



Rhode Island Emergency Management Advisory Council

MINUTES

January 17, 2006

2:00 PM

The Rhode Island Emergency Management Headquarters
645 New London Ave. – Cranston, RI

Agenda

I. Call to Order/Attendance

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 2:07 PM. In attendance were:

James Lanni, RIDPUC

Janice McClanaghan, RISEO

John Aucott, RIEMA

Leo D. Messier, PEMA

Marie Strauss, RIDEA

John Blessing, RISP/RIDFSM

Al Tardie, Gov. Comm. On Dis.

Thomas Gardner, TSA

Mike McDonough, TSA

Douglas Brown, RIPTA

Robert Thorne, TSA

Al Araujo, Pawtucket EMA

Norman Menard, Red Cross

Scott D. Caron, Smithfield Fire Dept.

Diana L. Arcand, RIEMA

Thomas Walsh, TSA

Tom McMillan, Exeter EMA

Joe Salter, TSA

Robert Thorne, TSA

Ray LaBelle, E-911

Lt. David Hayden, RISP

Meredith Arnold, HARI

Michael Mulhare, RIDEM

Thomas Kogut, RIDPUC

II. Approval of Minutes from December 20, 2005

The chairman requested the approval of the previous meeting minutes from December 20, 2005 pending any corrections. The minutes were approved.

III. Introduction

A. Comments from the Chairman

Chairman Fogarty began by introducing Diana Arcand. Mrs. Arcand noted some vacancies at RIEMA and hoped to have new members on board by February, primarily to help out with EMAP and TITAN. Chairman Fogarty noted that it is good to see that responsibilities at RIEMA are growing and is glad to see RIEMA adding staff. He inquired about a timetable for the new

FTEs to come on board and Ms. Arcand stated they expect to have all on board by mid-February.

IV. Homeland Security Grants – John Aucott, *RIEMA*

Lt. Governor Fogarty introduced John Aucott. Mr. Aucott announced that grant funding was shifting from population based assessment to risk based assessment. On January 25, there will be a stakeholders meeting to review Rhode Island's strategy for application. On March 2, a grant application is due. Rhode Island has received approximately \$60million in homeland security grants since 1999. Mr. Aucott suggested that because of the shifts in funding, Rhode Island may need to stress more regionalization in appropriation of grants. This could mean establishing certain geographic boundaries and the establishment of a target capability list.

Lt. Governor Fogarty noted that Rhode Island has had a 25% cut already and it seems as though more cuts are expected. He noted that it is unhealthy to build up programs and then have them die off. Lt. Governor Fogarty stated that if there are critical issues, he wants to ensure funding for all of them, noting that there will be programs that we cannot abandon. Chairman Fogarty asked if there was any way to ID such issues.

Mr. Aucott responded that Rhode Island wouldn't know for sure until June, but that it was necessary to maintain interoperability. Rhode Island will need state funding for the 800mhz to simply maintain the equipment. Lt. Governor Fogarty noted that as far as the state budget goes, June is a bit late. Mr. Aucott noted that by March RIEMA would at least know its priorities.

Lt. Governor Fogarty stated that Rhode Island has been funding RIEMA "on the cheap", but stated that Rhode Island has to make a judgement on what is important. State and local communities are going to have to stand up. Rhode Island must develop a capacity for emergency preparedness and that takes dollars.

Chairman Fogarty asked about the regional approach to federal grants. Mr. Aucott responded that it takes some efforts on behalf of communities with sharing information. There is already a potential project on evacuation routes; RIEMA has had some discussions on hurricane prep and a regional exercise. Lt. Governor Fogarty noted that in the next 10 months he would like to see that exercise happen.

V. Amber Alert Update- Lt. David Hayden, *Rhode Island State Police*

Lt. Hayden was introduced to give an Amber Alert update. He announced that some time next week there would be a "live" test of the system in coordination with the Lt. Governor's office. Lt. Governor Fogarty asked if this would be a periodic update and Lt. Hayden responded that he hoped it would be.

VI. Domestic Preparedness Subcommittee Report – John Aucott, *RIEMA*

Mr. Aucott was reintroduced to give the DPS report. He announced that due to infrequent meetings of the Legal Issues and Community Workgroups, they have been abolished but can be called together if certain issues arise. Lt. Governor Fogarty responded that it may be necessary to keep those groups meeting at least every 6 months.

VII. New Business/Comments/Suggestions

A. ENERGY UPDATE

Janice McClanaghan of RISEO provided an energy update. Because of the situation in Nigeria and the threats on oil workers, there is a slight concern about production. LIHEAP received \$15.2 million last year, this year Rhode Island will receive \$13.4 million, plus another \$844,000 in incidentals. So far the program has turned on 1,694 households.

Lt. Governor Fogarty announced that Rhode Island was fortunate for the recent help of Senator Reed and the oil companies involved that donated help. He hopes that more companies will respond to Senator Reed's call. Chairman Fogarty asked when LIHEAP will shut down. Ms. McClanaghan responded they were trying to stay open through the end of January. Chairman Fogarty noted that it is awful the Bush administration is taking a crisis approach to heating assistance. He also noted that the State needs to step up as well.

B. AVIAN FLU

Lt. Governor Fogarty noted that the Secretary of Health and Human Services, Mike Leavitt was in town recently to discuss the avian flu, but that there didn't seem like there was anything new to report. Dr. Fulton gave a brief update, noting that the situation in Turkey is a problem. Their situation has raised questions about controlling fowl. Many people that have contracted it were asymptomatic. This has been the case from Vietnam to Turkey and it could be an indication that the virus has gotten milder. In Rhode Island, there are many people raising fowl and it could become an issue. HEALTH is currently working with DEM should the flu spread to Rhode Island fowl. Dr. Fulton noted that the flu is much more likely to infect our ducks sooner than later. On January 31, there will be the first hospital planning meeting at Newport hospital. The \$800,000 Rhode Island is receiving from the federal government will assist in that attempt. HHS has been emphasizing local response and effort to the flu and this has been happening thanks to RIEMA leadership. Right now HEALTH is planning drills to start in the spring.

Chairman Fogarty emphasized that should the avian flu hit, Rhode Island will be on its own. Rhode Island must be sure that it is prepared for the worst case scenario. It is imperative that the State is able to maintain basic services, should FEMA be late to respond. Lt. Governor Fogarty asked if there was a plan for educating people and calming down in the event of a

panic. Dr. Fulton responded that DEM has been working on this and HEALTH has been assisting on this. They have been especially focused on the scenario of Rhode Island foul contracting the avian flu. Chairman Fogarty asked how the flu would reach Rhode Island. Dr. Fulton responded that it would come down through Alaska and down through Canada. It could also reach Rhode Island through the importation of birds that were asymptomatic.

C. UPDATES

Ray Labelle announced that CNN will be doing an interview with E-911 regarding its use of Pictometry. Leo Messier announced that Providence EMA was looked at for an EOC backup for the State. They are also looking into legislation to enable Reverse-911 to call all Rhode Islanders in the case of an emergency. PEMA is hoping to submit legislation this year.

No other updates were given. Lt. Governor Fogarty thanked everyone for their hard work, professionalism and support, most especially Director Warren and General Enright.

IX. **Adjournment**

The Lt. Governor motioned to adjourn and the motion was seconded. The meeting adjourned at 3:05 P.M.