can,
18 and then I'm going to get a phone call in
19 the 311 center that isn't in the
20 knowledge base, so we write it down. We
21 send over a service request, and then we
22 say, you know, is this a question that we
23 can just answer in the knowledge base so
24 that service request doesn't come to you.
25 And typically it is.

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2 So the knowledge base is a very
3 fluid being inasmuch as things become
4 important or pertinent or we have a
5 policy change or a procedural change. We
6 pull out what was in there and we put the
7 new information in there. So that is
8 your living document of how a person
9 coming off the street, a generalist
10 call-taker, becomes an expert in
11 everything around the county, because the
12 individual department populates that
13 knowledge base with the information of
14 how they do their business.

15 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: So each of
16 your call-takers can answer any of these
17 questions if it's in the knowledge base?

18 MS. GONZENBACH: Absolutely.

19 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: So they're
20 not segregated, where I'm doing two
21 departments or three departments. I'm
22 doing them all.

23 MS. GONZENBACH: Correct.

24 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: The other
25 issue relative to cost that you raised,

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2 how long ago did you start the planning
3 process and how long did the initial
4 planning process take and was that
5 inclusive of the \$264,000 in costs?

6 MS. GONZENBACH: No. I was
7 given the assignment. The CEO -- and
8 this is another thing that's critical to
9 a successful implementation, and that's
10 executive-level support. If your CEO,
11 your Mayor, is behind this, it will be
12 successful. The CEO in my -- a CEO is
13 like a Mayor in our county, a strong
14 Mayor form of government at the county
15 level. And when he took office in 2001,
16 he wanted to become the customer service
17 county known for its wonderful customer
18 service, and as a part of that, he wanted
19 to implement 311 in Dekalb County. And
20 when I started working there in August of
21 2003, my first assignment was, Go
22 implement 311.

23 So I said, Okay. I said,
24 What's 311? And so it was up to me to
25 answer that question. So I basically

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2 went underground, and my researchers and
3 I, we spent six months learning about
4 311. I visited Houston. I visited
5 Chicago. I called every implementation
6 in the country, including Lisa's former
7 boss. And if I didn't visit there, I
8 talked to them, and I learned everything
9 I could about it.

10 We spent six months doing
11 research. We learned everything we could
12 about everything, how it was done, and
13 then we decided what was going to work in
14 Dekalb County, because what works in
15 Chicago may not work in Dekalb County.
16 So we needed to figure out based upon our
17 environment what was going to work best
18 for us.

19 So during that time, I also got
20 to know who in the industry as far as
21 vendors go could do this, who had a track
22 record and who was successful. So part
23 of my research has to do with what kind
24 of system are you using. I wanted to
25 know. And then who implemented, who did

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2 your implementation. So by the time we
3 got to the point where we were ready to
4 write the RFP, I already knew who the
5 players were in the industry. I already
6 knew who the top people were who could
7 help us with this. And I already knew
8 what kind of -- well, the system was
9 chosen for us. Dekalb County is an
10 Oracle shop and so I was told when I was
11 given the assignment, You're going to
12 implement Oracle CRM.

13 So I said, Okay. So I just
14 wrote that into the RFP. "We are
15 implementing this system. If you can't
16 implement Oracle CRM, then don't bother
17 applying."

18 Most people don't have the
19 system chosen for them. We happened to
20 have it already done for us, which worked
21 out great.

22 But as far as how, that's what
23 we did. We just did all our homework so
24 we had that -- and then it took a couple
25 months to write the RFP, because we had

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2 to decide -- we decided what our vision
3 was, and then we wrote the RFP based upon
4 the vision.

5 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Now, did
6 you have consulting help while you were
7 doing your research or was it all staff
8 work?

9 MS. GONZENBACH: No. It was
10 all in-house.

11 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: And how
12 long did it take from the time you were
13 given that assignment to the completion
14 of the RFP?

15 MS. GONZENBACH: I finished the
16 RFP in May. I started the project in
17 August, doing research, and then it took
18 me two months to write the RFP. And then
19 it took purchasing six weeks to get it
20 out, which was very painful because we
21 were trying to move forward.

22 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Six weeks
23 here would be a light year.

24 MS. GONZENBACH: Well, this was
25 a CEO project, so it was on the front

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2 burner and so I wanted it turned around
3 like right away.

4 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: And you
5 thought six weeks was a long time?

6 MS. GONZENBACH: Yes. For
7 being a priority project, yes, I did.

8 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: I'm not
9 laughing at you. I'm just laughing.

10 MS. GONZENBACH: I get very
11 impatient. When I get something off my
12 desk, I'm ready to move. And so we
13 started -- the RFP went out July of 2004.
14 We had a vendor chosen at the end of
15 August. By the time contracts got
16 signed, we started December 1st. So we
17 have been working for two years.

18 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Okay. And
19 besides Baltimore and Dekalb County, what
20 other systems impressed you throughout
21 the country, which other --

22 MS. GONZENBACH:
23 Implementation?

24 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: -- cities
25 that have an active 311 system? Whether

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2 it's in one phase or two phases or three
3 phases, who would you recommend, besides
4 Baltimore and your place, that we should
5 look at as a model?

6 MS. GONZENBACH: Houston,
7 Chicago. When I was doing my research
8 three years ago, the top three that kept
9 surfacing, whether it was in a
10 publication, a journal or word of mouth
11 by phone calls, those three systems came
12 up as the best, Baltimore, Houston,
13 Chicago. There are several others. What
14 we were looking for was a comprehensive
15 implementation. We didn't want a work
16 order system. We wanted comprehensive.
17 We wanted those management tools, like
18 Baltimore is using.

19 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: What does
20 New York have?

21 MS. GONZENBACH: What does New
22 York have? New York has Sibel.

23 (Ms. Allen talking without
24 microphone.)

25 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: The

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2 stenographer can't hear you.

3 MS. GONZENBACH: Okay. She
4 said Hansen, H-A-N-S-E-N. I would have
5 to get you the information. I don't know
6 the answer.

7 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: I'm just
8 curious whether --

9 MS. GONZENBACH: No. I'm
10 curious, too, because I thought I knew
11 the answer to that, because I know most
12 of them. You hit me with one I don't
13 know.

14 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Those three
15 are worth looking at?

16 MS. GONZENBACH: Pardon?

17 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: These three
18 are worth looking at, Houston, Chicago
19 and Baltimore?

20 MS. GONZENBACH: Oh,
21 absolutely. Actually, Dekalb County
22 decided to model their implementation
23 after Houston because of the robustness
24 of their application.

25 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you.

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2 Questions?

3 (No response.)

4 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: I'd like
5 the record to reflect that Councilman
6 Greenlee is also in attendance, so that
7 the record is clear.

8 Are there any other questions
9 for this witness?

10 (No response.)

11 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you
12 very much for your comprehensive
13 presentation and for giving us some
14 benefit of your knowledge.

15 MS. GONZENBACH: I also wanted
16 to -- well, I want to thank you for
17 having me, and I also want to welcome any
18 of you to come and visit us in Dekalb
19 County. We would love to have you come
20 see what we're doing, because we're very
21 proud of our implementation.

22 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you
23 very much. Thank you.

24 Mr. James, could you take the
25 traditional seat. Please identify

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2 yourself for the record.

3 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER JAMES:

4 Thank you very much. My name is Joseph
5 James, Deputy Commissioner for the
6 Department of Public Property.

7 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: I wanted to
8 make sure you understand, we let you go
9 last because I wanted you to hear what
10 they all had to say so you could comment
11 within the context of their testimony.

12 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER JAMES: I
13 appreciate that.

14 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: I
15 appreciate your patience.

16 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER JAMES: And
17 I believe New York City is Sibel and they
18 do use a Hansen application for one of
19 their work order systems.

20 Good afternoon, Councilman
21 Kenney and members of the Committee. I
22 am here on behalf of James Donaghy from
23 the Managing Director's Office
24 representing the Managing Director's
25 Office for Pedro Ramos to testify to

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2 support Resolution No. 06745 (sic)
3 authorizing this joint Committee to hold
4 hearings on whether the City should
5 establish a constituent call center, also
6 known as a 311 call center.

7 The Administration would be
8 pleased to reexamine the feasibility of
9 creating a 311 call center with
10 representatives from City Council if this
11 is the desire of the Committee.

12 As you know, many cities
13 throughout the United States have
14 implemented successful 311 call centers.
15 These centers provide easy access for the
16 general public for non-emergency
17 government services through a single
18 number. A successful 311 call center has
19 several key components. The backbone of
20 a successful call center is enterprise
21 work order management systems that permit
22 tracking a service request from
23 initiation to completion through all City
24 departments. The work order system
25 assigns a unique tracking number when a

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2 call-taker generates a service request.

3 The status of the service request can be
4 tracked with this number through all
5 stages of the work order management
6 process.

7 The work order management
8 system also tracks multiple productivity
9 measures. A call center would be a
10 24-hour, seven-day-a-week operation,
11 staffed by highly skilled and
12 cross-trained call-takers. The
13 call-takers must have access to a
14 database of work flow procedures from all
15 City departments. This database would
16 need to be created for all City
17 departments Citywide. This database
18 would allow the call-taker to provide
19 accurate and timely information to the
20 caller. The call center must be
21 scalable. This scalability allows a call
22 center to expand operationally and
23 respond to an increase of non-emergency
24 service calls such as would occur during
25 a snowstorm.

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2 In 2002, the City explored the
3 possibility of opening a 311 call center.
4 However, after careful consideration, a
5 decision was made to place the project on
6 hold. There were some lessons learned
7 through this process, and the City has
8 taken steps to improve the existing
9 215-686-1776 City Hall switchboard call
10 center. These improvements include an
11 upgraded electronic City phone directory,
12 which will allow the operator to provide
13 accurate contact information for City
14 service requests. New telephone
15 equipment and software was installed at
16 City Hall to track incoming calls and
17 permit interactive voice response. This
18 equipment allows callers to receive basic
19 City service information electronically
20 and allows supervisors to track call
21 volume and assign staff more effectively.
22 This equipment upgrade allowed placement
23 of the Health Department's Health Center
24 appointment call line in the City Hall
25 call center. Finally, the process of

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2 selection of an off-the-shelf enterprise
3 work order management system is
4 approaching conclusion. As I stated
5 earlier, a work order management system
6 is critical to the success of a 311 call
7 center.

8 In conclusion, I'd like to
9 thank you for the opportunity today, and
10 I'm available to answer any questions.

11 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you
12 very much.

13 At the end of your testimony,
14 it says, "Finally, the process of
15 selection of an off-the-shelf enterprise
16 work order management system is
17 approaching conclusion." That's just the
18 work order system, not the full 311?

19 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER JAMES:
20 That is correct.

21 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: And that
22 would be implemented in which
23 departments?

24 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER JAMES:
25 Well, there are a number of departments.

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2 It was Public Property, Streets
3 Department. I'm trying to remember the
4 other one.

5 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: But the
6 implementation of this work order
7 management system would not preclude the
8 inevitability of a 311 system, or would
9 it enhance it or would it have nothing
10 really to do with --

11 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER JAMES: I
12 think one of the shortcomings when we did
13 the initial 311 project is that we were
14 coming out with a solution for the
15 productivity tool that they would use for
16 the intake, but we saw that where we were
17 not as successful was the back-end
18 system. We had no uniform or at least
19 consistent best-of-breed work order
20 system to actually get the work done. So
21 what we would do is create this false
22 expectation that service was being done,
23 but there was no real way of getting the
24 work done.

25 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: The other

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2 municipalities and governments that have
3 implemented this have been able to seem
4 to integrate the back-end work
5 fulfillment part. So I guess my question
6 is, is the work order management tool an
7 impediment or potential enhancement of a
8 traditional 311 call center?

9 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER JAMES: I
10 think what we were looking at was two
11 ways of approaching it. One, we could
12 take the existing Legacy systems and try
13 to make them work together with a
14 front-end CRM solution. That was a
15 possibility. Not the most successful
16 possibility, but a possibility. Then the
17 preferred solution from the operating
18 departments who would actually get the
19 calls is that they would prefer to have
20 their Legacy systems replaced or, in some
21 cases where a department did not have any
22 system, have some sort of work order
23 system so that they could be able to
24 really be able to be measured on their
25 performance and be able to provide true

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2 information back to the call center on
3 what was actually going on.

4 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Was there
5 any belief within the departments that
6 having a 311 call center would allow them
7 in some ways to conduct their core
8 business more effectively as opposed to
9 having to take the up-front requests and
10 just from the 311 center receive the
11 requests so that they can get to work on
12 the actual work as opposed to the public
13 relations part of --

14 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER JAMES:
15 Right. The 311 call center, because we
16 initially approached it as a
17 consolidation effort and I think we're
18 more -- the view now is the
19 centralization effort. We want to
20 centralize the kind of calls that come in
21 from the public, not necessarily a
22 consolidation, because it doesn't really
23 save us people. It actually would
24 increase our staffing levels to really
25 perform it.

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2 What the departments wanted is,
3 they wanted the ability to track true
4 performance measures. They would still
5 have the fulfillment end of, you know,
6 you call the 311 and you want a recycle
7 bin. Well, yeah, the 311 center will
8 take that and process a work request, but
9 somebody in the Streets Department
10 actually has got to send out that recycle
11 bin.

12 They would like a system that
13 would allow them to manage their effort
14 and their performance and allow the call
15 center to be able to provide the
16 information back to the public.

17 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: But also
18 for the call center to provide the
19 initial information to them?

20 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER JAMES:
21 Yes. Yes.

22 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Okay.
23 Could you share with staff here whatever
24 work was done on the initial 311
25 investigation that you guys did back in,

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2 what, '02?

3 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER JAMES:

4 '02, yes.

5 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: And also a
6 potential list of resources that you
7 think you would need to kind of kick
8 start that again from a research and
9 planning side of it, from a financial
10 side of it.

11 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER JAMES:

12 Sure. We would be able to provide that.

13 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thanks.

14 Any questions for Mr. James?

15 (No response.)

16 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thanks.

17 Thanks for your time.

18 Thank you for your attendance.

19 We're hoping that we'll be able to kind
20 of cull this information together and
21 come up with some type of recommendations
22 and also some type of plan for the
23 future. There's about more than a year
24 left of the Administration, and what I
25 would like to see is some work document

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 2 available to the next Administration for
 3 potential implementation.
 4 Councilwoman, do you have
 5 anything?
 6 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: That's
 7 fine.
 8 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you
 9 very much for your attendance.
 10 (Joint Committees on
 11 Legislative Oversight and Public Safety
 12 adjourned at 3:00 p.m.)
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