



Providence Emergency Management Advisory Council (PEMAC)

591 Charles Street, Providence, RI 02904

22 June 2016

12:00 PM

MINUTES

Call to Order by the Chairman:

The meeting was called to order by Vice Chairman Borg, at approximately 12:10 p.m.

Attendance:

The Honorable Jorge Elorza, Mayor

Steven Pare, Commissioner of Public Safety

Tony Simon, Chief of Staff, City of Providence

Michael Borg, Director Providence Emergency Management Agency

Hugh Clements, Chief Providence Police Department

Carolyn Arias, Director Providence Communications Department

Russell Knight, Director Providence Public Works Department

Vladimir Ibarra, Deputy Director Providence Emergency Management Agency

Peter LePage, Sr. Manager Providence Water

Elaine Richards, Public Safety Department

Tempie Thompson, Executive Director American Red Cross

Jennifer Howley, Rhode Island School of Design

Christopher Harwood, Johnson & Wales University

Lori Needham, Executive Director RI Broadcasters Association

Paul Stasiuk, Senior Coordinator, National Grid

Peter Ginaitt, Healthcare and Emergency Management Subject Matter Expert

Michael Previty, Providence Emergency Management Agency

Mitch Young, Providence Emergency Management Agency

Ryan Henseler, Providence Emergency Management Agency

It was noted that quorum had been met for the meeting.

1. Welcome by the Mayor & Public Safety Commissioner

Chairman Elorza expressed his appreciation to the Providence Emergency Management Advisory Council members for enhancing overall preparedness. He stated that his main priority was the safety of City residents; and to continue fostering partnerships to improve overall community resilience.

Public Safety Commissioner Pare highlighted the importance of the Providence Emergency Management Agency and thanked the public private partners in



attendance for their continued collaboration and for helping to create a better council.

2. Old Business

There were two changes to the charter including expanding the membership and reducing the meeting dates. A motion to approve the minutes was made and seconded.

Director Borg reminded the membership that their two year appointment would expire at the next meeting in 2017 when new members would be appointed.

The minutes were unanimously approved.

3. New Business

Director Borg explained PEMA's role throughout the spectrum of emergency management of prevention, preparation, mitigation, response, and recovery and how the department works with municipal partners, private stakeholders, and state and federal organizations to reduce risk, vulnerabilities, and mitigate the impact of events. He highlighted his number one priority of getting the City back to normal after an event by adopting a holistic planning approach to every incident.

The Director went on to discuss some of the training and exercises that are part of the Multi-year Training and Exercise Plan linked to core capabilities. These are based on existing strategic guidance, threat assessments, or corrective actions from previous exercises. Some of the emerging risks to the City included, pandemic, crime, terrorism, cyber-attacks, aging infrastructure, climate change and sea level rise. Most of these risks fall within social, political, economic, technological, information, and environmental factors that PEMA takes into consideration for planning purposes.

Mayor Elorza interjected with a story about the National Conference of Mayors in which an Alabama Mayor spoke about an above average tornado season with over 40 tornados in 2016. The silver lining was that there were no casualties thanks in part to effective communications and engagement with the community.

Director Borg replied that community engagement is key; hence PEMA's efforts to increase capacity in this area.

Director Borg discussed some of the accomplishments made since the last meeting. These included: inspection of all the primary shelters in Providence; an increase in the adoption rate of the emergency notification system CodeRED; several updates to Continuity of Operations plans, Medical Points of Distribution, the City Hall Emergency



Response Guide, Fox Point Hurricane Barrier Coordination Guide and the development of a Special Event Planning guide for city events.

4. Annual Report/Incidents, Exercises & Activities

There were multiple trainings and exercises conducted including 1000+ hours of volunteer disaster training, 160 city employees trained in disaster preparedness and two Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT) classes offered to Providence residents (including a Spanish class).

Moreover, PEMA continues the development of the Rhode Island Common Operating Picture and advancing the concept of persistent situational awareness while pursuing GPS tracking and city camera system integration. Also, PEMA is leveraging technology to provide an online training platform across city departments.

b. Federal Reimbursement & Grants

For grant funding and requests, PEMA continues sustainability efforts through the Homeland Security Grant Program, the Emergency Management Performance Grants, and Hazard Mitigation funding and other grants at both the state and federal level. Also, PEMA revamped and standardized the public assistance process.

c. Equipment & Planning

For fiscal year 2017, there are several key initiatives to advance preparedness, including pursuing an aggressive training program and updating planning through the five year cycle. As a long term plan there will be an effort to reorganize the Emergency Operations Center from an emergency support function based structure to more closely mirror the National Incident Management System. This conversion will allow for a more responsive posture to current and future operations.

d. New Initiatives

There are several initiatives geared towards community resilience. The first is a Virtual Business Emergency Operations Center (VBEOC) platform to facilitate collaboration between public, private and non-profit organizations. The VBEOC platform will support existing processes and existing incident management systems such as WebEOC.

The second initiative has been coined the Providence Social Media Active Response Team (PSMART) and will involve a group of trained volunteers to provide real time information via social media in an emergency. This effort adds an extra layer of information to gain concise, accurate information on short notice.



The third initiative is a technology acquisition as PEMA deploys and continues to develop a Providence Unmanned Aerial System program in support of emergency management. This effort would aid in direct response to natural disasters, damage assessments, logistics support, and search and rescue.

The last effort is the development of “PEMA University” to increase the education capability of city employees, the business community and residents. Some of the proposed classes range from preparedness related activities, public assistance, and continuity of operations/government, active shooter training, to risk methodology and loss prevention.

5. Questions

Mr. Ginaitt asked a question in regards to efforts to enhance transportation in light of travel bans. Director Borg responded that the City of Providence uses the Corporate Emergency Access System and that he was aware of State efforts to continue incorporating public private partners.

6. **Adjournment** The meeting was adjourned at 2:00 p.m. The next meeting will take place June 22nd 2017.