



Rhode Island Emergency Management Advisory Council

October 8, 2013

Rhode Island Department of Transportation

Division of Highway & Bridge Maintenance

10:00 AM

MINUTES

Attendance

Lieutenant Governor Elizabeth H. Roberts

Major General Kevin McBride, Rhode Island National Guard

Jamia McDonald, Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency

Jack Chartier, Office of State Fire Marshal

Peter Gaynor, Providence Emergency Management Agency

Robert Seltzer, Rhode Island Association of Fire Chiefs

Peter Ginaitt, Lifespan

Brian Pires, United States Department of Justice

Dawn Lewis, Hospital Association of Rhode Island

Elizabeth McDonald, American Red Cross – Rhode Island Chapter

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

Vincent Marzullo, Corporation for National and Community Service

Robert Wall, Rhode Island State Police

Jim Ball, RI Department of Environmental Management

Gregory Scungio, Rhode Island E 9-1-1

Shad Ahmed, University of Rhode Island

Tom Lawrence, Rhode Island Disaster Medical Assistance Team's Medical Reserve Corps

Erin McDonough, Rhode Island Disaster Medical Assistance Team's Medical Reserve Corps

Joseph McCooey, Rhode Island Judiciary

Lori Needham, Rhode Island Broadcasters Association

Lori Adamo, NEDRIX

Paul Stasiuk, National Grid

James Lanni, Rhode Island Public Utilities Commission

Joseph Arsenault, Rhode Island Association of Emergency Managers

Arthur Bovis, Rhode Island Department of Transportation

Chris DeGraves, Rhode Island Governor's Commission on Disabilities

Scott Halsband, Rhode Island Urban Search and Rescue

Jay Burdick, UW211, Rhode Island Volunteer Organizations Active in Disasters

Donna DiMichele, Department of Administration / Office of Library and Information Services

William Bessette, Amtrak Police
William Mullen, Transportation Security Administration- DHS
Ryan Whitehead, Transportation Security Administration- DHS
Michael McDonough, Transportation Security Administration- DHS
Captain John Saporita, Rhode Island National Guard
David Eaton, Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency
John Saporita, Rhode Island National Guard
Vlad Ibarra, Office of the Lieutenant Governor

I. Call to Order / Lieutenant Governor Roberts

Chair Roberts started the meeting discussing the government shutdown and its ill effects on many of our federal partners with furloughs. She continued by introducing Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency (RIEMA), Executive Director, Jamia McDonald who will provide a Director's Report on the ongoing changes and improvements with RIEMA as well as her vision for the agency going forward. The chair referred to the presentation by Tom Lawrence and Erin McDonald, which will be around Emergency Support Function 8 (Public Health and Medical Services). She stated that the Rhode Island Disaster Medical Assistance Team's Medical Reserve Corps is an organization that identifies, trains, and organizes local healthcare volunteers able to assist in both large-scale state emergencies and/or smaller community based public health initiatives.

II. Approval of Minutes from August 13, 2013

The minutes were unanimously approved

III. Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency Update

General McBride discussed some of the implications of the Federal Shutdown on National Guard functions and working through contingencies to mitigate them.

IV. Director's Report: Jamia McDonald, RIEMA

Director McDonald reminded members that the mission of RIEMA is to reduce the loss of life and property in disasters, protect Rhode Island's critical infrastructure from all hazards, and to provide leadership and support in comprehensive emergency management. RIEMA is conducting an analysis of agency functional responsibilities to determine what the agency is currently doing, what it should be doing, and identifying the gaps between the two. The Director would like to clarify the responsibilities involved in applying for federal grants and will work to continue to develop online tools for grant applicants. Federal grants are available if certain accountability and efficiency measures are taken, such as allowing for increased audit and compliance visits and integrated tracking of all expenditures.

Director McDonald stated that the Agency recognizes the need to improve communications with external partners and to create timelier messaging. It hopes to accomplish this by redesigning the website with more user-friendly information, creating online request

forms for grants, training, tabletop exercises, community outreach, as well as developing webinars for standard information. Moreover, there is an internal review taking place to determine legislative requirements and update processes to determine planning needs. There are currently sixty-five plans RIEMA is responsible to maintain and dozens of external plans in which they are referenced. Director McDonald requested member agencies to forward information if any portion of a plan involves them.

Director McDonald went on to discuss the agency's review processes for regional planning. There will be a questionnaire distributed to local Emergency Manager directors and in-person meetings will be conducted to ensure that the program is responsive. RIEMA's Emergency Operations Plan analysis shows that there are a tremendous amount of stakeholders composed of over two hundred distinct entities ranging from all levels of government, to the non-profit and private sectors. Also, there will be a review of Emergency Support Function (ESF) to assess the commitment of individual agency assets, approving and implementing mission assignments, maintaining situational awareness, reporting on ESF functions, and serving as technical experts as well as the primary resource for annex improvement.

Lastly, Director McDonald addressed some of the changes with the Interoperable Communications Committee (ICC) as it has an updated membership and has created five standing subcommittees: budget/capital, policy, compliance, training/education, and technical. It has also begun an aggressive review and implementation of Administrative Procedures for the management and maintenance of the Rhode Island Statewide Communications Network (RISCON). The State Emergency Response Commission was recently established by Executive Order. Its primary responsibility is to conduct emergency planning and response to hazardous materials and to coordinate with Local Emergency Planning Committees for training and exercise. In the future, the State Emergency Response Commission will be conducting a statewide hazardous commodity flow study and improving coordination on training and exercise for Hazmat/Decon and local first responders.

V. Functional Assessment Service Teams (FAST) Erin McDonough and Tom Lawrence, Rhode Island Disaster Medical Assistance Team (DMAT) and Medical Reserve Corps (MRC)

Chair Roberts introduced the Rhode Island Medical Assistance Team (DMAT) and the Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) as an active participant in preparedness and response activities within the State. The chair stated that they will discuss a volunteer project aimed at providing assistance to the state's regional shelters known as Functional Assessment Service Teams (FAST). Currently the group has over 1500 registered volunteer health professionals and non-medical volunteers. Mr. Lawrence is the Team Leader of RI DMAT and the project manager for the MRC program and Ms. McDonough is the MRC unit and State Coordinator for DMAT, Inc.

Ms. McDonough explained how post Hurricane Katrina; there has been a shift for general population shelters in order to provide citizens the resources. FAST is a program whose purpose it is to conduct assessments of individuals with functional/medical dependencies, when requested, at general population shelters. The program started out in California and has quickly been embraced nationwide, they provide assessments to evaluate the functional and/or medical dependency a person has and determine if those needs can be supported in a general population shelter with resources or additional staffing.

In Rhode Island, the approach to FAST has been the creation of the RIDMAT/MRC fully implemented into the states Emergency System.

The RI MRC has been able to recruit and organize medical health professionals and allied personnel to assist the State and local jurisdictions in preparing for and in training for public health and disaster emergencies. RI MRC works with FAST to implement the most effective system into the Rhode Island community. If shelters are opened, RIDMAT/MRC Emergency Operations Center opens and awaits request for assessment from Shelter Manager. FAST arrives at shelter with pre-determined cache of medical equipment, assesses the needs of the shelter resident(s) and notifies the Shelter Manager and DMAT/MRC EOC of additional staffing and/or medical equipment needs. MRC Coordinator begins to identify resources at the recommendation of the FAST and notifies partners to assist if needed.

Moving forward, there is a need for further evaluation and adjustments of the system. These include determining the best method for the logistics and movement of durable medical equipment, more training for more volunteers, more partners, etc.

VI. New Business, Member Comments, Suggestions

Brian Pires, from the United States Attorney's Office ATAC, briefed on the Freight Rail Security Initiative to enhance security and mitigate risk surrounding the transportation of toxic inhalation hazardous (TIH) chemicals by rail in Rhode Island.

The next meeting will take place on Tuesday, December 10th and it will be Subcommittee Reports.