

Intervenor Observer  
Observation Post

Stephanie Wexler  
Putnam Valley Police Station  
Oscawana Lake Road  
Town of Putnam Valley, NY  
10:55 am to 3:10 pm

Time of Observation

I spent approximately four hours at the Putnam Valley Police station on Wednesday, March 9, 1983, as an intervenor observer.

The Putnam Valley Police seem very sincere and dedicated to keeping the citizens of their community protected and safe. They are a small group. The Chief had told me from the outset that while a portion of their population lives within the 10 mile evacuation area, another portion lives outside the ten mile limit. They cannot put all their manpower into the 10 mile population. They have to have police service available to the people who will not be evacuating as well.

They are very concerned about being able to evacuate their citizens in the event of an emergency. They expressed a concern about whether the Con Edison/County evacuation plan will allow them to do so. They do feel that there was not enough local input which was reflected by a lack of information about local roads and crossroads in the evacuation plans. They had requested that someone from the State come and talk to them regarding their thoughts but no one had. Because the Putnam Valley Police did not believe that the official plan was workable, they developed their own more localized plan.

Their plan begins with an introduction advising that in a time of panic and fear, it would be impossible to know whether or not personnel would remain at their stations or would leave.

During the course of the day there were several comments by police personnel that the plan was ridiculous. They indicated that serious attention had not been given to the complexity and logistics of having to evacuate, in actuality, not just in simulation, thousands of people. They expressed dissatisfaction

8304180359 830411  
PDR ADOCK 05000247  
T PDR

with the duplication of services that occurred on the day of the exercise, with the fact that orders were coming from too many sources, and the fact that one hand did not seem to know what the other hand was doing.

For the entire time that I was there, until 3:00 pm, they were confused in thinking that the sirens sounding at 9:47 had been a mistake. They were waiting for the sirens to go off after a general emergency had been declared.

Being a small force, they wondered how long each man could be asked to work in the event of an emergency, considering factors such as fatigue and exposure to radiation. They wondered why the State officials had not responded to their requests for a meeting about the plan, and the lack of response by the State left the Putnam Valley Police Department feeling "expendable."

OBSERVATIONS OF STEPHANIE WEXLER ON WEDNESDAY, MARCH 9, 1983  
PUTNAM COUNTY POLICE STATION, PUTNAM COUNTY, N.Y.

10:55 Arrived at Putnam County Police Station. Doors to the police station were locked. Rang bell and announced myself through intercom. Allowed in. Took over observing from Dale Saltzman.

11:00 Call from Capt. Connelly requesting that a patrol car be sent to patrol at Oregon Corners.

11:02 Chief Jacobs says "We're running out of patrol cars. We'll send John. Send a utility car down to Oregon Corners. Next man is Sargorsky (sp.) to Oregon Corners. Take portable 473."

Gary Murray, Traffic Control Evacuation Coordinator says, "The only car left is the chief's."

11:05 Conversation continues about the use of manpower and the logistics involved. Officer Murray tells me about the Putnam Valley Town Evacuation Plan.

11:10 Wind, pressure announcement come over in the radio room.

11:12 Chief says, "Do you know the town of Cortland has our frequency?"

11:20 Officer asks for change of a quarter so that he can make some phone calls. No one has change but me. Officer gets change from me.

11:25 Officer Murray tells me that the only thing real on the special evacuation day blotter is the Chief and himself. Everything else is simulated.

11:27 Westchester County Control Center calls requesting a car be sent to Oregon Corners. Officer Murray tells the W.C.C.C. that "they have docimeters and post orders and everything. I'll have a car down there momentarily."

Officer Murray says off radio "Actually send a car to Oregon Corners to be checked by an observer."

Chief says "Make sure the people checking have I.D.s."

11:28 Call goes out by Debbie over the police radio, "228 to 4053- Respond to Oregon Corners. You have your post orders and docimeter. That's what they want to go over."

11:28 Chief would like officer Babnik to let them know who evaluator is and where they're from when the evaluation is over.

11:32 Chief makes a second statement wanting to know "Who's down there doing the observing. I want his name, rank and serial number."

11:35 Telephone call - Debbie says there's a call on 00 for the Chief. There's an intervener on the phone. Chief tells the caller that "We were put on alert at 7:58."

11:50 Chief Jacobs and Officer Murray discuss the logistics, the complexity and the time involved in moving an army of 80,000. They discuss the logistics including medics, transportation, a quarter-master and food. They comment that to deploy men to Lebanon it took two weeks.

The discussion continues on the logistics of moving thousands of people and how complex and long it takes. Chief says, "They're not going to be able to move 80,000 here. Taking close to 80,000 people on this side of the river."

11:56 Officer Murray talks to me about Putnam Valley's own evacuation plan. He says that there was no local input in the county plan. They've taken the Con Ed County plan and localized it. The county plan, he continues, doesn't take into account difficult roads. He says that they'll be responding to panic which is why they have tow trucks in various places in their plan. The Putnam Valley Police Dept. wants to react to an emergency rather than to a disaster which is also how they feel that their plan is different from the County's.

12:01 Officer Murray says that there was a girl here yesterday from Chicago who had a giant book relating to the evacuation.

12:02 453 call to SO Unit - Officer Babnik says that Inspector just spoke with him and left. Chief tells Officer Babnik to go on regular patrol and to take lunch.

12:02 Officer Murray types up Officer Babnik's activities on the special evac day log.

12:05 Debbie is listening and talking on the control room radio. She says, "We have them on standby. Standby to evacuate Continental Village Fire Dept." She says that the call came through from C.E.O.C., Westchester C.C.C. There is confusion as to who just called. Officer Murray says that they seem to be working with 2 different guys, and 2 different counties.

12:05 Capt. Connelly wants to know why West. County isn't contacting him first before issuing orders to Put. Valley.

12:06 Chief comments, "This is going down the tubes. This is the end of this."

12:07 Debbie says that a Con Ed car just pulled away from in front of the police station.

12:11 Chief and Officer Murray talk about the importance of a general disaster plan and talk about making peace with the fire department. They talk about how hard it is to coordinate volunteers. Very soft, quiet discussion on how to evacuate in case of a disaster the correct way. Discussion on the chain of command that would be established.

12:12 Debbie takes phone call and announces that the call is from a

Mrs. Keating from Peekskill Community Hospital. She wants to know how many vehicles the dept. has to spare to transport patients to St. Lukes.

Chief talks to Officer Murray and says that "We have only 2 and we're committed. This is a great time to find out. How can we send 2 ambulances to St. Lukes? he's on life support system. We need a vehicle for him."

12:14 453 call asking who's at Tompkins and who's at Adams. Response is no man. Man who's supposed to be at Tompkins is in Police station using the bathroom. Officer is getting his docimeter checked. Officer Murray reads it. He says it's 0.1 and that A 0.1 reading on a docimeter is like a sun tan.

12:16 Officer leaves to return to Tompkins Corner.

12:19 Call to Peekskill hospital to find out where St. Lukes Hospital is. Finds out it's in Newburgh.

12:21 Officer and Chief comment, "Great, send the patients up along the same route as the refugees."

12:27 Officer Murray says that they are going to switch the men at the posts. He says that every 4 hours they like to switch the men.

12:29 Phone call on 04 announced by Debbie. Capt Connelly has called on the wrong number. He calls again on the correct number. Officer Murray says, "We'll do what we can sir."

Officer Murray reports that they have 1 man and no cars left. He reports that it is now escalation into general emergency and general evacuation.

12:30 Order by chief not to switch men as previously decided. Chief says, "So now we have to restructure everything."

Officer Murray says, "He said Con Ed has just melted and is laying in a puddle."

12:31 Officer Murray says, "Now we should hear some sirens."

Chief says, "Oregon and Adams corners are covered."

Reference to Table 1 - General Evacuation; Chief says, "Get rid of man at Christians Corners. We're going to go by their plan, right. Cross Corners and Konopi's Hollow, we read Park police or State police. We're not going to man it."

12:35 Reassignments are decided:

No. 6 at Oregon and No. 3 at Adams.

12:37 Officer Murray says, "we have one man left over and one car."

12:40 Officer Murray reports, "We established traffic priorities last year. We're in good shape."

12:41 Chief says, "We don't need a car at Adam's Corner, a man can walk there."

12:41 Phone call from Capt. Connelly. Connelly calls on the wrong



line.

12:42 Capt. Connelly calls on the correct line.

Capt. Connelly has called to report a P1 Auto Accident at Cross Point for simulation purposes. Officer Murray tells Capt. Connelly that, "we have a man there."

The Sheriff, State Police and Putnam Valley Police have all responded to the simulated accident.

Officer Murray tells the Chief that Cross Point is Kevin's post and that Kevin is on his meal. The Chief says to send Babnik.

Officer Babnik is contacted and told to go over to 837 and to stay there until an observer arrives.

12:44 Chief and Officer Murray discuss duplication of services in regard to the simulated auto accident call from Capt. Connelly.

Chief says, "Why are there two additional services coming in when we can handle it. We need them in outlying areas."

12:47 Officer Murray says, "see how different it is when you have local control? We're the only department that has developed our own evacuation plan. I don't mean to sound negative but we're really concerned and try very hard."

12:51 Call from Officer Babnik. He's told to just stand by as there are supposed to be inspectors coming by.

12:52 We're playing war games, Pete," says the Chief in regard to the evacuation drill.

12:53 Sandwiches arrive.

1:03 Charley Schneider of the Putnam Valley Civil Defense comes into the station. He comments about the locked doors.

Schneider says that the Co-ordinator from WCCC never called him with information about events of the evacuation drill.

1:06 Officers, the Chief and Mr. Schneider are calibrating docimeters. They're not sure that the device is working. They're having some trouble finding a reading. Discussion that maybe the docimeter machine is caput.

1:08 Chief comments that the "Radio has been very quiet."

1:09 Call from WCCC picked up by Officer Murray. The phone order is to evacuate Continental Village Fire Department. Officer Murray says, "They told us that hours ago."

1:11 The Chief and Charley Schneider are talking about how 'ridiculous' the plan is.

1:11 Officer Babnik reports that just the S.O. showed at he simulated accident. Nobody else.

1:14 Schneider says, "This whole thing is a joke."

1:15 Officer Murray says, "Get the feeling one hand doesn't know what the other hand is doing?"

1:29 Chief comments, "How come Yorktown is so quiet?"

1:34 Chief says that he wants to make sure that he knows how to reach Charley (Schneider) if he's not home.

1:38 Charley Schneider leaves the station.

1:41 Service man from cable T.V. company comes into the station to use the phone because he can't find the house he's looking for.

1:44 Officer Murray explains to me that the Putnam Valley Police Dept. had requested that someone from the county office come to their station to see the difference between using their (Put. Valley's) plan and the county's plan.

1:46 Phone call from Capt. Connelly in regard to the simulated accident. Officer Murray tells him that "our patrol and your patrol were there".

Officer Murray is discussing the evac plan; holding pattern; regroup and figure out what's happening.

1:46 Officer Babnik returns to the station. He says that no troopers showed up at Oregon Corners. He continues that a woman, about 36 years old, showed up. She asked a whole bunch of questions, got back in her car, and left.

1:53 Chief Jacobs says, "If they would cover the outer perimeter, we could cover the inside. Why have more people at all roads leaving and entering Westchester? Why do we have to be there too?"

1:55 School alarm keeps going off. It is being fixed.

2:10 Discussion between Chief and Officer Murray regarding amount of time an officer can be committed to work shift.

They discussed the problem of on-duty personnel being held over.

Chief: "We'd have to put them to bed in the back."

Officer Murray: "What about the dosage they've been exposed to?"

Chief: "What are we still doing here? We're expendable."

Officer Murray: "That's why they don't come and talk to us."

Chief: "We're still responsible for property even if no one is there."

2:15 Officer Murray tells me about Putnam Valley's own localized evacuation plan. He shows me the large envelopes they have developed with specific instructions and priorities for each post, and a dosimeter for each police officer.

2:35 The typewriter isn't working correctly. Someone is coming to pick up the typewriter momentarily.

2:40      Officer Murray gets phone call from Reporter Dispatch. He tells the reporter that the sirens went off at 9:47. They received only one phone call about it. They are utilizing the county plan. As of 12:29 they were in a state of General Emergency. As of 2:26 ECC at the Sheriff's Department--still in that same condition.

The police have a special phone number that the county calls them on, and the police have a special number to call the county back. There are things that we don't know about what is going on. So far it has been quickly remedied. Communications are better this year than last. Officer Murray also reports that two intervenors from Yorktown Parents Group have been observing what's going on.

2:47      Officer Murray reports to the Chief that Manpower Status is still the same.

3:10      I left.