



Rhode Island Emergency Management Advisory Council
August 13, 2013
MINUTES

Attendance

Lieutenant Governor Elizabeth H. Roberts
Major General Kevin McBride, Rhode Island National Guard
Jack Chartier, State Fire Marshall
Alysia Mihalakos, Rhode Island Department of Health
Dawn Lewis, Hospital Association of Rhode Island
Susan Earley, Behavioral Healthcare Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals
Vincent Marzullo, Corporation for National and Community Service
Robert Wall, Rhode Island State Police
Erin Lambie, United States Coast Guard
Steven Florio, Rhode Island Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
Andrew Zarlenga, Rhode Island Urban Search and Rescue
Brian Pires, United States Department of Justice
Patrick McMahan, Charlestown Police Department
Justin Vail, Charlestown Police Department
Joe McCooey, Rhode Island Judiciary
Paul Stasiuk, National Grid
Jay Burdick, UW211, Rhode Island Volunteer Organizations Active in Disasters
Gregory Scungio, Rhode Island E 9-1-1
Jeff Kelly, MutuaLink
Shad Ahmed, University of Rhode Island
Peter Ginaitt, Lifespan
Lori Needham, Rhode Island Broadcasters Association
Theresa Woodmansee, Protecting the Past - Rhode Island
Armond Randolph, Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency
Ken McCarthy, Rhode Island Public Utilities Commission
Joseph Shilling, Rhode Island Public Utilities Commission
Scott Halsband, Rhode Island Urban Search and Rescue
Larry Grimaldi, Rhode Island Department of Elderly Affairs
Captain John Saporita, Rhode Island National Guard
Billy Watterson, Office of the Lieutenant Governor
Vlad Ibarra, Office of the Lieutenant Governor

I. Call to Order / Lieutenant Governor Roberts

Chairwoman Roberts started the meeting with a brief legislative update that included Governor Chafee signing both the Emergency Generators Bill (**S650 & H5651**) and the International Emergency Management Assistance Compact (**S501 & H5612**) into law. As previously mentioned, the Generators Bill would lower the number of units required for an elderly housing complex to be required to maintain an emergency generator from one hundred fifty to one hundred with an effective date for the measure to start on March 1, 2014. The date was moved in response to concerns voiced by stakeholders to March 1, 2014. Also, the International Emergency Management Assistance Compact would allow our state to provide assistance to neighbors to the north. According to General McBride, Rhode Island was the last New England state to sign up to this.

Chairwoman Roberts commented on several bills that passed to improve safety measures in Rhode Island including:

- **S 801 & H5941** requires all schools to perform a safety assessment in conjunction with local police, fire and school safety teams within 30 days of enactment and every three years thereafter. The school safety assessment and school safety plans are exempt from the public records law and open meetings law. When school committees are viewing the plans, it shall be done in executive session. General McBride commented that schools were doing this process and that the legislation merely formalizes the process, it will improve the response efforts.
- **S800 & H5940** requires the Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education to certify annually that all safety and emergency plans have been reviewed and updated.
- Legislation passed to expand access to the Military Family Relief Fund and eliminate the requirement of activation or deployment for state or federal services. General McBride highlighted how the new legislation can now better respond to address their needs as there has been a reduction in the number of deployments and the previous language was restrictive. The General noted that despite the change, there is a checks and balances process that goes through the Family Assistance Center.

Lastly, chairwoman Roberts commended the Rhode Island State Police and partners for the two very successful Amber Alerts. She stated that it has been fascinating to watch the combination of the alerts and social media interaction. She asked Lt. Wall from the RISPS if he had anything to add. Lt. Wall stated that both victims were found safely and quickly and wanted to thank the Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency-Emergency Operations Center for being instrumental throughout the process. Lori Needham from the Rhode Island Broadcasters Association stated that there would be an After Action Review for agencies/partners to learn from the process.

II. Approval of Minutes from June 11, 2013

The Minutes were unanimously approved.

III. Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency Update

General McBride stated that a lot of items taking place were budget driven. He will be traveling to D.C. to tackle budget items as Sequestration continues for fiscal year 2014 and there has not been guidance as to what the end results will be. The general mentioned that last week he was at the U.S. Northern Command with General Jacoby looking at response efforts of a complex catastrophe (to support restoration and big picture items) as each state is building their response and U.S. Northern Command will put them together so they will be in sync.

IV. Domestic Preparedness Subcommittee Reports

- A. Interoperability Communications Committee—*Jamia McDonald, Executive Director RIEMA*

Unable to attend.

- B. Healthcare Coalition of Rhode Island—*Alysia Mihalakos, Dept. of Health /Dawn Lewis, Hospital Association of Rhode Island.*

Ms. Mihalakos reported that a new grant cycle has begun and that HEALTH has been ramping up for hurricane season with an internal tabletop exercise to ensure HEALTH's readiness to respond to hurricanes and a tabletop to further develop policies and procedures to address the medical needs of individuals who evacuate to shelters. She noted that the face of the population is changing, as people who are more medically fragile are able to stay at home, creating a shift from the need to shelter healthy individuals to sheltering those with increasingly complex medical needs (including the need for oxygen and other contingencies). Nevertheless, HEALTH has been proactively implementing strategies to address medical, functional and access, and behavioral health needs, taking into consideration the chronic disease in addition to the traditional emergency response focus of acute trauma under a whole community approach. HEALTH has developed Functional Assessment Service Teams (FASTs) in conjunction with the RI Disaster Medical Assistance Team/Medical Reserve Corps (RI DMAT/MRC). A training series for FAST members with a focus on addressing activities of daily living began this summer and will run through September.

HEALTH is engaged in two multi-year progressive training and exercise cycles, one for the State's response to chemical nerve agent events using CHEMPACKs and one healthcare-exclusive mass casualty incident series. The after action review from each exercise will help improve plans and processes and address gaps.

Chairwoman Roberts asked if health centers have been part of the conversation as they might be able to be utilized as force multipliers for healthcare staffing at shelters. Ms. Mihalakos agreed and said that the conversations have focused on medical equipment from hospitals and

nursing homes, but will reach out to the health centers to gauge their level of willingness to participate.

General McBride stressed the need for regionalization to better support resources, and illustrated the unsustainable model of multiple shelters as opposed to the regional model. Mr. Florio asked whether the plans included hearing impaired individuals. Ms. Mihalakos responded that yes, all the plans now cover functional and access needs, as the audience is much broader. Moreover, Ms. Mihalakos mentioned that a new notification vendor was procured. The new notification system was used to contact hospitals and health centers during the recent rabies concern in Tiverton and the gastrointestinal illness at Spring Lake, testing its functionality. Lastly, Ms. Lewis discussed the collaboration between HARI and the Rhode Island Bar Association in developing emergency seminars for lawyers taking place on November 19.

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

Mr. Ball was unable to attend but provide a report. The report highlights some of the responses the HazMat Teams have been involved with over the last month including:

- On June 21 DEM responded to Met-Life in Warwick with the Warwick HazMat Team and EMA. The DOH Laboratory and the Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF) were notified by EMA. The Warwick HazMat Team suited up to obtain a sample of the material. The instruments utilized by Warwick produced all negative results for anthrax.
- On June 24th DEM responded with Central Falls Fire, Woonsocket HazMat Team, North Providence and Hopkins Hill Decontamination Teams, and the Cumberland Fire Foam Task Force to a 5-alarm fire involving hazardous chemicals at General Polymers in Central Falls. The HazMat team set up air monitoring around the building to insure responder and public safety. DEM worked with the company to insure the proper disposal of the released chemicals.
- On July 16th DEM personnel responded to Broadrock Renewables in Johnston concerning a methane gas line fire. The Johnston Fire Department detected hydrogen cyanide when they were fighting the fire and requested assistance from DEM. The hydrogen cyanide was thought to be a by-product of combustion as a result of the fire burning the high-density polyethylene piping. DEM provided air monitoring for the responders safety throughout the incident and follow-up inspection by the State Fire Marshall's Office.
- On July 26th DEM personnel responded along with Newport Police and Fire, East Providence HazMat Team and EMA concerning a suspicious package containing a white powder at The Chanler at the Cliff Walk Hotel in Newport. The East Providence HazMat Team suited up and made entry to obtain a sample of the material. Field analyses completed by East Providence indicated the material was cocaine. The Newport Police then tested the material with their field drug kits and also determined the material to be cocaine. Since the material was determined to be an illegal drug, it was turned over to the police. The hotel management was informed to decontaminate the area where the package was opened and the site was cleared.

Lastly, Mr. Ball is working on developing a long-range plan for the replacement of expired equipment and vehicles which will be very costly. He hopes that there will be funding available to make some of these purchases over the next several years.

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

Ms. Earley stated that the subcommittee is in the planning and writing phase.

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

Mr. Marzullo opened the floor for Jay Burdick from the Volunteer Organizations Active in Disasters (VOAD) who was elected as chair for a second term.

Mr. Burdick provided a brief updated of the VOAD meeting and stated that the group is applying to become a 401c3 organization to help the state with the management of donations next year.

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

Lt. Wall discussed briefly the two recent Amber alerts and pleased with the inter-agency collaboration and that both victims were found safely. He reported a surge in request for K9 explosive teams for large-scale events in light of the Boston bombings.

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

Ms. Lambie provided an updated of the Sentinel Hope tabletop that raised maritime security for a week and assessed their ability to do virtual checks and information distribution without glitches. The simulated TTX attack on the Block Island Ferry was successful in terms of response and the triage of individuals, the After Action Review is being completed. Also, there is planning for a cross border TTX with Connecticut in October in regards to an oil spill and response.

Ms. Lambie went on to discuss Port Security Grants of around 37 million nationwide but Rhode Island did not receive any funding last year. Hopefully Rhode Island does better this year but the announcement will not be made until the end of the fiscal year. Lastly, Ms. Lambie stated that the USCG is working on the Area Maritime Security update and reaching out to different port areas and their local security leaders making sure they are linked with the state and local plans.

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 stated that the emergency public access legislation for a half-time position passed within the state budget.

Ms. Earley provided an update of the last meeting of the subcommittee group on July 31st, the group organized a set of goals including arranging the meetings so that they pre-date the EMAC meeting. Another goal will be assessment of the emergency support functions (ESFs) that would most impact special populations and review three at a time and make recommendations. General McBride stated that this was very timely as it provides a proactive stance to bring up concerns to ESF leads.

I. Urban Search and Rescue—*Chief Andrew Zarlenga, North Providence Fire Department*

Mr. Zarlenga provided a brief update on their recruitment drive that increased membership by 12 members to around 100. In June held a TTX and the team was operational within an hour. The members are receiving water awareness training and a structural collapse course.

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

Mr. Pires reported that locally the Visible Intermodal Protection and Response Teams (VIPR) are ongoing to include bus terminals and ports, among others. More broadly, there are concerns with spill over from Syria and Lebanon, aftermath post Arab Spring-under governed spaces and the mixing of transnational crime. The group continues to engage D.E.A and non-traditional partners. On the home front, there is concern with disenfranchised youth behind the keyboard drawn to Jihadism, seen with the Boston bombing incident.

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

Lt. McMahon reported that eight trailers were resupplied and no longer supply with vents and airway equipment. All expired stock has been removed from the MCI trailers have been made available and deployed to events in the area for regional trainings.

V. New Business, Member Comments, Suggestions

Chairwoman Roberts opened the floor for comments:

Mr. Stasiuk provided an update on National Grid's annual storm drill that included Massachusetts and Connecticut with roughly 128,000 customers without electricity. The drill provided great visibility into identifying critical customers and provided a chance to improve community and customer liaison training.

Mr. Randolph stated that RIEMA Executive Director McDonald would be meeting with the Rhode Island Broadcasters Association about close captioning requirements.

Chairwoman Roberts stated that the next meeting would take place Tuesday, October 8. The venue is still fluid as RIEMA's training room is under construction but there will be notice via email.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:25 a.m.