



**Berkeley City Council**  
**Minutes: Ad-Hoc Subcommittee on NCRIC and Urban Shield**  
**By Tano Trachtenberg**

**Thursday, December 14, 2017**  
**1:00pm – 2:30pm**  
**BPD Multi-Purpose Room**

*Committee Members:*

- Mayor: Jesse Arreguin
- District 2: Cheryl Davila
- District 4: Kate Harrison
- District 6: Susan Wengraf

*Others in Attendance:*

- Police Chief Greenwood
- Fire Chief Brannigan
- Jennifer Laso- BFD
- Keith May-BFD
- Captain Lewis-BPD

- Andrew Frankel-BPD
- Rashawn Cummings-BPD
- Jim Kleppy-BPD
- Sean Tinney-BPD
- Joe Okies-BPD
- Cory Bold- BPD
- Christopher Waite- BPD
- Brandi Campbell- Mayor's Office
- Tano Trachtenberg- Mayor's office
- Chris Naso- Harrison's office
- Lori McWhorter- Wengraf's Office
- Yvonne Medina- Davila's Office

**1. Call to Order and Public Comment:**

Councilmember Wengraf started the meeting as acting chair upon the Mayor's request. Two members of the Public, Cindy Shamban (McGee-Spaulding Neighbors in Action), and John Lindsay-Poland (American Friends Service Committee) provided public comment. Cindy expressed her reiterated concern about the Berkeley Police Department's (BPD) participation in Urban Shield as well as her disappointment about the Subcommittee's lack of transparency. John, a member of the Alameda Task Force on Urban Shield, who observed the event this year, also shared his deep concern about the Event and Berkeley's participation, citing the military tactics and procedure he witnessed in the scenario run by Execushield.

**2. Approval of Minutes**

Minor amendments were made to the minutes before final approval.

**3. Review Feedback from the Community**

The council members agreed to read the referenced attachment drafted by Tracy Rosenberg prior to the next scheduled meeting.

**4. Attending Urban Shield September 8-9, 2017**

**A. Berkeley Fire Department**

Chief Brannigan shared how UASI and Urban Shield have contributed to the chain of coordination that occurs from the local to state level. Assistant Chief Keith May shared his positive experience participating at the 2017 Urban Shield. Jennifer Laso emphasized the value of her participation in the mass shelter and care working group and Yellow Command of Urban Shield.

Chief Brannigan described the chain of Emergency Operations Centers. The local level reports to the operational (county) level, which reports to the region, and then the region reports to the state. When the local level needs additional resources they must submit a request to the county. The county officials then assess the needs of the whole county and provide resources accordingly. The same relationship exists between the county and the region as well as the region and the state. While Urban Shield isn't the only opportunity to exercise this system, it is the most well-attended and organized. In response to questions from committee members about the nature of trainings prior to 9/11, Brannigan shared that specialized training like water rescue and county-wide coordination have only developed in the last 7 years. Urban Shield's value is in the funding of large scale exercises and the platform for regional coordination.

Assistant Chief May shared his experience participating in the Orange Command exercise, which was in the Alameda County Emergency Operations Center (EOC). They looked at traffic and how to best distribute resources, which he viewed as practice for situations where similar tools and skills are needed. The Green Command exercise involved Berkeley's CERT Team, made up of 6 members trained by BFD, who joined the Alameda county team and completed 4 scenarios (Earthquake, Flood, Building Collapse, and Confidence course) in the 9 hour day. May concluded that while BFD did not participate in this year's Red command (includes fire department related exercises like collapsed vehicles, multi-casualty incidents, and water rescue incidents), they have participated in the past, and view the practice as important.

Jennifer Laso participated in UASI Mass Care and Shelter working group. She emphasized that care and shelter is a local responsibility. Regional preparedness is a huge benefit because if the local level (Berkeley) is good and other localities are not, then Berkeley will attract many of the neighboring people in need. Their working group had three working sessions: rules and responsibilities, learning from lawsuits, and animals and medical services in shelters. All of this is a part of the UASI grant and the focus of the past year and the coming year.

Laso described the two-part Yellow Command exercise to the group. The June tabletop exercise focused on coordination at the county level, and the September exercise focused on regional and state coordination. She added that the September exercise identified some of the challenges that would happen during the Santa Rosa fires one month later. A final workshop included a review of what happened during the fires, and identified some major changes in assumptions about pets and medical services. Jennifer had the opportunity to go to Santa Rosa to serve as the Care and Shelter lead with the City of Santa Rosa, which she feels happened because of her participation. This ultimately led to updated guidance on best practices.

## **B. Berkeley Police Department**

Chief Greenwood and members of the Special Response Team (SRT) presented to the group about their participation in Urban Shield. They emphasized that training and experience are key to a strong response to any low frequency, high-risk event like a shooting or bombing. When you don't have a lot of experience, you have to make up for it in training.

Captain Lewis, Sergeant Frankel, and Officers Kelly and Okies independently discussed how Urban Shield contributes to public safety by enhancing the leadership of participating officers. Captain Lewis shared that the department intentionally cycles their staff through Urban Shield so that younger/newer officers, who might be covering or filling in for a more experienced SRT member, build leadership skills and have opportunities to practice. Sgt. Frankel shared that "each corner of the department has folks that have done Urban Shield" and "every patrol team has an SRT member that attended Urban Shield". The scenarios require officers to step back and plan, which helps de-escalation and improves public safety. Officer Kleppy shared a personal anecdote where the planning and leadership skills he learned from Urban Shield led to the successful de-escalation of a situation with a suspect who was high on meth and brandishing a knife.

Several members of BPD shared that they feel Urban Shield provides an important source of feedback, within the exercises and afterwards. Captain Lewis mentioned that the team loses points if they hurt innocent people or don't properly prioritize the risks posed during an exercise and that this, "challenges the way things are done". Another officer shared that, after each year's event, the team takes a hard look at their training, tactics, and performance, and uses the feedback from Urban Shield to inform the development of their training program for the next year.

Many members of BPD shared how Urban Shield emphasized the value of tourniquets. Officer Bold shared his experience as the first officer on the scene of the 2013 balcony collapse. His practice triaging helped him act quickly, effectively and collaboratively. Bold also mentioned that he was carrying a tourniquet with him as a direct result of training in Urban Shield, which he applied to an individual in need. This event led to the department wide provision of tourniquets. Many other officers shared their own personal anecdotes, where a tourniquet saved a life.

Sgt. Cummings shared the comments of PRC commissioner Terry Roberts and a list of events that happened in the US, where respondents had attended Urban Shield (NYC, Boston, Dallas, Las Vegas). Other officers stressed the realism of the training, which aids in stress inoculation. More practice with high intensity situations makes dealing with intense events more manageable.

Officer Tinney said that the endurance element of Urban Shield was valuable to him. Competing for forty to fifty hours straight built confidence that he could be effective for many hours on end.

At the end of the Department's presentation several committee members asked questions. Councilmember Harrison asked whether evaluators from BPD can provide feedback on the

effectiveness of scenarios or exercises. An officer responded that this type of feedback is solicited and would be provided to the site captain that is in charge of the scenario.

Councilmember Harrison also expressed concern about de-escalation during Urban Shield. She cited a scenario where there was a real life attack on Children's Hospital and the perpetrator was not killed. However, in the Urban Shield scenario they were. Harrison asked how de-escalation is practiced during Urban Shield. Captain Lewis responded that the fixed time limits at Urban Shield are not compatible with "true de-escalation" like BPD does with their departmental training. Chief Greenwood added that BPD has lots of experience already with de-escalation since they do it every day and they practice it frequently. Sgt. Cummings shared that there was a hostage rescue situation during Urban Shield that required de-escalation.

Councilmember Davila shared her thoughts on the difference between training and exercise scenarios. Training refers to a direct learning opportunity as opposed to applying what the team already knows to a situation. Davila felt that you go in with training and practice you already have, and then apply it to a given situation. Urban Shield lacks the type of teaching she thinks of as training. Chief Greenwood responded that applying training to an exercise scenario is in and of itself a training moment. The team leader of this year's SRT competing team shared that training opportunity comes from the feedback they receive after testing their tactics in these scenarios and discerning what can be improved. Without Urban Shield, he said, our training cycles become static.

Chief Brannigan acknowledged that Davila was correct in distinguishing training from exercise. Brannigan shared with the group that the general flow and development from training to practice is: plan, train, hold workshops, table top exercises, functional exercises, full scale exercises. The city can write the plan, train on the plan, provide workshops for the city employees to learn about it, and facilitate an occasional table top exercise. But Urban Shield provides opportunity to do a functional and full scale exercise.

**Next Meeting:**

The next meeting will be on January 18, 2018. The meeting will include a presentation from BPD on the SRT's training, tactics and equipment.

