



Rhode Island Emergency Management Advisory Council

June 11, 2013

10:00 AM

MEETING MINUTES

Attendance

Lieutenant Governor Elizabeth H. Roberts

Major General Kevin McBride, Rhode Island National Guard

Jamia McDonald, Acting Executive Director, RIEMA

Jack Chartier, State Fire Marshall

Peter Gaynor, Providence Emergency Management Agency

Joe Arsenault, RI Association of Emergency Managers

Robert Seltzer, RI Association of Fire Chiefs

Alysia Mihalakos, Rhode Island Department of Health

Paul Stasiuk, National Grid

Gregory H. Scongio, RI 9-1-1

James Ball, RI Department of Environmental Management

Dawn Lewis, Hospital Association of Rhode Island

Arthur Bovis, RI Department of Transportation

Erin McDonough, Rhode Island Disaster Medical Assistance Team/RI Medical Reserve Corps

De'an Bass, FEMA

Chris Cunningham, FEMA

George Newbauer, FEMA

James Lanni, RI Public Utilities Commission

Lori Adamo, NEDRIX

Joe McCooley, Rhode Island Courts

Shad Ahmed, University of Rhode Island

Peter Ginaitt, Lifespan

Christopher DeGrave, Governor's Commission on Disabilities

Andrea Tatro, Rhode Island Emergency Management

Jay Burdick, RI VOAD / United Way 211

Lori Needham, Rhode Island Broadcasters Association

Jeff Kelly, Mutualink

Jeff Hatcher, RI Architects and Engineers Emergency Response Task Force 7

Liz McDonald, American Red Cross

Kevin Blount, United States Coast Guard

Steven Florio, Rhode Island Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

Donna Longo DiMichele, Office of Library and Information Services

John Saporita, Rhode Island National Guard

Donna Leong, Office of the Lieutenant Governor

I. Call to Order / Lieutenant Governor Roberts

Chair Roberts started the meeting with a brief outline of today's agenda. The presentations for the meeting are on the topic of disaster recovery. Chair Roberts provided an updated of relevant legislation to the council. She stated that the state legislature is starting to wrap up its session and two bills were heard in the House of Representatives on June 11, 2013: House Bill 5612 International Emergency Management Assistance Compact on behalf of the RI National Guard, and House Bill 5651 Emergency Generator Bills. Their corresponding senate bills have already been passed.

The chair attended RIEMA's 2013 Hurricane Conference on May 30th, 2013 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel. She noted the focus on building partnerships and networks between agencies. The conference was well attended.

II. Approval of Minutes from May 14, 2013

The minutes were unanimously approved.

III. Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency Update

General McBride noted that there are many agencies now tracking the storm.

Acting RIEMA Executive Director Jamia McDonald announced that the Coast Guard training is taking place at Point Judith today and tomorrow to prepare for potential terrorist attacks. Director McDonald also noted that there are new customer service models.

IV. New Recovery Basics: The Rhode Island Disaster Recovery Framework – De'An Bass FEMA Community Recovery Team

Ms. Bass provided an overview of the Rhode Island Disaster Recovery Framework (Framework), a draft to create a formal state recovery coordinator structure with broad partner networks for comprehensive and cohesive post-disaster recovery. The Framework is intended to work in conjunction with the State of RI Emergency Operations Plan and requires extensive pre-disaster planning.

The coordination of the Framework attempts to use a flowchart of actors to pool resources and quickly funnel them down to communities in need of assistance. The State Disaster Recovery Coordinator and the Disaster Recovery Commission partner with local communities to create the networks in place needed to implement the plans.

The State Disaster Recovery Coordinator (SDRC) is to be appointed by the Governor, and will be the primary point of contact for state disaster recovery. Included in the roles of the SDRC is the coordination of communication between the different network partners in the Disaster Recovery Commission. Chaired by the SDRC, the commission includes representatives from the

non-profit sector, private sector, tribal representatives, and other stakeholders. Additionally, the committee invites Recovery Support Function (RSF) coordinators and RSF partners to the discussion; RSF partners provide subject matter expertise, and the RSF coordinators continue collaboration between the state-level RSF partners, their federal counterparts, and the Recovery Commission.

General McBride asked if there are any other states that utilize the framework. Ms. Bass noted that Maine has a draft of a similar framework and that Arizona has discussed the creation of one in the past. Also she noted that the Framework is aiming to address the broader, long-term issues of economic development in addition to emergency management.

The Chair asked whether there would be non-traditional resources and networks to be used in order to coordinate effective response. She noted the need to rely on more than just traditional government actors and emphasized the need to reach out to different parts of the Rhode Island community that are usually underserved and integrate them into the decision-making of the Framework.

Ms. Bass stated that the outreach process for the Framework is being refined right now and that it is still in draft form. Director McDonald stated that there is a need to have a central point of contact that is governmental in nature to ensure that there is continuity in the event of new disasters.

Ms. Bass noted that one of the keys ways to improve this framework in the future is to learn of the best practices in other states as well as hopes to create semiannual meetings to build capacity among partner states.

There was a final question in regards to how the public can be notified of the progress of this framework development. Ms. Bass noted that currently, most of the communication is through email, but the potential for a web-based portal is being considered.

V. Sandy Recovery Update – Jamia McDonald, Acting RIEMA Executive Director

Director McDonald opened up her presentation with an overview of the damage that Hurricane Sandy caused. After the hurricane, there were over \$53 billion in damages and FEMA opened up public allowance to the following counties: Bristol, Kent, Newport, and Washington.

There is currently a grant tracker on the RIEMA website that consolidates all funding opportunities and updates the community on the progress of grants already applied. Director McDonald stated that there have been 71 applications for grants submitted, which is commendable, but there needs to be a larger RIEMA presence in order to make sure the money gets to the communities quickly.

General McBride noted that there are several legislative bills that attempt to mitigate the cost of recovery. He also mentioned the possibility of ensuring that residents do not rebuild in flood zones, for fear of another catastrophe in the future. He noted that New Jersey Governor, Chris Christie holds this view.

Mr. Arthur Bovis asked if there would be mitigation of state infrastructure, such as roads. Director McDonald said that there will be steps taken towards better policy decisions and to ensure that there are better building codes and zoning for successful long-term efforts.

The Chair asked about how small businesses are recovering post-Sandy. What are the channels of support that they can draw on besides SBA loans. Are they receiving financial support for relocation? Are there nontraditional routes that they can use for support?

Director McDonald replied that the SBA loan process, which has three stages, should be streamlined and mentioned that government entities should make sure that they are not placing extreme regulations on small businesses in order for them to rebuild. General McBride also added that there are some regulations that could be suspended, but there was a question raised about how sustainable that practice will be in the long-term.

There was a question as to how the state would communicate to the residents post-disaster. There was discussion of using the RI.gov portal, but in the possibility of a power outage calls for other modes of communication as well.

Director McDonald stated that government officials need to be retrained on how to disseminate news. The Chair noted that there needs to be a strengthening of informal networks of communication as well so that people can manage for themselves. She gave the example of the Chicago heat wave, in which different neighborhoods of comparable income levels had varying rates of mortality because of the social networks in the different neighborhoods.

There was a question about how the state can tap into the knowledge of different groups that can help in the rebuilding process; specifically, how can there be an expedited process for credentialing to bring in professional networks, such as architects and engineers, for assessment?

There was also a question raised about how the state can ensure that people are trained to react to school shootings, as in Newtown. How can teachers be trained and how there can be a standardized protocol.

General McBride stated that there cannot be a standardized procedure unless there is a baseline agreement as to what is defined as safe. Nevertheless, Director McDonald stated that there is currently discussion with RI Education Commissioner, Deborah Gist about collaborations on finding the right approach for our state.

Liz McDonald from the American Red Cross said that there is still funding from the Red Cross available for non-profits helping in Post-Sandy recovery efforts. There have not been many RI non-profits that have taken advantage of it, so she wanted to get the word out. Lastly, Director McDonald stated that she would work to put the Red Cross grant information on the website.

VI. New Business, Member Comments, Suggestions

Chair Roberts reminded members that there is no July meeting but that next EMAC meeting would take place on August 13th

The meeting was adjourned at 11:15 a.m.