



Rhode Island Emergency Management Advisory Council

August 7, 2012

10:00 AM

RI Emergency Management Agency

645 New London Avenue

Cranston, Rhode Island

MEETING MINUTES

Attendance

Lt. Governor Elizabeth H. Roberts

Director Theresa Murray

Jack Chartier

Chief Robert Seltzer

Alysia Mihalakos

Dawn Lewis

Peter Marinucci

Brian Pires

James Ball

Susan Earley

Steven Florio

Lt. James Manni

Lt. Robert Wall

Vincent Marzullo

Ken McCarthy

Shad Ahmed

Jeff Kelly

Gregory Scungio

Annmarie Beardsworth

Lt. Col Robert Hayden

Donna DiMichele

Mike DeMello

Samantha Previte

Sheyda Bautista

Sarah Redlich

Vlad Ibarra

I. Call to Order - Lt. Governor

Chair Roberts opened the meeting with a few housekeeping items that included:

- Lt. James Manni will no longer serve as the chair of the Law Enforcement Working Group. RI State Police Lieutenant Robert Wall will serve in this capacity.
- Jeff Stevens will no longer serve as the Co-chair of the Special Needs Working Group with Steve Florio. Susan Earley will serve in this capacity.

Chair Roberts went on to discuss the next phase of the Regional Shelter Outreach forums with Mayors and Town Administrators which will involve a follow up meeting with the Rhode Island League of Cities and Towns in November. Also, the chair was pleased with the efforts by AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC) members to survey local shelters and promote awareness of the RI Special Needs Registry.

Lastly, the chair discussed her role in different capacities during the Vigilant Guard (VG) Tabletop Exercise (TTX). She was part of the preliminary work with the Governor's Policy Group, which included all state directors and administrators, and she had a chance to address the audience at the Distinguished Visitors' Day. This year was the first time that two international delegations (Bahamian and Salvadorian) were present.

II. Approval of Minutes from June 12, 2012

The Minutes were unanimously approved.

III. RIEMA Update

Director Murray highlighted some of the logistical feats that the agency was engaged during America's Cup, Tall Ships and preparation for VG TTX. America's Cup and Tall Ships had reported over 150,000 attendees each and the public safety implications were tremendous. Several agencies worked in concert with RIEMA including the Rhode Island Disaster Medical Assistance Team, Dept. of Environmental Management, Newport, Jamestown and Middletown Police and Fire Departments, the Red Cross and the Fusion Center to name a few.

VG TTX focused on training first responders to state and national level decision-makers on a Category III hurricane scenario. The Director was pleased with the coordination amongst federal, state and municipal partners. The TTX provided invaluable information on situational awareness and illustrated glitches with communication with ESF partners that was quickly addressed.

Domestic Preparedness Subcommittee Reports

A. Interoperability Communications Committee—*Theresa C. Murray, RIEMA*

The Department of Homeland Security will conduct a system wide review focusing on communications and to build upon the current system with partners.

Director Murray went on to discuss the guidance provided by the National Governors Association to preserve the public safety use of 700 MHz narrowband spectrum and establish a governance structure to facilitate nationwide coverage and interoperability. The system will provide the option to either opt in or out for the radio capability for the next several years. Moreover, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) will provide a Cyber Resilience review to emphasize the cross-functional nature of the assessments.

Lastly, the Mini Mobile Command Center arrived on Saturday and it will be used mostly during inclement weather for its satellite capability. The vehicle was procured with DHS Homeland Security Funds. Also, Director Murray mentioned an addition to RIEMA's communications team of Lieutenant and Training & Safety Office Gil Woodside from the Pawtucket Fire Department. Lt. Woodside brings expertise with HAM Radio operations.

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

Ms. Mihalakos reported that RI Dept. of Health (HEALTH) is undergoing its first joint Hospital Preparedness Program (HPP) and Public Health Emergency Preparedness (PHEP) program site visit. The agenda includes grants management review, a tour of the response facilities used by HEALTH, a tour of the State EOC, a meeting with the leadership of HEALTH and RIEMA, and a review of 10 of the 15 required capabilities with relevant internal and external partners.

In response to another small Pertussis outbreak, HEALTH partnered with The Wellness Company and emergency management partners in North Kingstown to execute vaccination Points-of-Dispensing (PODs) on July 19 and 23, providing Tdap to another 1129 people. On June 1, HEALTH conducted an executive-level TTX to address HEALTH's hurricane preparedness. One of the goals of the TTX was to develop a checklist specific to HEALTH from the 96-hour mark to complement the State's Hurricane Checklist, with new recommendations for ESF 8 (Public Health & Medical Services) submitted to RIEMA, and the Healthcare System Event Work Plan. Additional findings from the TTX indicate that additional work is needed on COOP for the Department, that regulations need to be modified regarding the testing of generators in healthcare facilities, and that an education plan needs to be developed for partners that illustrates the different types of facilities that may require evacuation (confusion still exists in the community about the differences between nursing homes and assisted living facilities-- which HEALTH regulates--and elderly housing complexes, which HEALTH does not).

HEALTH has made several changes to its Ambulance Strike Team Plan, which would be used for evacuation of healthcare facilities and giving lessons learned during Tropical Storm Irene. This plan has been reviewed internally and is awaiting the director's signature. Once approved, it will be vetted through the trade organizations before being released to healthcare facilities and ambulance services.

Ms. Lewis reported that last year a survey was completed of all hospital emergency communication systems. Based on those results and the intentions of the ICC, HEALTH developed a five-year tactical communication plan. This plan included establishing connection or refurbishing three radio systems, Rhode Island Statewide Communications Network, Hospital Emergency Administrative Radio System, and the National Common Channel Mutual Aid Radio

System. Implementation of this phase of the plan began at hospitals last month and is expected to take several months to complete. These radio systems will provide redundant communication between hospitals, EMS, and public safety agencies.

Lastly, on June 20th, hospitals across Rhode Island participated in a day-long exercise with state hazardous materials and decontamination teams. The goals of the exercise were to enhance understanding of roles and responsibilities, review how individual agency plans work in unison, and assess equipment capability while developing relationships and sharing best practices. Participants were provided a new decontamination toolkit, which includes rules and regulations related to hazardous materials, resource contacts and operational checklists.

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

Mr. Ball discussed the subcommittee's involvement during America's Cup, Tall Ships and VG. During America's Cup and Tall Ships the team disseminated Air Monitoring materials and pre-staged Hazmat trailers based on necessity. For VG there was collaboration between the Hope Valley Hazmat team and the Kingstown Hazmat and the Woonsocket and North Providence to create an environmental sampling. He felt that there was good cross pollination of knowledge and the teams were pleased with the results.

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

Ms. Earley discussed some of the training and exercises that the group has been working on, including Compassion Fatigue. Compassion fatigue is a condition characterized by a gradual lessening of compassion over time when dealing with trauma victims. Online training materials will be available for the teams and a psychological training took place at Zambarano Hospital. A TTX Exercise will take place in September and a team was activated to help with hospitals in Colorado. Lastly, the team participated with military police in response to a civil disturbance.

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

Mr. Marzullo discussed the deployment of an AmeriCorps NCCC team to Rhode Island to complete surveys of local shelters and promote the RI Special Needs Registry door to door. On July 13th there was a "Welcome to Rhode Island" cookout held at the American Red Cross where members were introduced to stakeholders including RIEMA, HEALTH, the Rhode Island Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster and the Providence EMA among others. Andrea Tatro will be the lead at RIEMA overseeing this effort.

Starting in the fall the size of NCCC members will increase to 1600 with FEMA to support resources. The NCCC plan on setting up an information booth to recruit people for the registry at the Washington County Fair on August 14th to the 18th.

F. Law Enforcement Working Group—*Lt. Robert Wall, Rhode Island State Police.*

Lt. James Manni introduced Lt. Robert Wall who will take the helm of the Law Enforcement Working Group. Lt. Wall has been with the RI State Police for 20 years and 30 years with the RI National Guard. He will also be the RIEMA liaison to the RI State Police.

Lt. Manni discussed some of the activities that the group was involved with including the Rhode Island National Guard Air Show, the America's Cup, Tall Ships, and the Jazz & Folk Festival. All those events were successful without major incidents.

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

Ms. Lambie, provided a report on the Port Security Grants. For the 2012 period, \$97 million was available nationwide, down from \$235 million in 2011. Unfortunately, of the entities from RI applying for grants, none received any funding. Sector Southeastern New England (SSNE) will follow up with FEMA to discuss reasons and how to avoid it in the future.

Ms. Lambie, went on to discuss that the SSNE is sponsoring a TTX, focused on both safety and security, on Cape Cod in September. The scenario will involve an attack by terrorists on a ferry vessel out of Woods Hole, MA.

For the Port Safety and Security Forum, the Research Vessel KNORR informed the Coast Guard that they discovered a stowaway on board after leaving port in Iceland. Their next port of call was Woods Hole, MA where a joint boarding was conducted by the Coast Guard, FBI, DHS, The Naval Criminal Investigate Service and the U.S. Customs and Border Protection. The joint boarding and follow up went very well and was a credit to all the hard work these agencies have put into seamlessly working together.

The Coast Guard has built out a small initial Incident Command Post at the East Providence office. This is available for use upon request and contains wi-fi, 800 MHz, marine band VHF-FM radio and RICOP capabilities. For the VG TTX the Coast Guard sent new personnel who would fill positions as liaisons and intelligence officers during a real event to observe the VG TTX.

Lastly, the Area Maritime Security Sub-Committee Meetings – SSNE will be setting up meetings for each of the 4 identified port areas to conduct small tabletop exercises using the newly updated Incident Action Plans. The four port areas include Newport/Jamestown, Port of Davisville, Providence/East Providence and Point Judith/Block Island.

H. Special Populations Working Group—*Steven Florio Rhode Island Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing /Susan Earley, Behavioral Healthcare Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals.*

Mr. Florio discussed their work with the Special Needs Registry and the collaboration with the American Red Cross and E911 to update information and enhance the system.

The current Special Needs Registry count is 10,102 as a result of a recent update involving algorithms to sort through the database cleaning up duplicates.

Mr. Florio was pleased that the Emergency Notification system will have text and email capabilities. Also, there have been preliminary conversations with Stuart Freiman from the RI Economic Development Corporation – Broadband Initiative on a statewide alert system. The next subcommittee meeting will take place on Monday, September 10th at the United Way of Rhode Island.

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

Chair Roberts was very impressed with the work of the USAR team, she was able to see one of the simulations as part of the Distinguished Visitor's day for VG. State Fire Marshal Chartier was also complementary to the team and stated that the event was quite a logistical achievement as there were 200 responders integrated into the structure. Chief Seltzer thought that the Incident Command structure worked really well during VG and there were only minor glitches. The team was divided into shifts, although for the last day, the engagement was for 24 hours as they wanted to test vulnerabilities and assess capabilities. Chief Seltzer was pleased with the collaboration he received from the Task Force 7 Architects and Engineers as they were brought in to evaluate structures and provide a report of each of the buildings to assess whether it was safe for the community to go back or not.

There was a question from the public in regards to how where they able to keep people from going into the site? The Chief responded that the perimeter was secured by the military police who once activated, would not let them in and in the unlikely case they broke in, the Rhode Island State Police would make an arrest.

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

Mr. Pires, discussed the efforts by the Transportation Security Working Group and the intermodal operations at critical venues throughout the state.

Under the Anti-Terrorism Advisory Council the team is monitoring closely the vandalism incident in front of the Masjid Al-Islam mosque in North Smithfield this past Sunday. The incident engaged the local police department and the Fusion Center. However, preliminary data does not suggest that the vandalism was a hate crime, but they will continue looking for clues.

Donna DiMichele encouraged Mr. Pires to perhaps use the public library system as a way to send information and have conversations about religious issues.

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

The group has not met. During VG they looked at PODs.

IV. New Business, Member Comments, Suggestions

Next meeting will take place Tuesday, October 9th at 10:00 a.m. at the RI Emergency Management Agency.