



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

**December 11, 2012  
10:00 AM  
MEETING MINUTES**

### **Attendance**

Lieutenant Governor Elizabeth H. Roberts  
Major General Kevin McBride  
Deputy Ed Johnson  
Capt. Verne Gifford  
Jack Chartier  
Alysia Mihalakos  
Dawn Lewis  
James Ball  
Susan Earley  
Vincent Marzullo  
Lieutenant Robert Wall  
Lieutenant Patrick McMahan  
Steven Florio  
James Lanni  
Greg Scungio  
Alan Seitz  
Peter Marinucci  
Elizabeth McDonalds  
Christopher Degrave  
Peter Popko  
Arthur Bovis  
Erin McDonough  
Jeff Hatcher  
Paul Stasiuk  
Chris Hiener  
Peter Coffey  
Shad Ahmed  
Donna DiMichele  
Leo Messier  
George Pedro  
Vlad Ibarra

## **I. Call to Order / Lieutenant Governor Roberts**

Chairwoman Roberts opened the meeting with the announcement of Christopher Degraives as the new representative of the Governor's Commission on Disabilities.

Chairwoman Roberts went on to discuss the activation of the Rhode Island Department of Health's Incident Command System to address a dramatic increase in flu activity that occurred. As of the meeting Rhode Island had seen a total of 33 hospitalizations this season due to Flu. The flu activity designation is now "Widespread." The strain H3N2 is a great match to the vaccine; it does, however, affect the elderly more so than children. The Rhode Island Department of Health set up local clinics throughout the state including in Cumberland, Providence, Charlestown, Burrillville, Warwick, Lincoln and North Providence.

Chairwoman Roberts encouraged those who have not taken the flu shot to do so and asked Ms. Mihalakos if she had further information. Ms. Mihalakos said that this was an opportunity to test the municipal Points of Dispensing (PODs) and help with municipal exercises.

Chairwoman Roberts gave kudos to RIEMA leadership for their efforts to provide additional resources to small business owners in our state and continuing building partnerships by having members of the Rhode Island Emergency Business Operations Center address the Small Business Advocacy Council and the International Emergency Managers Conference in Newport and small business owners at Kirkbrae Club in Lincoln.

## **II. Approval of Minutes from August 7, 2012**

The minutes were unanimously approved.

## **III. Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency (RIEMA) Update**

MG McBride talked about the scheduled After Action Review (AAR) on Friday at Alton Jones and the opportunity it provides to gather information to then be used to conduct an Executive level AAR to address policy items.

MG McBride stated that during Hurricane Sandy the approach was different and very successful due to agency collaboration, private and public partnerships and built up from lessons learned. However, he would like to see local emergency management personnel have a greater understanding of the process including exhausting all capabilities before requesting aid.

Deputy Johnson discussed some of the efforts at RIEMA with their Continuity of Operations and the partnerships built. Also, the Joint Field Office has over 100 individuals helping from Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in the debris management, public assistance and individual assistance piece in conjunction with the Small Business Administration (SBA). Lastly, Deputy Johnson discussed the School Safety Conference held at the Crowne Plaza Hotel.

#### IV. Domestic Preparedness Subcommittee Reports

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

Deputy Johnson discussed the review by the Department of Homeland Security of the 800 MHz system and how they will be looking at infrastructure, with a strategic vision on good governance as they assist the subcommittee.

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

Ms. Mihalakos stated that prior to Hurricane Sandy; there was a rise in the Special Needs Registry with 592 new enrollees as it overlapped with the annual letter.

Ms. Mihalakos discussed the evacuation in Westerly of Watch Hill as a way to assess nursing homes availability and how well it worked.

Chairwoman Roberts asked if vacancy and capacity were tracked and Ms. Mihalakos responded that yes, both were tracked. Ms. Mihalakos went on to say that 41 facilities ran on generator power and that they only had a generator failure to which the DMAT team provided aid.

Lastly, Ms. Mihalakos stated that today was the shutdown of the Nextel system into 800 MHz, without any sort of guidance by the Department of Administration as to which system will be used going forward and how it will affect portability.

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

Mr. Ball wanted clarification on “Essential Personnel” as several individuals were working from home that should have been at work. Fortunately, there were minor issues with Propane tanks.

The HazMat Team integrated with the United States Coast Guard personnel to conduct inspections of Petroleum and Gas. In Westerly, he observed several household hazard waste issues that were handled by the Department of Public Works.

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

Ms. Earley discussed how they received advanced notice so the Behavioral Healthcare Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals created bulletins and reached out to community partners and businesses to look at the continuity of operations plans, plan ahead for food needs and any other contingencies.

Ms. Earley did not see any particular issues with Emergency Support Function 8 (Public Health and Medical Services).

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

Mr. Marzullo discussed some of the cleanup efforts of Serve Rhode Island (SRI) in Westerly which moved from large scale clean ups, to identifying and deploying teams for specific tasks for the remaining projects and transitioning into longer-term recovery and clean up.

SRI is working with the Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training to develop a plan under the National Emergency Grant for Disaster for employing individuals who are unemployed due to Sandy.

Mr. Marzullo reported a total of 810 clean up volunteers, putting in 5,158 hours of service in response to Sandy. A NCCC team from Mississippi was deployed to Rhode Island with 10 members. They have cleaned up 162 houses, 29 businesses, and 6 public properties in the Misquamicut beach community of Westerly.

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

Lt. Wall stated that the Rhode Island State Police did not have many issues. Troopers worked in coordination with the Rhode Island National Guard and resources were allocated to the South County area. Nineteen troopers were sent to New Jersey as part of an EMAC request.

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

Capt. Gifford discussed the enhanced collaboration of a liaison officer staged at the Emergency Operations Center and how helpful that was to the process. There were some challenges with managed expectations and fuel delivery as refineries were compromised in other areas.

Lastly, Capt. Gifford discussed the TTX this summer of a mass rescue operation involving ferries.

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. (confirmed)*

Ms. Earley discussed the need to arrange the meetings of the subcommittee to be monthly as opposed to quarterly. There was a meeting held yesterday which was poorly attended due to the lack of notice.

Behavioral health network will continue to operate during the recovery period, crisis counseling grant "RI HOPE" will connect people with resources while efforts normalize. The program will have four full time outreach workers both for the Newport and Washington county focusing in Westerly and Newport.

Mr. Florio would like to see the Rhode Island television coverage mirror the New York coverage were the screen was split in half so that the interpreter was visible. He was pleased that the FEMA centers in Westerly and Charlestown provided interpreter services.

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

Chief Seltzer was unable to attend the meeting but sent representation from the USAR team.

Three strike teams were activated as part of Emergency Support Function 9. The team worked in conjunction with the Rhode Island Architects and Engineers Emergency Response Task Force 7 on building condition assessments. There were more than 100 hours of worked involved with the effort.

J. Transportation Security Working Group—*Brian Pires, Anti-Terrorism Advisory Council/Transportation Security Working Group.*  
No report

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

Lt. McMahon stated that the mass casualty plan has been finalized and signed. He thanked Ms. Mihalakos and Ms. Lewis for helping with the plan.

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

Chairwoman Roberts wished everybody a safe and happy Holiday Season and thank General McBride, Liz McDonald from the Red Cross, and many others for volunteering their time this past weekend for the 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Operation Holiday Cheer.

The next meeting will take place on January 8<sup>th</sup> at the Rhode Island Department of Transportation.