



Rhode Island Emergency Management Advisory Council

MINUTES

February 21, 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 2:09 PM. In attendance were:

Janice McClanaghan, *RISEO*

Thomas Walsh, *TSA*

Tom McMillan, *Exeter EMA*

Robert Thorne, *TSA*

Mike McDonough, *TSA*

Douglas Brown, *RIPTA*

Robert Thorne, *TSA*

Leo Kennedy, *Cranston Fire*

Binyamin I. Efreom, *Gov. Comm. on Dis.*

Thomas Kilday, *HEALTH*

David Gifford, *HEALTH*

BG John L. Enright, *RIEMA*

Scott D. Caron, *Smithfield Fire Dept.*

Marie Strauss, *RIDEA*

John Blessing, *RISP/RIDSFM*

Ray LaBelle, *E-911*

Lt. David Hayden, *RISP*

Meredith Arnold, *HARI*

Al Araujo, *Pawtucket EMA*

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Paul Stasiuk, *National Grid*

Amanda Milkovits, *ProJo*

Robert Warren, *RIEMA*

II. Approval of Minutes from January 17, 2006

The chairman requested the approval of the previous meeting minutes from January 17, 2006 pending any corrections. The minutes were approved.

III. Introduction

A. Comments from the Chairman

Chairman Fogarty began by briefly discussing the recently released proposed state budget. He noted the potential that federal dollars will be reduced this year. Lt. Governor Fogarty then stated he has had preliminary discussions with James Lee Witt, a former director of FEMA and current consultant on

emergency preparedness. He will discuss this meeting with both Director Warren and the General and would like to take advantage of his resources. Lt. Governor then asked about the status of new FTE's at RIEMA. Director Warren responded that four were on board and one more is expected soon.

Lt. Governor Fogarty asked about the grant application process mentioned by John Aucott at the last EMAC meeting. Director Warren responded that the homeland security people have been meeting weekly with stakeholders and will submit a grant request hopefully by March 2.

Chairman Fogarty asked if the National Review Report had been sent in to the Federal government and Director Warren responded that it had. Director Warren also noted that the Federal government will be coming into Rhode Island the week of March 13th to evaluate Rhode Island preparedness.

Chairman Fogarty asked for any comments Director Warren had on the FY07 budget, noting a bit of an increase from previous years. All that Director Warren noted was that he was planning on meeting with Congressman Langevin's staff to try and acquire some additional Federal dollars. Lt. Governor Fogarty noted that he would like to try and get Congressman Langevin to attend an EMAC meeting in the near future to discuss the Federal grant situation for the upcoming year.

Lt. Governor Fogarty asked about the status of hurricane planning. Director Warren stated that the outline for the plan is in his office, and they are working on formalizing it. Evacuation maps are now online and available to the public. Director Warren has an upcoming meeting with the Connecticut EMA director, noting that for their hurricane preparations, they rely heavily on their EOP. Lt. Governor Fogarty asked about the public information aspect of the planning. Director Warren responded that Armand Randolph has upcoming meetings and has ordered new pamphlets of information on hurricane preparedness to be distributed to cities and towns. Lt. Governor Fogarty also noted the recent stories in the news about meetings regarding chain of command. Director Warren responded that after getting some information from a consulting group, he is setting up trainings based on IS-700 for the Governor, his cabinet, mayors, town managers and local politicians. It is expected that this will span out to other locals in the community. The Governor has issued an executive order for this.

A question was asked of the Director about how it is determined which locals get what money from Federal grants. He responded by stating that in the first couple of years after 9/11 the money was focused primarily on equipment. This year much of the money has been focused on trainings. For the upcoming grants, Director Warren noted that RIEMA is asking for locals to submit grants now. Tom McMillan asked about evacuation plans, he wanted to know where people are meant to head once they are out of a particular

town. Director Warren responded that this was being looked at from a shelter point of view. RIEMA continues to meet with the Red Cross in order to increase the number of shelters in the state, with the understanding that most evacuation routes will lead people to major highways. The Director also noted that every community will be receiving a laptop with communications software on it in order to keep local EMA's and RIEMA in coordination should a statewide evacuation need to take place.

Lt. Governor Fogarty thanked Director Warren and noted the terrific job he's been doing so far.

B. Comments from the Vice-Chairman

General Enright noted that it is important that everyone stays focused and submits their plans to RIEMA for hurricane preparedness. Hurricane season starts June 1 and that date is approaching quickly. The General noted that he will be attending a meeting in Albany on the lessons learned from the Texas evacuation last summer. He also noted that RIDOT is conducting an origin and destination study of the state's transportation.

IV. **Center for Emergency Preparedness and Response /Avian flu update –**

Tom Kilday, Rhode Island Department of Health

Lt. Governor Fogarty introduced Tom Kilday to give an avian flu update. Mr. Kilday began by explaining that people are currently tracking migratory patterns of birds, keeping an eye on the spread of the avian flu within that population. HEALTH is currently developing a model plan for all hospitals within the state, with the primary goal being the regionalization of health care should the flu become a pandemic flu. HEALTH is also working with DEM to develop cultivation rules and public information guidelines. Currently there are three main messages for the public, especially important for when the avian flu reaches Rhode Island's bird population:

- 1.) The difference between the bird flu and the human flu.
- 2.) The definition of a true outbreak.
- 3.) Personal preparedness.

General Enright asked if there had been any easily transmitted cases of avian flu from human to human. Mr. Kilday responded that of the 169 cases over the last three years there have been none easily transmitted from human to human. Lt. Governor Fogarty asked what will happen when the first bird is infected in Rhode Island. Mr. Kilday reiterated that HEALTH and DEM will emphasize the difference between the avian flu in birds and humans, as well as how to handle the birds within our population. Lt. Governor Fogarty asked if there was any marketing planned. It was noted that a one-time education campaign will not be as effective as a continued campaign. Dr. Gifford stressed the value of the FAQ documents currently available on the RI HEALTH website. General Enright also noted the availability of the "Bird Flu and You" posters.

Mr. Kilday also noted that the egg-based vaccine takes too long to manufacture (3-6 months) and that a majority of the Federal dollars appropriated to pandemic flu are directed towards research of cell based technology for vaccines.

V. Domestic Preparedness Subcommittee Report - Robert Warren, Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency

Director Warren noted that there was a meeting of the Elderly and Disabled Working Group on the 27th. Hospitals have now establish codes for emergency situations. Response and Hazmat groups are still conducting trainings. DPS is trying to reinvigorate and formalize VOAD and the Communications Working Group is moving forward with 800mhz implementation.

VI. Energy Update – Janice McClanaghan, Rhode Island Energy Office

Ms. McClanaghan noted that crude oil was down to a low that hasn't been seen in a while but wouldn't remain because of the increase of travelling in the spring. There is currently a battle in Congress over whether or not additional money will be an appropriation and if it is an appropriation, this will mean less money for the northeast.

VII. New Business/Comments/Suggestions

Lt. Hayden noted that on January 26th there was an Amber Alert test and the outcome was positive. The RISP are currently planning a practical exercise for April, in coordination with Director Warren. The date will be announced soon. Lt. Governor Fogarty asked if this would be similar to the test of three years ago. Lt. Hayden answered that it would be but with a few new variables, perhaps including the Amber Alert Portal.

Ray Labelle noted the introduction of legislation for support of Reverse-911. Lt. Governor Fogarty made a motion for the council to write a letter of support for this legislation, the motion was seconded and passed.

It was announced that things at TF Green Airport were busy and an expansion was underway. Once completed, security lines will move quicker and the x-rays of check-on luggage will be behind the counters, freeing up space.

IX. Adjournment

The Lt. Governor motioned to adjourn and the motion was seconded. The meeting adjourned at 3:00 P.M.