


F R O M	NAME & TITLE	William M. Johnson, Director	CITY of <b>BALTIMORE</b>  M E M O	
	AGENCY NAME & ADDRESS	Department of Transportation (DOT) 417 East Fayette Street, Room 527		
	SUBJECT	City Council Bill 16-0285R – Informational Hearing – Response to the January 2016 Blizzard		

TO The Honorable President and Members of the City Council  
c/o Natawna Austin  
Room 400 City Hall

March 7, 2016

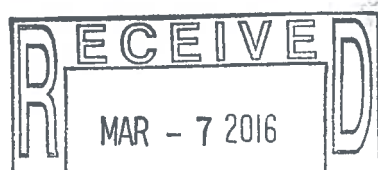
I am herein reporting on City Council Bill 15-285R – Informational Hearing – Response to the January 2016 Blizzard for the purpose of requesting representatives from the many City agencies involved in the response to the historic January 2016 blizzard to appear before the City Council to review the lessons learned from this crisis and to explore what best practices should guide the City’s response to future storms of this magnitude.

On Friday, January 22, 2016 the east coast was hit with Winter Storm Jonas. This storm brought blizzard conditions to the Baltimore region and by the end of the storm on Saturday, January 23rd, a record 29.2” of snow accumulated in the city.

Understanding the magnitude and impact of this event, DOT assembled contractors from up and down the east coast (as far north as Massachusetts) to help remove snow from city neighborhoods as quickly as possible. With the assistance of the Mayor’s Office of Emergency Management (MOEM), DOT worked with Butler County (Ohio) Incident Management Team (IMT) to provide additional coordination, cost tracking and management during the disaster recovery. This allowed city managers to focus on internal crews and the existing contractors under retainer to mechanically shovel, haul, plow and salt all snow covered roads within the city.

Snow crews worked around the clock from the beginning of the snow event through noon on Sunday, January 31, 2016 for a total of 216 hours of continuous snow operations. Regular City forces consisted of 123 crews; 180 retained contractor pieces; 60 inspectors as well as supporting administrative personnel all working on 12 hour shifts. The Pimlico Race Track was used as a staging area and primary dump site for snow. At the height of the snow removal operations, approximately 1300 pieces of equipment to create “strike teams” consisting of bobcats, loaders and dump trucks to clear snow from various neighborhoods throughout the city, as well as gateways and the central business district. These additional forces were coordinated and tracked by IMT, and began arriving on Sunday, January 24, 2016. Crews worked 18 hours on / 6 hours off loading and hauling snow. On Tuesday, January 26, 2016 snow melters were brought in to assist in melting the snow. One was stationed at Pimlico Race Track and the other at Lot G at M&T Bank Stadium.

Contractors began demobilizing assets on Friday, January 29, 2016. The melting operation continued 24 hours a day from January 26, 2016 through February 8, 2016. Dumping ceased at M&T Bank Stadium on Friday, January 29, 2016 because of concerns over the time and costs associated with melting and the overwhelming amount of snow stockpiled there. After an alternative site was made available by a local property owner, snow was then taken to 2000 Kloman Street starting the same day. Crews continued hauling to the Kloman street location 24/7 from January 29, 2016 until February 9, 2016 until hauling operations ceased citywide. During this time, a management decision was made to even haul snow from M&T Stadium to the Kloman Street site as there was greater cost savings to the City to haul it again and allow the remaining snow to melt over time than to continue use of mechanical melters.



*Comments*

A total of 14,564 tons of salt were used to treat city streets after the record breaking snowfall, and every city street was considered passable 7 days after this historic storm. Please note that during the back-to-back blizzards in 2010, it took the city 17 days before city streets were passable.


As part of the City's snow emergency response, DOT coordinated with various city agencies during snow removal operations. The BCFD operated loaders and backhoes to assist in clearing priority areas and loading the snow to be hauled out of city neighborhoods. They also supplied and operated a fuel truck to keep the snow melters and loading equipment in operation. BCFD also provided windshield surveys of roadway conditions throughout the city and reported which areas needed additional attention and resources, all while maintaining watch and responding to life safety situations throughout the City. The BPD used their foxtrot helicopters to show aerial views of city streets to assess progress in real time. DGS Fleet Management crews kept snow equipment in working order with minimal disruptions, whereas in 2010, 40% of our snow fleet went down due to transmission issues and a failing, aging fleet. DPW and Parks and Recreation each provide drivers, inspectors, and additional support in clearing streets, inlets, downed trees, and other functions.

It is important to note that no fatalities were recorded as a result of emergency services being delayed or being unable to reach city residences. Snow managers worked hand in hand with emergency responders to make sure that areas in need were prioritized. There were few power outages, but when they did occur. DOT coordinated with BGE to target those areas for snow removal to restore power as quickly as possible. In addition, we coordinated with the Port, the MTA, SHA, and other state agencies to expedite restoration of bus, rail and airport service restoration, as well as continued supply of critical supplies from the ports to inland locations for fuel, food, and other items.

Finally, the City has made great progress since 2010 in its preparation and response to major snow emergencies, and that progress was evident by the relative timeliness and availability of specialized equipment and management resources deployed to restore the city's overall functionality. We will be developing After Action Reports where we will incorporate lessons learned, things that worked well and additional areas for improvement both with deployment of equipment and boots on the ground, management and oversight of contractors, communications to the public and the media, and cost tracking. We welcome the opportunity to report our findings thus far to the Committee and to hear about community observations and suggestions for continued and improved service.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Respectfully,

  
William M. Johnson  
Director