

Rhode Island Emergency Management Advisory Council

Meeting Notice

THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL WILL BE HELD:

June 23, 2009

10:00 AM

Room 313, State House

Providence, Rhode Island

AGENDA

I. Call to Order/Attendance

Lieutenant Governor Elizabeth H. Roberts

RIEMA Director David Smith

Alysia Mihalakos Joseph Baker

James Lanni Carol Kent

Kate McCarthy - Barnett Ray LaBelle

Dawn Lewis Brian Pires

Jim Ball Alan Seitz

Jack Chartier Robert Howe

Michael Cournoyer Dawn Lewis

Steve Preston Ray LaBelle

Douglas Pesce Ray Perry

Lori Needham Edward Johnson

James Swanberg Steve Florio

II. Approval of Minutes from May 19, 2009

Chair Roberts called the meeting to order at 10:03 am. The Chair noted that General Bray was unavailable in Afghanistan and welcomed Lt. James Lanni as he will take over as commander for the WMD Tactical Team. The Chair asked for approval of minutes for the May 19th meeting. A correction for the minutes was requested: that the interpreter was not a participant in the meeting. The minutes were then unanimously approved.

III. RIEMA Update: Director David Smith

Director Smith highlighted the important role of extending the Hurricane Conference to a full day; it has allowed us to take advantage of networking. Director Smith offered thanks to those who participated. Yesterday (6/23), Meghan Sullivan attended a Social media process in Boston. RIEMA is bringing all forms of social media to our power to bring information from the outside to us. The Lt. Governor noted that she had just tweeted the EMAC meeting, and confirmed how quickly this technology can move.

Director Smith had the privilege to sit with FEMA administrator Fugate and Secretary Napolitano at a recent conference, and noted that there will be significant changes ahead. There will be a new Office for Intergovernmental Agencies: there are liaisons from each state that can get grants and program inquiries from the federal government. Katie Green from N. Kingstown is our representative.

Funding: the results of the grants are as follows:

- o A 6% increase in state homeland security funding: \$6.524 million**
- o Last year there was one nonprofit in the area that were funded; this year, there are 5 at \$366,000.**
- o Citizens Corps, and Metropolitan Response: \$139,520**

RIEMA is now working on two main initiatives from federal money: Port Security and Transit Security initiatives. Last Friday on the heels of the hurricane conferences, there was another interagency conference in Warwick regarding After-Disaster Volunteering and Aid. Fifty agencies were represented. Director Smith was very impressed with the cohesion of that particular effort.

Director Smith then introduced the new Deputy Director of RIEMA, Edward Johnson – he was an emergency preparedness liaison with the U.S. Air Force.

IV. Domestic Preparedness Subcommittee Reports

A. Communications Working Group- Director David Smith, RIEMA

Chair

The Communications Working Group is being renamed the Interoperability Communications Committee (ICC). Legislation was introduced to the House last month and will be heard this afternoon at 3:00 pm. Lt. Governor Roberts is optimistic about timing.

Membership of the group has expanded to include Jack Landers, Chief Informational Officer for the state. Fifteen (15) groups are now a part of the committee.

B. Hospital Preparedness Working Group-Alysia Mihalakos, DOH/Dawn Lewis, HARI

The group is currently working with the CDC on a cooperative agreement and work plan. There will be a three-year grant, more long term, with lots of involvement; grant guidelines have not changed for either program. They took cuts in both grants, but also received word that states will be offered federal money for emergency flu and illness preparedness; they have yet to discover exactly how the money will be able to be used. Right now they are looking for creative state match ideas.

H1N1 update: There are 114 confirmed cases of H1N1 in the state; 34 hospitalized. We've just seen the first death in a person who had a number of chronic underlying conditions.

The anticipated attack rate is in the 40-50% range in the fall. We had anticipated a 30% attack rate, which was the worst-case scenario. ICS has not been deactivated. Continue work with Municipal Emergency

Management directors to get everyone at the table. Because we share media markets, we need consistent messaging. So far, we have not encountered any issues in this area. This has been a good testing ground for the fall.

Lt. Governor Roberts asked what “Attack rate” is. Ms. Mihalakos responded that it is, given the total population, the total percentage of population that would contract H1N1.

Lt. Governor Roberts also asked about average age for H1N1. Ms. Mihalakos responded that the majority of people are 60 and younger. The greatest numbers are 30 and younger. This brings up the challenge of seasonal vaccine vs. H1N1 vaccine.

Lt. Governor Roberts noted that it seems there is an opportunity here in anticipation of school opening, that there is the most visibility around cases. If it’s going to have younger profile, having this approach seems correct. Ms. Mihalakos responded that the RI Department of Education is on the operations team and workgroup. We have plans in place to delay the opening of schools. If we see lots of kids getting sick, we want to delay opening. We don’t control when the vaccine arrives. But if it’s not arriving until November, then we don’t want kids to have a dramatic impact on other kids who can get sick. We want to note trends earlier and set the precedent with superintendents and principals to ensure dialogue so that everyone is aware of the progress being made. We have sent messages out to all camps, that if they send home more than two kids with symptoms,

they report it directly to us.

C. Haz Mat/Decon Working Group-Steve Preston, Woonsocket Fire Department

The overarching goal is to complete the state certification process. They are looking to complete this by the end of the year, and working to get consistency in training and expanding on training classes.

New England Mutual Aid Contract – there is no cap now for Haz Mats. The initiative was written in 2008 for all seven (7) New England States. This group's mandate is to work with the legal staff of all seven states to find out what resources they have, what is available and what types of teams. Legally, he can't provide Hazardous materials/WMD assistance to Connecticut or Massachusetts. Hopefully this agreement will change that.

House Bill 5911 is still languishing in committee, but Mr. Preston hopes it will come out shortly. It corrects some language in Hazardous waste cleanup regulations. He urged everyone to support it.

D. Behavioral Health Working Group- Carol Kent, MHRH

Ms. Kent said she had been in several meetings talking about the Family Assistance Center Manual, and that it is on final draft. They are giving it a final go-through in July, and RIEMA will be processing it during the summer.

We have a contract from HEALTH that provides funding for the disaster work MHRH does, including training initiatives. We are

currently doing training at ten (10) sites for psychiatric first aid, and providing psychological training to all non-clinical class at different sites. We are dealing with employees who are providing dietary services, admissions, or janitorial services who all have interactions with people as they come into the emergency room. The key is helping them prepare for these interactions. This afternoon, there is a half-day with HEALTH staff on the impact of disaster or trauma on mind and body.

E. Special Populations Working Group- Kate McCarthy Barnett, DOH

Dr. Barnett noted that the group is now in the process of drafting a statewide special needs sheltering plan. The group wants to review individual shelters in each city and town. As a jumping off point, they are working on statewide plan with regard to hurricanes.

The group continues its work with the Special Needs Emergency Registry – if someone who is enrolled in the registry calls 911, an indicator will show up on dashboard to alert responders that there are additional needs to be addressed. It is in its first stages, but the group believes it could be done by the end of August.

Looking at funding – The group is having introductory talks with RIEMA regarding an emergency response system. They want alert notices for those in the emergency registry via text, phone, email, etc.

HEALTH and RIEMA are working on a September training for Pandemic Flu and Special Needs. The training will be offered over a

few days at several times. Lastly, the group is also working with the Commission on Disabilities to look at communications alternatives. The Committee requested that we had a presence from the EMA director.

F. Law Enforcement Working Group-Capt. James Swanberg, RISP
Capt. James Swanberg, stated that the RI WMD Tactical Team continues the training program to include training with other specialty responder teams. Most recently they helped at the National Mayor's Conference.

The Fusion Center continues to increase its level of service by seeking additional personnel for the unit. In May, the team hosted a training exercise in Coventry with DEM and the Haz Mat Team. Today, there is a training at the Fire Marshal's office with the state bomb squad. Capt. Swanberg is stepping down from law Enforcement working group, handing reigns over to Lt. Jim Manni.

Lt. Gov. Roberts and Director Smith thanked Capt. Swanberg for his leadership role over the years.

G. Port Security- Erin Lambie USCG

Ms. Lambie stated that they continue working with the Cleaning Committee on oil and Hazmat spill response using guidelines from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

The Committee is working and moving into its next exercise in May 2010. It will be a combination of oil/hazmat and security. Its focus will be more on the security side since Maine is conducting an Exxon/Valdez type exercise covering the consequence side. Partners in this exercise are: Area Planning Committee and Maritime Committee; FBI, local law enforcement, state police; most who played a part in the tabletop exercise.

We received almost 1.6 million in security grants:

- o For the Rhode Island Economic Development Corps: expanding port security camera network, mostly to monitor ferry systems**
- o First ARRA port security grants are due by the 29th of June. This is the first grant that does not require a match. This is a pool of funds a lot smaller than we're used to. We expect a lot of applications. \$6 million for Providence and Newport; \$5.5 for all other ports.**

H. Transportation Security Working Group-Brian Pires, ATAC/TSWG

Mr. Pires – was able to use the group at the National Mayor's Conference. They were able to put some federal assets into that venue in Kennedy Plaza. The group has developed into a quick and ready force; able to step in and gain assistance from federal air marshals. The group is confident that they will be ready for any similar event in the future.

I. Urban Search and Rescue, Bill McKenna, Cranston FD

Chief McKenna was not present, Director Smith presented. The

director stated that given that they were all volunteers, everyone did a great job at Hurricane Conference.

Director Smith noted that it is really important that we have rubble pile to train on and under. The claim, however, is moving slow. RI Rescue and Recovery had a number of acres drafted out by surveyor and engineering groups, but it requires that we bring the appropriate rubble to the site. A challenge has been the legal agreement between the parties.

V New Business/ Member Comments and/or Suggestion

Lt. Governor Roberts announced that the Next meeting is August 25th. She once again thanked Capt. Swanberg for his consistency and competence. He has been a very valuable resource. Lt. Governor Roberts reminded all present that the Air Show is happening this weekend.