



Rhode Island Emergency Management Advisory Council
March 12, 2013
10:00 AM
MEETING MINUTES

Attendance

Lt. Governor Elizabeth H. Roberts
General Kevin R. McBride
Edward Johnson
Robert Seltzer
Jack Leyden
Joseph Arsenault
Gregory Scungio
Dawn Lewis
Steven Florio
Jim Ball
James Lanni
Paul Stasiuk
Joe McCooey
Elizabeth McDonald
Andrea Tatro
Bill Mullen
Bob Sasso
Marian Juskuv
Bill Bessette
Jay Burdick
Donna DiMichele
Vlad Ibarra

I. Call to Order / Lieutenant Governor Roberts

Chairwoman Roberts provided an update on several HIPAA issues raised at the February meeting. A small group comprised of members from Lifespan, the Rhode Island Department of Health and the Office of the Lieutenant Governor convened to address HIPAA restrictions in light of emergency situations; they envision creating an issues brief so that everyone is on the same page.

Chairwoman Roberts went on to invite interested parties to participate in the “Senior/Disabled Housing Emergency Ad-hoc Work Group” which looks at the intersection of Long Term Care and Emergency Preparedness. The Ad-hoc group will meet on Wednesday March 27 at 10:00 a.m. at the Dept. of Administration. Lastly, Chairwoman Roberts discussed how today’s presentation by Chief Seltzer will provide an overview of the Rhode Island Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) team, and the second presentation by the Rhode Island State Building Commissioner, Jack Leyden, will highlight how that process is complemented through his office.

II. Approval of Minutes from February 19, 2013

Chairwoman Roberts made a motion to approve the minutes which was seconded and the minutes were unanimously approved.

III. Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency Update

General McBride announced that President Obama approved Rhode Island’s request for disaster declaration and for public assistance for all five counties. The designation for public assistance (PA) means that eligible municipalities and state agencies can apply for assistance in repairing storm-damaged infrastructure or for projects to mitigate effects for future damage.

IV. Rhode Island Urban Search & Rescue Overview

Robert W. Seltzer, BS, EFO, Chief of Smithfield Fire Department

Chief Seltzer’s presentation revolved around interdependencies being key in successful response to any hazard event. The interdependencies at the municipal level revolve around mutual aid and/or collaborations between police and fire departments, emergency medical services, departments of public works and human services. At the state level, they comprise the Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency, National Guard, Department of Transportation, State Police, State Fire Marshal’s Office, and HEALTH, among others. These interdependencies from the various teams (rescue operations, logistics, planning, hazardous materials, mass casualty trailers, and urban search and rescue) are pivotal because as the process escalates they rely upon each other and work towards the same goal. Chief Seltzer discussed in detail the makeup of the team and collaborations such as with the private-structural engineers as an example of a best practice model. He provided slides of recent engagements including the 2010 floods and a bridge and building collapse.

Lastly, Chief Seltzer went on to discuss some of the guidance provided by the Southern New England Fire Emergency Assistance Plan for Mutual Aid. The plan was developed shortly after the Station nightclub fire and builds upon lessons learned. Mr. Ginaitt asked how they update their guidance since at this point it is about nine years old. Chief Seltzer responded that the mutual aid committee provides updates and works with RIEMA to address issues. He ended the presentation wondering how DHS/Sequestering would affect capacity and state response.

Jack Leyden, Rhode Island State Building Commissioner

Commissioner Leyden provided an overview of the role of the commission which is to safeguard and establish minimum requirements necessary to protect public health, safety and welfare in the built environment. Building codes are updated every three years to provide for protection from fire, structure collapse, and general deterioration as well as training and education on consistent code enforcement.

Commissioner Leyden provided examples of deployments by Inspectors to perform structural assessments and how that critical data leads to federal disaster declarations and ultimately to the State getting more dollars for recovery. He expanded on the explanation of Chief Seltzer on the role of USAR and Task Force 7 in rapid assessments and efforts to enhance current collaborations with communities. He discussed ways to improve their processes including full day training programs and disaster support lines so that local officials can provide assistance. EMAC members asked several questions including credentialing, mutual aid agreements, coverage and guidance to deviation from the current approach for coastal communities. For further inquiries please contact Commissioner Leyden at 401.222.3033

V. New Business, Member Comments, Suggestions

Chairwoman Roberts informed members that the next meeting will take place on Tuesday, May 14 at 10:00 a.m. at the RI Department of Transportation.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:50 a.m.