

Franklin County Regional Emergency Management Committee

Sept. 29, 2022
Virtual Meeting Notes

The FC-REMC meeting was held virtually. The meeting began at 9:00 a.m.

Attendance: Steve Bessette (Fairfax EMD), Brian Savage (Swanton Town TA/EMC), Liza Comiskey (Highgate VFD), Dave Raymond (Fairfax VFD), Cathy Ainsworth (Fairfield EMC), Maurice Lamothe (STAC EMD), Mathew Sullivan (Swanton PD), Carrie Johnson (St. Albans Town Manager), Shaun Coleman (NRPC), Max Kennedy (VEM), Jackie Cassino (VTRANS) and Jason Gosselin (AHS).

Shaun began the meeting at 9:00 am followed by roll call. There was no quorum.

Adjustments to the Agenda: None.

Program Updates – Max Kennedy, VEM

Max provided a quick overview of the REMC program and discussed the issue with REMCs meeting quorum. There will likely be change in state statute regarding what constitutes an REMC quorum.

There is an ICS/EOC Interface (G-191) training on October 11th at Castleton. All are welcome to attend.

State/FEMA Mitigation Funding available on an array of projects. See <https://vem.vermont.gov/funding/mitigation> for more information.

The state's annual Emergency Preparedness Conference was held in September at Killington. Attendees had the option of going in person or attending virtually. All went well.

Max provided a presentation on the Local EOC Grant. A grant application announcement will be made soon. This grant will support local efforts to expand on local EOC and EM capabilities. Eligible activities will include generators, IT equipment (not EOC software), interior construction, situational awareness capabilities and communications equipment such as base stations. There is \$650,000 available with a 50% match requirement.

The state has begun planning for a statewide catastrophic exercise called *Binary Blizzard* scheduled for 2023. The exercise will test the state's ability to respond to a cyber-attack and associated critical infrastructure disruptions. There was a brief question and answer period following the presentation regarding what activities may be eligible.

Lamoille Valley Rail Trail Emergency Access – Jackie Cassino, VTRANS

Jackie introduced herself as the VTrans Rail Trail Coordinator. She provided some information on the status of the expansion of the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail into Franklin County from Cambridge. The trail expansion is currently under construction and will eventually pass through Fletcher, Bakersfield, Fairfield, Sheldon, Highgate and Swanton. It will intersect the Missisquoi Valley Rail Trail at Sheldon Junction. When completed, the trail will have a 10-foot-wide compacted crushed stone surface with 2-foot grass shoulders and wheelchair-accessible grades. Both Rail Trails are open year-round to non-motorized uses with the exception of snowmobiles, motorized wheelchairs, and maintenance vehicles. Motorbikes, ATVs, and ORVs are not permitted on the trails. Local snowmobile clubs maintain and groom the trails through winter.

VTrans has begun to conduct an emergency assessment review of the LVRT in Franklin County. The assessment includes identifying emergency access points, resources, contacts, resource tracking systems and dispatching. Jackie spoke with Shaun about reviewing/updating some of the resource information they currently have and determining how best to have an information sharing meeting with area first responders and EMDs/EMCs. Today's meeting is the first attempt to gather information directly. A larger in person meeting will be held in the area in late 2022 or early 2023.

There was question and answer period regarding mutual aid, access points, dispatching, experience with MVRT rescues and equipment. Jackie was hoping to generate a list of possible grant resources for equipment related to backcountry rescue. For more information, contact Jackie.cassino@vermont.gov.

Recovery Support for Individuals and Families Impacted by Disaster - Jason Gosselin, AHS

Jason introduced himself as the Emergency Management Director for the Agency of Health and Human Services. He provided an overview of support activities AHS and partners provide following disasters at the last FC-REMC meeting.

If there is an event that causes significant damage to private residences but does not rise to the level of a Presidentially Declared Disaster, AHS is responsible for coordinating various state and voluntary agencies that have recovery capabilities. Jason is the lead for the Individual and Family Needs Task Force made up of various support agencies including Health, Children and Families, Mental Health, VT Food Bank, Community Action, RPCs, etc. These agencies work closely with local and state emergency management partners to provide shelter, food, clothing, and social services to individuals and families.

Jason discussed the role of VT Organizations Active in Disasters (VOAD) made up of non-profit agencies, churches, schools, municipalities and state government that provide assistance to individuals and families. They coordinate clean-up, repairs, technical support, food access, counseling, housing and financial support.

A Multi-Agency Resource Center (MARC) may be activated. They can be an efficient way to deliver services to individuals and families affected by a disaster by bringing together multiple service providers in a single location and providing on-site assistance. Swanton Village hosted the first MARC activation in the state during the Missisquoi River 2018 flood event.

Case Managers may be assigned. Case Managers serve as guides through the recovery process. They assist with applications to the Vermont Recovery Fund to cover expenses beyond insurance, guide individuals to connect with crisis counselling, establishing connections with COVID.

Shaun thanked Jason and noted that the majority of members who attended this meeting were not at the last meeting when this information was presented previously.

Draft FC-REMC Bylaws Review

The Draft Bylaws were circulated but no action taken due to lack of quorum.

Roundtable

No comment.

Public Comment

No comment.

Adjourn

Meeting ended at approximately 11:00 a.m.