



Rhode Island Emergency Management Advisory Council

Meeting Minutes

THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL WILL BE HELD:

September 13, 2011

10:00 AM

RI Emergency Management Agency

645 New London Avenue

Cranston, Rhode Island

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

Lt. Governor Elizabeth H. Roberts

Major General Kevin McBride

Ed Johnson

J. David Smith

Alysia Mihalakos

Dawn Lewis

Steve Preston

Jim Ball

Jeff Stevens

Steven Florio

Susan Earley

Erin Lambie

Peter Popko

Chief Robert Seltzer

Brian Pires

Lt. Patrick McMahan

Jack Chartier

Gregory Scungio

Robert Leach

Al Contente

Paul Stasiuk

Marian Juskov

Peter Marinucci

Leo Messier

Donna DiMichele
Larry Grimaldi
Stephen Kavanagh
Elizabeth McDonald
Claudia Staniszewski
Vladimir Ibarra

II. Call to Order / Comments - Lt. Governor Elizabeth Roberts

The Chair updated the membership of the upcoming RIEMA briefings on how to apply for Federal assistance from FEMA for reimbursement from costs incurred prior to, during, and following the hurricane. The briefings are open to state agencies, local municipalities, fire districts, and private non-profit Groups.

The schedule is as follows:

- Tuesday September 13, University of Rhode Island – Kingston Campus
- Wednesday September 14, Bristol Fire Department Headquarters
- Friday September 16, Amica Headquarters,

Chair Roberts reported that in light of numerous questions regarding plans available for elder facilities and their regulatory requirements, the Long Term Care Coordinating Council will provide a briefing tomorrow September 14th at 10 a.m. at the RI Council of Community Mental Health Organizations, 40 Sharpe Drive, Unit 3, Cranston.

The Chair thanked Erin Lambie from the US Coast Guard for the invitation to participate at their “Oil Spill Exercise”. The exercise happens once every three years, and it provides an overview on the actions that would take place in the event of a major spill in Narragansett Bay or the Providence River.

The Chair took time to congratulate J. David Smith for his outstanding role as the Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency Director and provided him with a citation to mark this noteworthy moment. She reiterated that Mr. Smith will continue to be involved with the Council on his new capacity as Director of Salve Regina’s Administration of Justice Program.

The Chair then announced the retirement of Steve Preston as Chair of the Haz Mat/Decon Technical Working Group. She thanked him for his valuable service to the Council and provided a citation as well. Mr. Preston announced that he will be involved in consulting work going forward and that the new chair for the Subcommittee will be James Ball from the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management. The Chair welcomed Mr. Ball and introduced Lt. Patrick McMahon as the new chair for the Mass Casualty Subcommittee. Lt. McMahon works for the Charlestown Police Department.

Lastly, the Chair, informed the membership that the town of Coventry finished the application process for the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (**HMGP**) and received a total grant award amount of **\$530,161 for five storm water management projects**.

These projects are the first to be awarded through this grant and fulfill Coventry's request for projects under the HMGP for the RI Floods of 2010.

III. Approval of Minutes from June 7, 2011

The Minutes from the June 7th meeting were unanimously approved.

IV. RIEMA Update

Vice Chair General Kevin McBride thanked Mr. Smith for providing a very solid foundation at RIEMA. The General discussed some of the challenges that emerged in the evening hours of Tropical Storm Irene and the swift response by the Agency. Also, the General mentioned some of the upcoming changes to the Agency including the mission statement and improving communications.

Interim Director Ed Johnson reiterated the kind words towards Mr. Smith and provided a brief assessment of the Irene response.

Director Johnson was very pleased with the state partnerships forged and noted he looks forward to enhancing assistance to the local Emergency Manager Directors.

Chair Roberts asked about the Irene “Hotwash” and was informed that it would probably take place in the upcoming weeks.

V. Domestic Preparedness Subcommittee reports

A. Interoperability Communications Committee— *Director David Smith, Salve Regina*

Mr. Smith provided two reports to General McBride that provided the genesis of the Interoperability Communications Committee. The committee was created as a result of an after-action report around 2003, with the purpose of enhancing the state’s communications by creating an 800MHz system.

The committee is comprised of about twenty one members with different backgrounds and occupations. One of current goals of the committee is to consolidate the frequencies from other agencies such as the Department of Transportation and the Department of Corrections into one. There are other policies and procedures that will be updated including having more regular scheduled trainings as opposed to ad-hoc. The next site in the system construct piece will be Gloucester.

B. Hospital Preparedness Working Group— *Alysia Mihalakos, DOH/Dawn Lewis, HARI- Provided Report*

Ms. Mihalakos stated that the Hospital Preparedness Planning Committee (HPPC) was established in 2000 and continues to serve as a forum for cooperation and collaboration among hospitals, HEALTH, RIEMA, and other appropriate emergency response organizations. The Committee's mission is the development of a networked plan of cooperation and interaction involving the response of all hospitals and other

responding organizations in the State to an emergency. One of the main strategies of the group has been the standardization of plans, policies, technologies, and trainings. HPPC also serves as a forum for hospitals to share "best practices" on key emergency preparedness functions. While HPPC is not a separately-funded coalition, hospitals do receive funds from HHS through HEALTH from the Hospital Preparedness Program.

Some of the accomplishments of the HPPC include the development of the Public Health Emergency Management Suite, which includes bed-tracking and hospital diversion and messaging tools, and an exercise/event calendar. This system was identified as a need after the Station Night Club Fire. Ms. Lewis stated that the Patient Tracking System is now available at all hospitals and all EMS vehicles can enter information in route to hospitals. HPPC members also utilize BaseCamp, a project management tool for information sharing during events. In addition, the HPPC has established of a mutual aid agreement among hospitals for the sharing of staff, supplies, and equipment between and among all hospitals within the State, and a similar MOA for health centers.

C. Haz Mat/Decon Technical Working Group— *Steve Preston, Woonsocket FD/ James Ball, RI DEM*

Mr. Preston expressed his gratitude to the Lt. Governor and Council members for their camaraderie and continued work. He stated that prior to 1999 the state did not have a HazMat response team. RIEMA developed the first strategy and looked at communities that were providing those services. Closely after September 11, 2001 a Decontamination team and Mass Casualty team were formed. Most of the work involved standard operation procedures including NIMS type I training. The communications committee works with 800 MHz system and the training committee looks at federal, state and municipal needs.

Recently there has been a need to obtain legal assistance as with the case of the Hazardous Waste Clean Up bill.

General McBride asked Mr. Preston how training was tracked. Mr. Preston responded that Jack Leyden (Rhode Island State Building Code Commissioner) provides those instructions.

D. Behavioral Health Disaster Response Network Working Group—*Susan Earley, BHDDH*

Ms. Early explained how the committee provides support to individuals with mental health issues. They used to be part of the Emergency Support Function (ESF) 15 but after a restructuring of scope they fall under ESF 8 -Public Health and Medical Services.

The group recently had a meeting with the evangelical ministers to provide counseling to local and regional resources in New Hampshire. One of the short term goals is to enhance the support activities along Border States. During the 2010

Floods the group spearheaded RI HOPE (Helping Other People in Emergencies) this initiative provided community based outreach and assistance to individuals and communities recovering from the historic March floods.

E. Volunteer/Citizens' Corps Council—*Vin Marzullo*

Claudia Staniszewski from Serve RI provided the briefing on behalf of Vin Marzullo. Ms. Staniszewski reported that one of the major activities has been to build disaster volunteer capacity including recruit and train volunteers. There was a recent memorandum of agreement with the local EMA directors expanding the role with RIEMA into volunteer management and donations.

F. Law Enforcement Working Group—*Lt. James Manni, RISP*

Lt. Manni from the Rhode Island State Police was unable to attend the meeting as his team had SWAT training.

G. Port Security—*Erin Lambie, USCG*

Ms. Lambie stated that there are two major groups that comprise the subcommittee. The Area Maritime Security Committee (AMSC) and the Area Committee. The AMSC is required by the Maritime Transportation Security Act, 33 CFR Subchapter H to advise the Federal Maritime Security Coordinator on matters of maritime security. Membership consists of members of the maritime community including Federal, State and Local partners in addition to members representing commercial interests of the maritime community. The committee currently has thirty two members and RI EMA is included as a member. The Coast Guard is required to provide recommendations on Port Security Grant applications and the AMSC is provided an opportunity to provide input to this process. The AMSC meets at least two times per year, based on the needs of the port activities.

The Area Committee is mandated by the Oil Pollution Act of 1990. The committee meets three times per year unless needed more frequently. The purpose of the committee is to plan for a safe, appropriate, and timely response to all reports of oil or hazmat spills in the coastal zone. Additionally, pre-plan under ICS for joint response efforts including procedures for mechanical recovery, dispersal, shoreline cleanup, protection of sensitive environmental areas, and protection, rescue and rehabilitation of fisheries and wildlife. Membership is open to all but the FOSC is the Chairperson. The Vice-Chairpersons are Jim Ball of RI DEM and Paul Lock of MA DEP. There is an Executive Steering Committee with representatives from USCG D1, NOAA, Sector SENE Prevention, DOI and EPA.

H. Special Populations Working Group—*Steve Florio RICDHH /Jeff Stevens HEALTH*

Mr. Florio stated that there are about 90,000 individuals in Rhode Island that fall under the definition of special populations.

The Subcommittee has five work groups that include communications, transportation, long term mobility, long term care and the RI Special Needs Registry.

During Irene there were several issues with the shelters and the subcommittee will work with the Red Cross to identify those areas in need of improvement.

During Irene there was a surge of 700 people who signed up within 3 days. Some of the issues the committee would like to address going forward will be

1. The need for a Statewide shelter plan
2. Transportation deficiencies within the RIDE program.
3. Outreach to minority and vulnerable populations. Mr. Stevens mentioned that HEALTH was in the process of hiring a part time outreach person.

I. Urban Search and Rescue—*Chief Robert Seltzer, Central Coventry FD*

Chief Seltzer stated that the group started around 2000/2002 and they meet monthly. The group is comprised of roughly 100 members from the public sector, law enforcement, fire service, civilians, structural engineers and a K9 unit. There are two teams in Aquidneck Island and one in Providence. The only deployment out of state was Hurricane Katrina.

General McBride asked how their training was tracked. Chief Seltzer informed him that they have a system that tracks their training.

J. Transportation Security Working Group—*Brian Pires, ATAC/TSWG*

Mr. Pires stated that the group's main priority was preventive. The Anti-Terrorism Advisory Council (ATAC) is a consortium of state and federal partners that contains components for response including the Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF) and the RI Fusion Center.

The Transportation Security Working Group (TSWG) drives initiatives. In 2006 the Rail was the priority. This group lead the nation in Visible Intermodal Prevention and Response (VIPR) teams that started with rail and migrated to bus. One of the goals is to push for regionalization in law enforcement and threat assessment being conducted by multiple entities.

K. Mass Casualty—*Lt. Patrick McMahon, Charlestown Police Department*

Lt. Patrick McMahon stated that the group was formed around 2003 to deal with Mass Casualty fire departments and hospitals. They meet monthly and their funding comes from the RIEMA.

There are MCI trailers placed throughout the state and through NIMS type three training the group consolidate 4 of the trailers. The group has been assessing their inventory and bringing it up to date. As of 2010 all stock was up to date and this year there is an intent to present a state plan that will be provided to RIEMA.

VI. New Business/ Member Comments and/or Suggestion

Mr. Robert Leach, President of the Architects and Engineers Emergency Response Task Force provided an update on his recent trip to Washington D.C. where he met with both of Rhode Island Senators (Reed and Whitehouse).

NEXT MEETING: Tuesday, **October 11** Location TDB.