



Rhode Island Emergency Management Advisory Council

Meeting Notice

THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL WILL BE HELD:

March 18th, 2008

2:30 PM

Schofield Armory

705 New London Ave

Cranston, RI 02920

AGENDA

I. Call to Order/ Attendance—Lt. Governor Elizabeth Roberts

The working groups that report to our council have been so valuable when we are confronted with challenges. Each time we have a need, they step to the plate, usually on top of a normal workload in what is technically their “day job.” Whether it is Kate McCarthy-Barnett with the Special Populations Registry, Carol Kent with the behavioral health response and family resource center or the Hospital Association’s work for surge capacity systems each of these working groups have professionals on them that serve our state so well. These committees supplement our staff at RI EMA. I am grateful for their dedication and innovation.

Today another working group has made progress on a challenge faced by our state, specifically within the city of Providence. Our action report on the Dec. 13 storm charged the Law Enforcement Working Group to review and propose changes to the city’s traffic management plan, as well as to coordinate with local municipalities. We are well ahead of schedule on this action and I would like to thank those of you that gave your time and energy to coordinate these efforts.

I want to especially thank Col. Brendan Dougherty, Lt. Darren Delaney who could not be with us, Capt. James Swanberg and Lt. Tim Lee for accepting our charge to review and revise traffic management plans for the city and our state. We will hear from Capt. Swanberg and Lt. Lee on their results later in our meeting.

I also want to acknowledge Dr. Anthony Cirillo whom I met first in our work when I was chair of the Senate Health and Human Services committee. He will be greatly missed and I hope we can call on him in the private sector.

II. Approval of the minutes from January 22, 2008

Steve Preston Motion
Richard Brown Second
Motion passes unanimously

III. Emergency Management Agency Report—Major General Robert Bray

General Bray introduced General Goodwin and spoke about their trip to Northern Command and North American Aerospace Defense Command in Colorado for a committee to discuss hurricane season 2008. MG Bray said the federal partners are already in preparation mode for the coming season and have expressed their intention to become more involved with local stakeholders before and during an event. The state and federal partners agreed that better sharing of resources is necessary and a better knowledge of what resources are available to the states should be a priority.

The committee understands the need proactive preparation. In the event of a hurricane or other weather emergency the federal agencies have been instructed to provide resources before the event. Previously there were some resources that were restricted by certain laws by the Deficit Reduction Act. FEMA now recognizes the need to blur the line of the largest stumbling blocks for asking for support.

FEMA and the states understand there is likely going to be some monetary risk. If you mobilize and send assets to a region and the incident doesn't occur there will be some costs. But that is a positive risk.

The committee also worked on a better way to communicate basic information to the federal partners from the states. During Ardent Sentry it was not uncommon to get requests for the same information from many different federal agencies. The committee members voiced the need for a common operating procedure so that this information is not redundant.

A copy of the power point presentation from MG Bray is available electronically from the office of the lieutenant governor. The power point explained the federal execution matrix that will be used by all agencies during a hurricane. The matrix highlights execution times for action points such as the execution of the Stafford Act.

MG Bray said that a meeting is planned for June with adjutant generals and EMA directors, which will be hosted by Amica.

RI EMA is now the lead agency on the 800 mhz system. RI EMA, RISP and Narragansett Police have shared relevant information in order to make this transition. This summer RI EMA expects to be able to hire personnel to deal with the system directly.

RI EMA has sent a memo to the dispatch centers of each municipality to identify through protocol those actions during an event to notify RI EMA. This memo is intended to establish situational awareness so RI EMA can be proactive in the support of the local stakeholders.

The interview process for the new RI EMA director is winding down and MG Bray will meet with the Governor to make a decision shortly. It was a very good process with a very good group of candidates.

IV. Traffic Plan Coordination Corrective Action—Capt. James Swanberg (RISP)

Capt. James Swanberg said that the EMAC requested the law enforcement working group communicate with local police departments to ensure each had an emergency evacuation plan and that it was coordinated with the RISP. The working group was also asked to specifically work with the Providence Police Department to review their emergency traffic plans and update them as needed.

Capt. Swanberg said Col. Dougherty sent a letter to all local police chief requesting the information needed by the working group. Col. Dougherty also assigned two lieutenants to work with the municipal departments. A majority of towns (21) said they have evacuation plans developed through hurricane evacuation preparation. Eight towns had some plans other than a coastal evacuation. Many cities and towns asked for additional assistance from RISP and it was certainly an eye opener for RISP and local partners.

RI EMA and RISP will continue to collaborate resources to help municipalities develop better, more effective plans.

The lieutenant governor asked if there was a sense that the community understood how to use the evacuation plan.

Capt. Swanberg said a majority of communities did understand the plans, but some communities in northern Rhode Island said they didn't have one or needed one.

Capt. Swanberg introduced Lt. Tim Lee from the Providence Police Department. A copy of the power point presentation is available from the office of the lieutenant governor.

Lt. Lee described the project that PPD has undertaken with the RISP at the request of the EMAC. Lt. Lee broke down the city into sections for evacuation and where officers would be positioned to direct traffic in an organized fashion.

Lt. Lee calculated that Providence could be effectively evacuated downtown in 60 minutes without major events at the Dunkin Donuts Center or the Convention Center

The lieutenant governor asked if the hospitals had any input on the plan.

Lt. Lee said he had talked with security personnel at the hospitals and would continue the plan as a work in progress. This was the first draft and would be adjusted with input from stakeholders.

Chris Laccinole from the Veteran's Administration asked how the time of 60 minutes for an evacuation was estimated?

Lt. Lee said they used previous experience such as major events at the Dunkin Donuts' Center or the convention center.

V. Domestic Preparedness Subcommittee reports

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

Steve Preston said the teams continue to meet on regular basis, but the biggest task is keeping teams trained without activity.

Mr. Preston also wanted to let the council know about complaints he is receiving from municipalities that are not being reimbursed with the federal funds owed for training and equipment from the state.

Mr. Preston said that RI EMA is wonderful but then the reimbursement requests go into the black hole. He hopes the council can address the issue before cities and towns stop their cooperation. These are tough fiscal times and the reimbursements are not small.

MG Bray said much of the delay is bureaucracy. He said when RI EMA hears of problems the Department of Administration to directly address it.

Vincent Marzullo said the state's grant system is the same system he worked with in the 1970's and it is strangling municipalities and non-profits. The federal government has an online system that is electronic and works extremely well. Most of the non-profits he works with complain about the state system. The legislature or the executive branch needs to make this a priority.

The lieutenant governor asked if the responsiveness has declined in the last year or the same it has been for a long time?

Mr. Marzullo said it was probably about the same, but private businesses don't want to do business with the state for fear of disruption of their cash flow. It is so frustrating to the front lines agencies. He said the Department of Administration either has too much control or a lack of customer service.

B. Communications Working Group—*Tom Kilday*

Tom Kilday said R IEMA is taking the lead on 800 mhz. To facilitate the transfer he has been meeting with a lot of the key stakeholders to design a template of what the current system looks like.

Part of the template is a responsibility inventory, which includes licenses, agreements for towers, road control, grass cutting, building management and generator fueling. No one to date has presented a spreadsheet with this data. It includes the details such as who has the keys to the building.

RI EMA resubmitted a communications grant to DHS for \$7.3 million on March 13. The funds should be released by March 31.

The lieutenant governor asked what the timeline for the responsibility matrix was

Tom Kilday said approximately April 1st.

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

Vin Marzullo informed the council about the statewide volunteer fair set for Sat. April 19th. All CCRI locations have been donated for the event as well as Chariho High School and the Block Island Fire House. All disaster relief agencies will be participating and RI EMA has asked each municipality to attend the site nearest to them.

Mr. Marzullo also informed the council that funds available from Citizen Corp on a competitive basis for municipal volunteer training.

The lieutenant governor asked how RI EMA was informing citizens of the event.

Brittan Bates said RI EMA was expanding through all of the organized volunteer groups that already exist including faith organizations and hospitals. The flier is also being disbursed in Spanish as well as English. RI National Guard members are volunteering on the day of the fair to translate for non-English speaking attendees.

Ms. Bates said that this is part one of the three-part plan for hurricane preparation. The other two parts involved a table top hurricane drill in May and a mass shelter full scale exercise planned for September.

Steve Florio asked if there would be accommodations made for those with special needs.

Ms. Bates said there would be.

Kate McCarthy Barnett commented that there just need to be a line about special needs on the publication

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

Dr. Cirillo thanked everyone for their kind words about his departure from the department of Health.

He said that pandemic flu planning is really a challenging issue because it is a worse case scenario that may never happen. The federal government has committed to making states ready and we need to update our plan this year in order to receive funding. The President has directed cabinet level administrators to work with the states to update

The plan is due back on June 16 then the federal partners will do a cabinet level review of the plan. The departments will score the plans and release it to the public by October.

Some of the information related to health care, but much of it has nothing to do with healthcare.

There are some very tough drill down questions and every state agency director has to sign off on the components.

MG Bray said while the plan focuses on pandemic flu it would be a good tool for any incident.

Bob Thorne asked Dr. Cirillo if there was any progress on vaccine development/production?

Dr. Cirillo said most vaccines are developed though chicken eggs and that is not so good if the virus is in poultry. The technology is moving towards cell production facilities. The first vaccines were not effective from that process because strains change very quickly. Cell based make vaccines are developed more quickly, but the the infrastructure is difficult to build quickly.

The lieutenant governor asked if there is anymore news about the use of the Cranston St. Armory as a storage center.

Dr. Cirillo said the use of the Armory has been up in the air. The flu preparation supplies have been well secured. If there is another facility at a zero cost to the state, it will be moved. The current location is the perfect situation, yet there is a need for more space because there is more equipment to purchase.

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

Carol Kent said there is a new behavioral class finishing training and this class will increase the number of trained specialists to a total of 450.

MHRH has internally exercised in their command center. They are also electronically creating event logs for incident action plans. There is planning for a family assistance resource exercise planned for April.

F. Urban Search and Rescue—*Bill McKenna, Cranston FD or Tom Kilday*

Bill McKenna echoed Steve Preston's comments about reimbursements.

There are currently 115 members all volunteer basis. A report has been completed and sent to MG Bray about space requirements needed after the RISP barracks are adjusted..

There are two bills Mr. McKenna asked the council to support. S2468 and H7731 would permit RIEMA Director to call up teams without a declaration of an emergency.

G. Mass Casualty—*Tom Kilday, RIEMA*

Tom Kilday said the working group is still seeking a leader. Tom is working on an MOU to replace the current one that is expiring soon. There is a May meeting set for equipment audit and grant fund writing continues.

H. Port Security—*Erin Lambie, USCG*

On April 10th there will be a recovery exercise. The scenario will involve a vessel explosion in Port of Providence. The exercise will address environmental and structural issues and will deal directly with petroleum delivery issues since the port is a major hub for delivery throughout New England.

Those wishing to participate are asked to Register in advance.

I. Law Enforcement Working Group—*Capt. James Swanberg, RISP*

Capt. Swanberg said the law enforcement working group continues to train. There are 5 communities or organizations that are participating on the SWAT team: RISP, PPD, Woonsocket and Newport. The members are continuing training on a quarterly basis.

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

The Special Needs Working Group is meeting on a bi-monthly basis with the next meeting set for March 24. There are two projects the working group is currently focused on.

The Special Needs Registry work continues and the working group is doing outreach in the community. There are approximately 3,000 on the registry and numbers continue to increase. The working group is developing a web based system and it should be ready in approximately 6 weeks. This will give RI EMA the ability to search the system with the ultimate expansion of the electronic search to municipalities.

The group is also surveying all emergency shelters for access issues.

K. Transportation Security Working Group—

Chief Smith from Amtrak police spoke to the council about the security procedures currently in place in New York City and Philadelphia. The two teams are providing high visibility and baggage inspection.

Locally, working with Brian Pires from the U.S. Attorney's office in Rhode Island. Visibility teams will be coming into New England in April and May.

The lieutenant governor asked about the increase of pedestrian incidences and Amtrak's monitoring of access.

Chief Smith said with 22,000 miles of track there are challenges. But the 20,000 employees and 350 police are all trained to watch for problems. There is no track monitoring specifically but more visibility on trains and stations. If Amtrak identifies problems in certain areas they will move more resources. Amtrak continues to work with local and state police as a partnership.

Chief Smith said the incident in Providence was more of a safety issue.

Bob Thorne said TSA is testing the baggage explosive systems at T.F. Greene. These new machines will make baggage security operations much more efficient. The Rhode Island Airport Corporation paid for the new system.

IV. New Business/ Member Comments and/or Suggestion

The next meeting of the EMAC will be May 20th.

Bob Thorne wanted to thank all the participants in the airport exercise for their time and investment. It included more than 100 volunteers and the after action report is complete.

The practice paid off during the Dec. 16 airport incident, including family assistance center.

Though TSA got to use 800 MHz system it was not in use incident wide. This fact was noted in report.

The lieutenant governor also announced the retirement of Bob Thorne and thanked him for his commitment and a job well done. She said his work and the work of the TSA has instilled confidence in consumers.

Brian Pires thank Bob Thorne for his service and said when he came on board with the U.S. Attorney there was a major concern about rail safety. Bob and Brian coordinated the efforts that are now in place and the efforts are ongoing without any federal or state budget money.

MG Bray announced that Lt. Col. Patricia Ryan will be deploying to Iraq.

Mr. Ed Direzzo was introduced as the replacement to Dr. Cirillo.

Meeting was adjourned.