



## **Rhode Island Emergency Management Advisory Council**

**May 8, 2012  
10:00 AM**

**RI Emergency Management Agency**  
645 New London Avenue  
Cranston, Rhode Island

### **MEETING MINUTES**

#### **Attendance**

Lt. Governor Elizabeth H. Roberts  
MG Kevin R. McBride  
Theresa Murray  
Ed Johnson  
Jack Chartier  
Pete Gaynor  
Brian Pires  
Peter Ginaitt  
Jim Ball  
James Lanni  
Susan Earley  
Erin Lambie  
Dawn Lewis  
Alysia Mihalakos  
Annmarie Beardsworth  
Jeff Stevens  
Joe Arsenault  
Robert Seltzer  
Elizabeth McDonald  
Lori Needham  
Steven Florio  
Jeffrey Hatcher  
Joe McCooey  
Gregory Scungio  
Donna DiMichele  
Vlad Ibarra

## **I. Call to Order / Attendance - Lt. Governor Elizabeth Roberts**

Chair Roberts discussed her outreach efforts with MG McBride and Elizabeth McDonald from the American Red Cross to enhance current communication gaps about Regional Sheltering among RI EMA Directors and the Mayors/Town Administrators.

These efforts will be statewide around the five established Local Emergency Planning Committees (Cumberland, Providence, Warwick, Middletown and Charliho).

Chair Roberts followed up on three bills that were discussed at the March meeting:

S 2606 Protection from Price Gouging During Emergencies. This legislation was introduced by Senators Algiere, Bates and Tassoni and has a hearing in Senate Corporations on May 8th at the Rise of the Senate (usually around 4:45 pm) in Room 212.

H 7514 Add 2 members to EMAC. This legislation was introduced by Rep. Blazejewski and Gallison and has been referred to House Veterans Affairs. Sub A held for further study.

H 7446 would establish an emergency communication and public telecommunication access fund to create an emergency communication program for the deaf and hard-of-hearing. It was introduced by Representative Naughton and Handy. The legislation had a hearing and was held for further study.

Lastly, Chair Roberts highlighted “*Operation Immersion*”, which is a Tabletop Exercise scheduled for May 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> at Camp Fogarty. The Exercise is a combined effort by the Rhode Island National Guard and the Rhode Island Department of Behavioral Healthcare Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals, for workers from behavioral health service providers to experience a day in the life of a U.S. Soldier.

## **II. Approval of Minutes from March 13, 2012**

The Minutes were unanimously approved.

## **III. Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency Update**

MG McBride expanded on “*Operation Immersion*” and stated that the purpose of the Exercise is to provide insight into military life and to better prepare behavioral health service providers to work with National Guard men and women who have served in the military during wartime.

The General also discussed the senior level policy Exercise “*RI Vigilant Guard Tabletop*” which will provide an opportunity for participants to discuss regional implications of lessons learned during Tropical Storm Irene and encourage different sectors to provide better tools to prepare for future incidents.

Director Murray apprised members that Regional Planner James Gumbley and former Chief of Cranston Fire Department will be leaving the Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency at the end of the month. Also, Director Murray will meet with the Joe Arsenault from the Rhode Island Association of Emergency Managers in regards to a nationwide Tabletop Exercise in Boston.

#### **IV. Domestic Preparedness Subcommittee Reports**

##### **A. Interoperability Communications Committee (ICC)—*Theresa C. Murray, RIEMA***

Director Murray explained that according to the bylaws the Interoperability Communications Committee chair is the Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency Director. Director Murray thanked David Smith for stepping up and chairing the committee during the transitional period.

The Director expressed that some of the pressing items going forward will be interoperability with the 800 MHz system and ensuring that the D Block comes to Rhode Island as it further develops. The committee continues to address some of the communication glitches during Tropical Storm Irene including individuals not knowing how to use the system properly.

##### **B. Hospital Preparedness Working Group—*Alysia Mihalakos, Dept. of Health /Dawn Lewis, Hospital Association of Rhode Island.***

Ms. Mihalakos, reported that HEALTH submitted its aligned Hospital Preparedness Program and Public Health Emergency Preparedness grant application. The US Department of Health and Human Services has created intensive documents for the 15 public health and 8 healthcare system preparedness capabilities that HEALTH is expected to meet over the course of 5 years. The department submitted a 5-year forecast for how Rhode Island will achieve all of the capabilities. Furthermore, HEALTH is submitting a continuation application for a 3-year competitive grant for the Emergency System for Advance Registration of Volunteer Health Professionals (ESAR-VHP), which is one of the primary funding sources for the First Responder Authentication Credential (FRAC) issuance under Incident Management Rhode Island (IMRI), along with the State Homeland Security Grant (SHSG).

Ms. Lewis presented HARI's considerations to enhanced utilization of the Event Calendar to capture of all trainings and exercises in the emergency management realm, which is available at <https://www.rimedicalresponse.org> to registered users. The use of the Event Calendar reduces the burden of partners being asked to participate in the multiple exercises to achieve the same objectives and from booking multiple exercises on the same day or in the same week.

On June 20, 2012, HEALTH, HARI, the hospitals, the 13<sup>th</sup> CST, DEM, and the regional HAZMAT and decontamination teams will be participating in a joint decontamination training titled "*Operation Wash Down*", to build additional partnerships and to provide a better understanding among the partners of the similarities and differences in the decontamination systems being used in the field.

C. Haz Mat/Decon Technical Working Group— *James Ball, Dept. of Environmental Management.*

Mr. Ball raised his concern with a forty percent cut in grants and questioned how to properly maintain teams with the current climate.

MG McBride asked what the pattern of utilization of the teams was. Mr. Ball responded that the East Providence team oversees the East Bay Area, the Hope Valley Team oversees the Southern Area and Warwick and Cranston. However, with the removal of the Newport and West Warwick, it has made the current teams much busier.

MG McBride suggested having a side conversation with Mr. Ball to address this issue including perhaps plugging in NORTHCOM and other federal assets to support the team.

Mr. Ball went on to discuss training involved with Vigilant Guard on May 16<sup>th</sup> and a Quonset Tabletop Exercise in October involving Pneumonia. Lastly, he discussed the upcoming North East Mutual Aid Compact and the potential to send personnel and equipment across borders.

D. Behavioral Health Disaster Response Network Working Group—*Susan Earley, Behavioral Healthcare Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals.*

Ms. Early discussed “*Operation Immersion*” and their engagement with the Disaster Behavioral Team to continue to add individuals to serve on the team. She highlighted their work with children who have been exposed to trauma. Lastly, their RI Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (RI VOAD) subcommittee will address how to support individuals and organizations through and after a traumatic event.

E. Volunteer/Citizens’ Corps Council—*Vincent Marzullo, Corporation for National & Community Service.*

No report. Unable to attend.

F. Law Enforcement Working Group— *Lt. James Manni, Rhode Island State Police.*

No report. Unable to attend.

G. Port Security—*Erin Lambie, United States Coast Guard.*

Ms. Lambie discussed the Port Security Grants 2012. The period for application for a Port Security Grant closed on May 4<sup>th</sup>, 2012. Ms. Lambie went on to discuss their Mass Rescue Drill. The Coast Guard is going to hold their first Mass Rescue Operations drill in Rhode Island. The drill will incorporate Federal, State, local and private industry partners to discuss how the community would respond to a terrorist attack on a large ferry. The lessons learned will be used to improve their contingency plans.

Ms. Lambie highlighted the Area Maritime Security Committee Sub-Committee meetings which are completed in the following four designated port areas: Providence/East Providence, Quonset

Point/Davisville, Newport/Jamestown, and Point Judith/Block Island. The first round of meetings was intended to update the local Incident Action Plans (IAPs) which will then be used during a facilitated discussion in a follow up meeting. These IAPs are part of the Area Maritime Security Plan and provide a starting point for any security event that would take place in one of our ports. Moreover, there are a number of large Marine Events including the Tall Ships 2012, America's Cup and the Quonset Air Show.

Lastly, Ms. Lambie stated that with the beginning of Hurricane Season, they recently completed an annual internal drill of our Severe Weather plan. There were no major changes to their operations.

H. Special Populations Working Group—*Steven Florio Rhode Island Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing /Jeffrey Stevens, Dept. of Health.*

Mr. Stevens discussed the creation of a template for Nursing Home facilities and training to residential service coordinators on how to better deliver their message to their clients. He also discussed his outreach to senior high rises and assisted living facilities and Chair Roberts asked for him to update the Long Term Care Coordinating Council on those activities.

Mr. Stevens informed members that the Special Needs Registry has updated their Alzheimer, Psychological conditions and Autism Spectrum Disorder and will be working with 911 to enhance the response.

Mr. Stevens discussed the application for the American Red Cross to have an AmeriCorps team of ten individuals specialized in communications and media come to Rhode Island for six weeks to provide door to door promotion of preparedness to the thirty nine cities and towns

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

Chief Seltzer was pleased to see the stand-down of the Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) teams as a result of lack of Worker's Compensation coverage (in the event a team member is injured) come to its conclusion.

On Saturday, the USAR team will participate in the Tabletop exercise with the Guard on building collapse and will use K-9 resources along with the Fire Marshalls Office. The collapse pile can be use for future trainings and will be available for the State Fire Academy.

Lastly, the Chief discussed the need to capture the trainings and what members are participating. Dawn Lewis (HARI) suggested visiting <https://www.rimedicalresponse.org> to generate secure rosters.

J. Transportation Security Working Group—*Brian Pires, Anti-Terrorism Advisory Council/Transportation Security Working Group.*

Mr. Pires, discussed the efforts of the Transportation Security Working Group as multi jurisdictional, intermodal venues including ports, buses and ready teams with AMTRAC. They will focus on vulnerability assessments.

Under the Anti-Terrorism Advisory Council the team continues to reach out to the Muslim community and recently created a community survey based on input from a civil rights panel on boots on the ground issues.

Mr. Pires briefly discussed the serious folded Al-Qaeda plot using non metallic improvised explosive devices (*IEDs*). MG McBride met with the Fusion Center on a strategic level to monitor this as body bombs continue to be a concern.

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

The team recently completed the latest version of the State plan with language worked. The trailers will be used for Vigilant Guard and will be deployed to the scene.

## **V. New Business, Member Comments, Suggestions**

The Chair opened the floor for new business, comments and/or suggestions.

Chief Seltzer raised the issue of diminished State Homeland Security moneys affecting capabilities. He stated that the reductions went from about sixteen DHS grants to five. These cuts will adversely affect Hazmat, Decon, USAR, Bomb Squad and the Fusion Center. MG McBride stated the need to come up with a strategic plan and perhaps adding a line item in the budget. Chair Roberts suggested making an easy to understand description of here is what we need and this is how resources are being allocated. Perhaps the creation of an ad hoc workgroup called “Sustainability Working Group chaired by Chief Seltzer.

Deputy Director Johnson stated that the Emergency Management Assistance Compact will play a more prominent role as grants will become even more competitive in nature.

Joe Arsenault discussed the rapid growth of the newly Associates Degree at the Community College of Rhode Island in Emergency Management with thirty students enrolled in the program.

Pete Gaynor, Director of the Providence Emergency Management Agency discussed the upcoming Tabletop Exercise “*Operation SMART EXIT*” a full scale evacuation of the ten largest commercial buildings in Downtown Providence on June 28<sup>th</sup>.

Chair Roberts informed members that the next meeting will take place on June 12<sup>th</sup>. The meeting was adjourned at 11:40 a.m.