



Rhode Island Emergency Management Advisory Council

Meeting Minutes

THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL WAS HELD:

May 24, 2007

2:30 PM

The Rhode Island Emergency Management Headquarters

645 New London Ave. – Cranston, RI

Planning Room

MINUTES

I. Call to Order/ Attendance

Lt. Governor Elizabeth Roberts	Leo Kennedy (Cranston FD)
MG Robert Bray	Amanda Milkovits (Projo)
Director Robert Warren (RIEMA)	Rich Blott (Rep. Langevin)
Lt. Col. Patricia Ryan (RING)	Tom McMillan (Exeter EMA)
Dr. Anthony Cirillo (DOH)	Mike McDonough (TSA)
Lt. David Hayden (RISP)	Tom Walsh (TSA)
John Holt (Red Cross)	Lori Needham (RIBA)
Diana Arcand (RIEMA)	Chris Laccinole (VA)
Joseph Salter (TSA)	Larry Grimaldi (DEA)
Leo Messier (Providence EMA)	Robert Thorton (TSA)
Dawn Lewis (HARI)	Raghava Kavalla (Brown)
Matt Gugliemetti (RI Energy Resources)	Paul Stasiuk (National Grid)
Al Araujo (Pawt. EMA)	Mary O'Rourke (ASFT)
Geof Milner (RI SATERN)	Ron Pigeon (USCG)
Brian Pires (US Attorney/ATAC)	

II. Approval of the minutes from March 29, 2007

The chair offered a motion to accept the minutes from the March 29, 2007 meeting. The motion was seconded by Dr. Cirillo and Director Warren. The motion was passed.

III. Introduction

A. *Comments from the Chairman, Lt. Governor Elizabeth H. Roberts*

Lt. Gov. Roberts thanked the staff at RIEMA and RING for their hard work and service during the Ardent Sentry Hurricane Drill in May. General Bray and Director Warren's leadership was on target and the efforts of all of the emergency personnel have made Rhode Island more prepared.

B. *Comments from MG Robert Bray, Adjutant General RING*

The MG commented that Rhode Island handled the drill very well and that it was evident that our state has plans in place to deal with a disaster and we can accomplish the objectives of the plan.

At the federal level, the MG said we gained a great deal of respect and confidence in our preparations and that is extremely significant. The MG didn't know if the public truly appreciated the value of the exercise for preparedness across the country, but some major headway was made to develop relationships between state and feds.

While the drill was very successful, the MG said Rhode Island needs to keep training and keep getting resources for preparation. The drill must be reviewed so that the state can shore up weaknesses and understand our strengths.

Some of the state's weaknesses are interoperable communications and a better understanding of the command structure.

Clarifying the roles of state/municipal officials needs to be more clear. Continuity plans need to continue being developed and we must push for the training of cabinet members on ICS.

Our communications systems were made a priority and we have acquired the technology. The next step is to make sure the command and control piece is in place. That will be RI EMA's focus for the rest of the year, including asking our partners/municipalities to focus on participating in on the communication piece.

MG said Yvette was very valuable. The key to remember is at the end of the exercise Yvette won. We are not going to win the battle, but we can mitigate the effects of mother nature. It behooves us to take the opportunity and lessons and learn from them.

IV. Domestic Preparedness Subcommittee Report – *Robert Warren, RIEMA*

Director Warren said that Paul Choquette, head of the Special Populations subcommittee, will step down and we are currently looking for a new chair.

Director Warren also noted that Dr. Cirillo has been appointed the point of contact for the NESEC pandemic flu preparations.

Dr. Cirillo said the stockpiling process is beginning and storage space was found. DOH/RIEMA is waiting for grant guidance to come in and it should be in by June 1. That guidance will determine how much money will be available for continued progression.

Lt. Governor Roberts asked where Rhode Island is working with the private sector preparing for a pandemic?

Dr. Cirillo said DOH is looking for niches where the state can help the business community with pandemic.

V. Hurricane Exercise Review – Robert Warren, RIEMA

Director Warren reported that hot washes have been finished and categorized by agencies and municipalities. A more comprehensive report from the federal agency should be out in the next few weeks.

There were some design flaws in the drills, including the lack of injects to the EOC. Chief Dillion created injects for the state so that we could test more operational procedures.

Director Warren broke down the hot wash by categories:

Logistics

The biggest push for logistics was commodities, including food and water distribution to communities. They now know they have to order 25 hours in advance. Dr. Warren wants to hold a drill on commodities in the early fall.

Planning

First time a National Guard representative was in the planning section.

Director Warren recommended a strategy cell inside the planning section because there is a need to look 72 hours in advance. The state meteorologist attended the hurricane school in January and participated in the entire policy session group. His interaction was instrumental. The policy discussion of evacuations were real and came in real time.

The best thing was the policy group did not come into planning room. If policy wanted something done they handed it off. That was a successful change from the mycoplasma case.

Operations

RI EMA facilities were insufficient. Rooms were overstressed and there is a lack of latrine or shower facilities.

Web EOC performed very well, but there is a need for training for RINET MUNI.

EOC/JOC concept went really well. Everything went through the chain of command.

ESF's all performed very well. The command structure was organized. Ex. State Troopers combined with search and rescue on ESF 9 and it worked better for information.

Having the federal representatives at the EOC worked very well, except some personnel had to go to the JFO. It is so important to have the federal reps here to make sure our plan is married to their plan. No incident action plan went out from the federal team or state without talking about it.

The drill took out roads that RI EMA didn't think we would be susceptible including Route 6 and the Mt. Hope Bridge. There is a need to for another plan to get Aquidneck evacuated.

Sheltering: The drilled called for 400,000 citizens to be sheltered.

Firefighting: The emergency responders do not differentiate from wild lands and urban areas. There is a need to get the fire chiefs to work on this issue.

RIEMA: Needed more section chiefs meeting more. Also needed to create an air branch. Need someone to manage air capabilities better.

Director Warren said personnel was limited and he wanted to thank all the partner agencies for their help, including TSA.

Leo Messier complemented RI EMA and the National Guard.

The MG was asked to testify in front of Congress because of our involvement.

Dr. Cirillo spoke of pandemic stand up during the drill. The United States Health and Human Services head official had a chance to come and Rhode Island showed exactly how we manage emergencies. Dr. Cirillo has met with the Volunteer Association of RI to create a mechanism to capture volunteers in one system so we can better manage it.

Lt. Governor Robers asked if there was any participation from assisted living and nursing homes.

Dr. Cirillo said the state had 6 nursing homes participating in the drill and DOH found out nursing homes need forms to standardize requests for assistance so they know. What are the questions they have to answer for us to help them. This year one of the focuses of planning is nursing homes.

Lt. Governor Roberts suggested Dr. Cirillo also concentrates on the assisted living facilities and senior high rises, as well as other vulnerable populations.

Director Warrens said RI EMA consulted with structural engineers and need to bring residents to lower floors in senior high rises.

Lt. Governor Roberts asked if assisted living managers have training?

Dr. Cirillo said all facilities must have an evacuation plan, but there is a need to get down to individual facilities specifically for guidance in requesting aid.

Lt. Governor Roberts suggested the Long Term Care Coordinating Council as a good tool to get this planning done.

The Rev. Holt said the drill was a good experience. The Red Cross stood up shelters in Jamestown and East Providence and the operations went very well. The Red Cross actually had to stand up a shelter during the Bradford fire. The exercise element made doing the real work very smooth.

Rev. Holt said the concern we all share is that it is one thing to open two or three shelters during a drill. In the event of an actual emergency, there will be a need for 30 shelters and two super shelters. Rev. Holt said thanks to RI EMA we have 110 additional managers with training, but it is still not enough to take care of a major catastrophic event.

Rev. Holt said the Red Cross has been asking a lot of questions to regional counterparts about pre-positioning and moving of commodities.

Rev. Holt said the drill also raised the question of spontaneous shelters and how to best integrate them into the emergency structure.

Director Messier said Providence has been working closely with DOH to work with long term care facilities to drop off medical supplies instead of having nursing staffs leave during emergencies. Cities and towns can get them the supplies and then responders wouldn't have to transport patients.

Lt. Governor Roberts said she wants policy people to get more training. She will talk to the governor to get decision makers trained in ICS so that there is an understanding at the top levels of government.

VI. National Weather Service 2007 Hurricane Season Forecast — *Glenn Field, NOAA*

Glenn Field from NOAA started his presentation by thanking RI EMA and the local municipal EMA's for the good relationships with NOAA. He mentioned that Providence had become the third "Storm Ready" city or town in the state. He would like the rest of the 36 towns and cities in Rhode Island to concentrate efforts on this process.

For the first time in the country, NOAA will begin forecasting rip tides for the Southern New England region. The launch of the new product will be unveiled on June 8th.

Glenn Field reported on the findings of NOAA's 2007 Hurricane Forecast. For the entire power point presentation, please contact the Office of Lieutenant Governor Elizabeth Roberts.

Joe Salter of TSA asked Glen Field if we can receive storms from areas other than the African coast or the Bahamas.

Field said it is possible but they would be very weak or break up before reaching New England.

Salter asked Field to repeat the calculation of how fast a hurricane travels and how fast wind speeds could reach. Field said while the average speed of a New England hurricane is about 33 mph, the hurricane of 1938 did travel at 60 mph between Cape Hatteras and Connecticut.

The three rules for emergency responders in New England are: Don't worry about when the eye will make land fall. You need to prepare before so that you can have an idea of the track of the storm. The north and west sides of the storm will always have high amounts of rain, while the east and south sides of the storm will always be sunshine and severe winds.

Dr. Cirillo asked if storm tracking cones were less reliable in New England.

Field said they are not less reliable but New England storms take more turns. The important key to tracking is to watch the trend of the storm.

VI. New Business/ Member Comments and/or Suggestions

Director Messier said there was a drill at the Providence Place Mall last Saturday. There will also be a major drill in the mall on October 7th. The Providence branch of the United States Post Office will be conducting an anthrax test alert. This includes tabletop drills in July and a full scale drill in August, including pharmaceutical distributions.

There is a port evacuation drill on June 6th and 15 facilities will be participating. Providence EMA will be using reverse 911 to notify companies and residents. Providence will be working with Chief Dillion of the PFD. RIPTA will also be involved.

Director Messier is working on the Port Security grant to enhance video surveillance to upper bay. Sept 08 EMI will come to RI to conduct an integrated emergency management course.

Lt. Governor Roberts asked if reverse 9-1-1 is capable of crossing municipal boundaries because if there is a port evacuation in Providence, it will effect areas both south (Cranston) and east (East Providence).

Directors Warren and Messier both said they would be able to activate reverse 9-1-1 for all effected.

Joe Salter of TSA said there will be an evacuation drill on block island.

VII. Adjournment