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Posted at: 05/21/2009 5:37 PM

By: Matt McFarland

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Recordings reveal debate over ambulance route



ALBANY - The city of Albany is launching an investigation to figure out why it took so long to get an ambulance to the scene where 11-year-old Benjamin Cocco lay dying.

Recordings of the conversations between the emergency dispatcher and the ambulance company reveal they were not just worried about the length of time it was taking -- dispatchers were also questioning the route the ambulance crew originally planned on using.

- **Mohawk Ambulance:** "We're on the off ramp of 787 to I-90 and we're going to go through the park and up New Scotland.
- **Dispatcher:** "Oh geez, he has nobody closer?"
- **Mohawk Ambulance:** "Nope."

The emergency communications reveal a sense of aggravation and confusion.

Mohawk Ambulance says it had a full shift of five ambulances already working Tuesday night. A sixth crew was heading to Albany from Troy when the call came in.

Frustrated by the slow response, police dispatchers even suggest the quickest route to the scene.

- **Background voice:** "Just get off at 85 at Krumkill. That's a lot easier."
- **Dispatcher:** "Yeah I think they should go 85."
- **Background voice:** "Take the highway and get off at Krumkill on 85."



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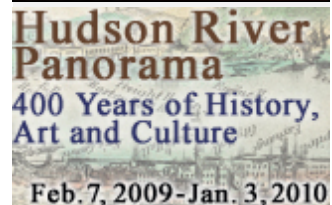
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Now Albany Mayor Jerry Jennings is demanding answers

"Anytime it takes an ambulance 23 minutes to get to a scene there is something wrong," he said Thursday.

Benjamin was on his bike when he ran through a stop sign and straight into a path of a moving car. The 11-year-old suffered head and internal injuries.

As city paramedics performed CPR on the young boy, the minutes continued to tick while they waited for the ambulance -- 23 in all.

- **Dispatcher:** "What's going on? Why is everybody coming from 787 near Menands tonight?"
- **Mohawk Ambulance:** "We're trying."
- **Dispatcher:** "I'm not accusing you that at all."
- **Mohawk Ambulance:** "I'm trying. If I get someone closer to clear up I will certainly send them."
- **Dispatcher:** "Right, well even just the route that they used didn't make sense to us either."

Jennings says the city is forming a task force and will be looking into Mohawk Ambulance's performance.

"I want it done very quickly because you can't, I don't want an extended evaluation of anything. I want to know why it happened and how do we prevent it from occurring again," the mayor said.

In regards to the recordings, a Mohawk Ambulance spokesperson says the crew eventually did follow the dispatcher's suggestion, taking Route 85 to the scene.

Mohawk Ambulance states it will be cooperating fully with the city and the mayor's office in reviewing all of the circumstances from Tuesday night.

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