



Rhode Island Emergency Management Advisory Council
Meeting Minutes:
December 18, 2007
2:30 PM

The Rhode Island Convention Center
One Sabin Street
Providence, RI
Room 557

AGENDA

I. Call to Order/ Attendance

Lt. Governor Elizabeth Roberts (Chair)	John Holt (Red Cross)
MG Robert Bray (RING)	Joe Salter (TSA)
Alysia Mihalakos (DOH)	Kate McCarthy-Barnett (DOH)
Lt. Darren Delaney (RISP)	Chris Laccinole (VA)
Major Steve O'Donnell (RISP)	Steve Florio (Deaf and Hard of Hearing)
Paul Stasiuk (National Grid)	Thomas Walsh (TSA)
Richard Brown (East Providence)	Capt. Pete Popko (USCG)
Ray LaBelle (911)	Erin Lambie (USCG)
Matteo Guglielmetti (Energy Resource)	Tom Kilday (RIEMA)
Dawn Lewis (HARI)	Brittan Bates (RIEMA)
Steve Preston (Hazmat)	Amy Gryzbowski (RIEMA)
James Lanni (PUC)	Vin Marzullo (Citizen's Corp)
Carol Kent (MHRH)	Rep. Joseph Trillo

II. Approval of the minutes from July 26, 2007

Minutes approved

III. Dec. 13 Snow Storm

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

Effective communication and coordination—and therefore an effective response—did not happen on Dec. 13. Like all Rhode Islanders, I have expressed my frustration about this breakdown in communication.

The governor acknowledged the failures of last week and acknowledged the need to learn from this situation to move forward.

My office has been part of effective emergency responses and drills and we will be part of the solution moving forward. During emergencies and exercises, when the EOC is

activated, my office has a vital role—not disrupting the chain of command—but contributing to solutions, communicating with the public and developing policy responses. Every member of my staff has successfully completed emergency preparedness training and they know their roles and responsibilities in an activated EOC.

The charge of this council is to analyze this situation and make recommendations for how we can ensure this does not happen again.

The talent to solve these problems is in this room. I am committed to working with elected and appointed officials at every level of government to ensure that we better coordinate our emergency response on behalf of RI citizens in all future events.

The EMAC will review these events and implement an action plan with recommendations to the governor with a presentation at a special meeting of the EMAC on January 22 addressing at least five key areas of concern:

1. Timely and effective use of the Joint Information Center (JIC).
2. Creation of a statewide system for coordinated school closures at all levels from preschool through universities.
3. A statewide system for effective coordination and communication with employers/private sector regarding closing times in an emergency.
4. Review and revise rush hour plans for major traffic centers statewide.
5. And most important: Much better communication/coordination between state and municipal officials including two way communication, WebEOC participation by local officials, formal agreements requiring use of interoperable communications.

I will work with General Bray to develop and an action plan from this council to address past failures and ensure future safety and security for all Rhode Islanders.

B. Comments from MG Robert Bray, Adjutant General RING

I want to address my comments to the committee specifically:

I support the lieutenant governor and her specific proposals. I look forward to working with her moving forward as we have in the past. I look forward to moving ahead and past what happened on Dec. 13. As the lieutenant governor said, the solution set to these problems is here in this room and we will call upon you for that assistance.

IV. Dec. 16 Snow Storm and T.F. Green Aircraft Incident— *Tom Kilday, RIEMA*

EMA was activated in a watch status after the report of the aircraft incident. Director Warren and Tom Kilday responded to the airport and set up the mobile command center. Brittan Bates was activated as the public information officer and worked with RIAC. There were no injuries or deaths from the incident. There is a continuing investigation by the FAA.

Lt. Governor Roberts asked if there was communication with the city of Warwick and the surrounding neighborhoods.

Tom Kilday said there is a plan with the RIAC and the city. RIAC's operation center is in the old tower/terminal. Warwick FD supported RIAC Fire. There was a decision that there was no need to pull more alarms. There was not a mass casualty plan implemented. The airport was reopened by 1930. WebEOC was used to coordinate with entities involved.

Lt. Gov. Roberts asked if there is a plan to inform homes close to the runway?

Tom Kilday referred the question to RIAC.

Joe Salter said that TSA, working with different law enforcement agencies including the fusion center, made the determination that there was no terrorist nexus involved in the incident. The incident was a simple recovery of passengers and crew. The NTSB will be conducting an investigation, which will be a long lengthy process to determine the actual cause. The Sept. 27 exercise showed we have the team in place. Salter said that the state and federal teams always have an 80 percent plan in place and an incident like this shows we can do the other 20 percent very quickly. Salter said he had been through many airport incidents and this incident was run very well.

Lt. Gov. Roberts asked Salter if there was a communication plan with the neighborhoods surrounding the airport?

Salter said the RIAC does maintain emergency operations plan. In this particular incident the aircraft never left the runway (runway 5). If there were a need to contact the surrounding area, it would have taken place.

V. Domestic Preparedness Subcommittee Report—

A. Haz Mat/Decon Technical Working Group— *Steve Preston, Woonsocket FD*

The Haz Mat/Decon working group continues to meet monthly. The teams are in the middle of the certification process. The teams are also updating equipment through the RIEMA grant process. The group has also begun working on the 2009 grant process. The entire team learned valuable information from the convention center drill.

B. Communications Working Group—*Tom Kilday, RISP*

- **RIEMA has expanded the membership of the committee** to include key partners such as the league of cities and towns.
- Infrastructure build out of RICON is ongoing – **3 tower projects followed by 3 more.**
- **RIEMA Submitted the Public Safety Communications Interoperability (PSIC) Grant Investment Justifications (IJ's) and the Statewide Communications Interoperability Plan (SCIP) on November 28th for to meet the December 4th deadline.** Both of these items meet our application requirements for the \$7.3 million grant under The Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 which directed the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) to provide a grant through DHS for communications interoperability.
 - **PSIC funding will be used to achieve the following the goals:**
 - Continue the build-out of the RICON system to provide true statewide coverage
 - Provide a RICON radio for use in all front line municipal police and fire apparatus as well as licensed EMS services, EMA Directors, hospitals emergency departments, colleges and universities, and state response agencies (1400 subscriber units)

- Build a Strategic Technology Reserve to support additional users and federal assets, while also supplementing tower infrastructure
- **Provide additional channels (frequencies) to increase RISCO capability (Providence).**
- Increase our Amateur Radio capabilities as it pertains to statewide sheltering

MG Bray said 800 MHz is the technology bridge for interoperability. The state is coming to the point where we will have upgraded all of our technology and enter a sustenance phase. Narragansett will no longer have a responsibility for maintenance of the system. RISP will take over that responsibility and the key to this transition is the RISP budget. The state has spent \$37 million already and we have not fully implemented its use.

It is incumbent to use the 800 MHz system completely. The Communications working group needs to develop the operating procedure and we need the entire council's input on this plan. We all agreed to use it and collaborated on it. Now the entire state needs to use it. RIEMA will begin pushing the implementation and usage.

The lieutenant governor said that her opening statements made it very clear that if we need to have formal agreements to get people on to the system it will be a priority.

C. Volunteer/Citizens' Corp Council—*Vin Marzullo*

The Citizens' Corp Council is a national plan to get volunteers involved in the emergency system. The working group has reorganized to create more strategic plans with organization in the community. Training and credentialing is very important for the group.

Handout attached.

D. Hospital Preparedness Working Group—*Dawn Lewis, HARI*

The Hospital Preparedness Working Group is working on the 2007-2008 grant implementation.

The surge capacity system is fully functional and was activated during aircraft incident.

The event calendar is ready and will be deployed to the community in mid January. All drills, trainings, meetings will be on there to collaborate intra-agency.

There will also be an emergency notification system in mid-January. Hospitals will have the ability to have templates ready to contact those that they want to contact during an event, such as their medical professionals. This communication network is a two way system.

The hospital group is also working on medical preparations such as distributing bans for triage and transportation. This will help at the Family Assistance center to locate patients during an emergency.

The group is looking to purchase the relevant equipment for specialty hospitals, working on the homeland security drill evaluation and pulling together kits for the pandemic flu preparations.

E. Behavioral Health Disaster Response Network Working Group—*Carol Kent, MHRH*

The working group is pleased RI recognizes the importance of behavioral health in an emergency incident. The group is composed of many partners. There are seven regional response teams based in our community health centers. The working group has signed a memorandum of understanding with the Chaplain Center and the RI Psychological Association.

The working group has trained over 500 people and there are 422 active members. There are plans for a family assistance drill in March with Providence and RIEMA. The drill is to test the best way to set up a family assistance center and what ESF's need to be incorporated.

The fiscal year 2007 has focused on mental health surge capacity and the working group has visited 7 hospitals to date.

F. Urban Search and Rescue—*Tom Kilday, RIEMA*

- Chief Bill McKenna is the TF leader.
- **USAR is reviewing modified deployment models under NIMS typing I (28 member quick response), II (37 member extended response), III (70 member full response) and the deployment of an Incident Support Team for management activities during response and/or at RIEMA EOC.**
- RIEMA is working on integrating the modified team models into the Statewide Mutual Aid Plan for in state activation/deployment.
- RIEMA is developing operations policies and procedures for team management, liaison and purchasing (John Washburn is the Operations Manager from RIEMA).
- **Inventory, logistics management, NIMS typing and training are the primary goals of the team going into 2008.**

Lt. Governor Roberts asked how hard is it to transform teams for these functions?

Tom Kilday said that since the teams can only be activated for large-scale events there is some fatigue due to non-activation. The working group is trying to find different trigger mechanisms to use their skills more effectively.

G. Mass Casualty—*Tom Kilday, RIEMA*

- Designated funding under FY 07 (5K per municipality/Team) (8 teams)
- Working on identifying new committee leader (Gregg Noury from Cumberland)
- Developing meeting schedule for 2008
- Anticipate expanded scope and membership of committee
- Rhode Island MCI plan is first item on the agenda for committee review

H. Port Security—*Erin Lambie, USCG*

Handout attached.

General Bray asked DEM to talk about Maritime cameras and said that they were proving to be very valuable.

DEM representative was not from the investigation division and did not comment.

General Bray said the collaborative between EDC, DEM and Providence has worked very well, but the federal grants are coming to an end for this purpose. The state would be in need of funds for maintenance and there are grants for matching money for new programs.

General Bray said the state sees the maritime cameras as a major component of the port security effort and that there is a need for at least the 25 percent match to keep this system going.

Lt. Governor Roberts asked about the reopening of the Motiva facility.

Peter Popko of the USCG said the Motiva facility was back up and running. The USCG met with Providence FD and Motiva. The company bought a very expensive apparatus for high capacity foam.

The port area has come together as a group Popko said. Chief Mike Dolan (PFD) has done a good job leading this effort. Last week there was a tabletop exercise with local and federal responders.

Since Motiva there has been a closer communication about scenarios. The next drill is an opportunity to expand to the private sector and state staff.

One issue for the state is the problems we may encounter with energy delivery in the event of an incident. What do we do to bridge that time? Local industry in the port continues to partner with the USCG.

Motiva also sponsored an oil spill drill before the fire. According to Popko the drill had a positive effect on the actual incident.

Lt. Gov. Roberts said there is an increase of population with the expansion of the Bay Campus at Johnson and Wales.

Popko said JWU was a sponsor of the tabletop drill last week including a scenario dedicated to sheltering in place. Reverse 911 was activated and there was participation by Cranston officials, Providence Fire and JWU Security. Hospitals also participated in policy discussions about how to deal with patients that self-deliver.

Rep. Trillo asked what the additional money cover for cameras and in what areas?

Tom Kilday said the new cameras would be situated in the upper Providence River

Rep. Trillo asked how much money would be needed?

General Bray said about 400K for maintenance, but he would have to get back to the council on the money for new cameras.

I. Law Enforcement Working Group—*Lt. Darren Delaney, RISP*

Lt. Delaney said that the State Fusion center continues successful operations and has been educating private and public entities about the threats presented to us.

WMD teams from Providence, Warwick, Newport, and Woonsocket are acquiring new equipment and they continue to drill in Woonsocket (Nov.) and Warwick (Dec.).

The Amber Alert team from RISP trained hospital security staffs recently. In the event of a natural delay by local police departments, security staffs could be crucial. A drill the week of Dec. 10 was very successful.

Major O'Donnell commented that he and Colonel Dougherty were out on the roads during the entire time monitoring the storm.

There were 80 troopers deployed, including 44 duty officers and 39 detectives. Major O'Donnell said this was an unprecedented response and the troopers handled over 200 accidents and assisted or towed over 800 vehicles. 2 troopers were stationed in the TMC the entire storm.

The real problems occurred on route 95 at the Thurbers Ave exit and also on the exit ramp to Route 37. Route 10 and Route 6 split also had problems with traction and cars were stuck trying to go up the ramp. Major O'Donnell said one lesson learned from Dec. 13 is the need for more heavy tows. The major problems were trucks stuck on the Thurbers Ave. curb blocking the all the lanes of 95 heading south.

General Bray commended the state police for a full deployment in adverse weather.

Rep Trillo asked if any exits were closed to traffic or if we detoured all truck off Thurbers Ave?

Major O'Donnell said the problem was trucks would lose momentum and not be able to get through Thurbers Ave curve.

Lt. Gov. Roberts thanked the RISP for their service on the night of the storm and commented how important their help would be in this process.

Ray Labelle added that E9-1-1 received 2810 calls and averaged 350 an hour.

Rep. Trillo asked if E9-1-1 was aware of the kids on the buses from Providence?

LaBelle said E9-1-1 did receive a call somewhere between 5 and 6 pm and forwarded those calls to Providence PD and FD.

J. Special Populations Working Group—*Kate McCarthy-Barnett, DOH*

Kate McCarthy-Barnett said the group is meeting monthly and concentrating its efforts on the special needs registry. 2000 citizens have already signed up.

The working group is also focused on an assessment of the Red Cross shelter survey in 5 major areas: vents, dialysis, communication issues, prison system, functional independence (Personal care assistance), and transportation.

The lieutenant governor said inclusion is very important in emergency planning and she thanked the working group for their work.

K. Transportation Security Working Group—*Joe Salter, TSA*

Joe Salter announced that there is an upcoming meeting of the transportation security-working group. VIPIR operations are continuing and TSA has received great cooperation between federal, state and local officials.

The airport is the no. 1 target for VIPIR operations. The threats have not gone away. Salter said the working group could activate and put together an operation within hours.

The working group completed the first operation directed towards cruise ships in the country recently. The TSA in Rhode Island has been recognized as having the best maritime operations in the nation.

Lt. Gov. Roberts asked about the preparations for holiday travel.

Salter commented that during Dec. 13 the airport stayed open the entire day. The airport always has extra personnel for the holidays.

During the aircraft incident, runway 1634 was open in a matter of hours after the incident and runway five opened at 1330 yesterday. The aircraft is currently in hangar number 2 awaiting NTSB inspection.

VI. Airport/IED Hijacking Drill – *Joe Salter, TSA*

Salter said the drill was challenging in many ways including the weather and the timing (past midnight). It was a positive operational drill and Salter thanked all the partners from RI EMA, TSA, Warwick officials and the RIAC.

The drill was a dual incident scenario testing both an improvised explosive device as well as a hijacking.

Exercises are never perfect, but it was highly successful and brought many different responders together.

VII. New Business/ Member Comments and/or Suggestion

General Bray asked the Council to focus on collaboration for the next meeting. He asked members to bear in mind that the council is about coordination and direct impact from members is extremely important.

Rep. Trillo asked if the state has a plan to deal with the next snow emergency? He thinks the state should have a plan by stages.

Lt. Gov. Roberts said clear responsibility and better communication will be the priority and direction before the special meeting.

General Bray said there is a need to use the technology we have available to us including RITURN, RISON and WebEOC to create a common operating picture.

On the Dec. 16 storm RI EMA sent out a directive to municipalities to activate the WebEOC. 4 communities responded. The General said RI EMA will send a "report card" out for those towns that did not respond to the directive. If need be, the grant process will also be utilized to ensure more cooperation.

The General said RI EMA needs to do a better job to establish protocol for levels of response for agencies. General Bray said he believes things were done well in the past, but the state has a mandate to do better.

The General reiterated that agencies, cities and towns would see more direction from RIEMA on the use of interoperable tools.

Vin Marzullo said public officials need to communicate and give better guidance. He said he sees that there is a critical need to know what is going on during an emergency and there has to be a communication plan for the community at large.

The lieutenant governor said clear and effective communication is part of the directive she laid out for the General and this council.

She said the school illness incident in January 2007 showed how coordination between local officials, state agencies (RIDE) and emergency management officials can work very well. We have the ability to make it work, but it did not on Dec. 13. We need to use the capabilities we have.

General Bray said the task of the council is to bring emergency management concepts up for discussion. He said RI EMA have had many cases of using the system effectively such as the Ardent Sentry drill). We have a great deal of capabilities in this state and Dec. 13 does not mean we are not prepared. But General Bray said n there is a need to define when and who uses those capabilities.

Rep. Trillo asked if a commission would be formed to look into how each agency from our state performed? He asked Ray Labelle how 911 did not link with Providence to get school children off school buses.

Ray Labelle said E9-1-1 is a transfer agency and link directly to the local municipalities. Unless it is a state emergency, agents are just talking to other agencies. If the emergency operation center would have been put activated, E9-1-1 would have put the EMA protocol in place.

Lt. Gov. Roberts said the General has already begun an agency-by-agency analysis and will continue so he can report on the January 22 meeting.

The council was introduced to the new state fire marshal Mr. Frank Sylvester.

Adjourned Labelle. Trillo second motion.