

Franklin County Regional Emergency Management Committee

March 21, 2023

Virtual Meeting Notes

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

Attendance: Reginald Beliveau Jr. (Swanton Village and Town EMD), Micah Genzlinger (Fairfax FD), Michael Olio (Richford TA), Cathy Ainsworth (Fairfield EMC), Maurice Lamothe (STAC EMD), Mathew Sullivan (Swanton PD), Eva Gillilan (Fletcher EMC/Red Cross), Shaun Coleman (NRPC), Max Kennedy (VEM) and Michaela Olin (ARC).

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

Adjustments to the Agenda: None.

REMC Updates – Max Kennedy, VEM

Max provided a quick overview of the REMC program and discussed the issue with REMCs meeting quorum. The legislature may be amending statute to fix the quorum issue. The proposal is to change REMC quorum to 5 temporarily until the end of the year. This will enable REMCs to vote to be able to take action on items such as forming bylaws and changing individual REMC quorums.

Michaela Olin, Disaster Program Manager for American Red Cross, Northern New England

Michaela gave a presentation on Red Cross Programs and Services. For Vermont, ARC typically supports home fires and flooding events, but they will support any event. This year in northern Vermont, Red Cross has supported 17 home fire events. That is an increase of 200% since last year. They provide resources to those who are affected by disasters. Red Cross has Disaster Health and Disaster Mental Health providers who are all licensed professionals in Vermont.

The primary preparedness program for ARC is the fire campaign which provides free smoke and carbon monoxide detectors in homes. Recently, a *Sound the Alarm* campaign which was held in Maine. This is a national push by ARC where regions choose to install as many smoke detectors as possible in as many homes as possible in one day. Northern Vermont will be on the docket next year. Let Michaela know if there are any towns that you think would be most beneficial. They also offer child educational disaster preparedness programs.

Red Cross offers various training including First Aid, CPR, lifeguard, babysitting, etc. Michaela also spoke about Red Cross Volunteer services and Armed Services support.

April is National Volunteer Month. Volunteer week is April 16 to 22nd. On April 18th there is a Red Cross open house at on Prospect St. in Burlington.

There was a brief question and answer period around Red Cross Shelter Agreements. Shelter agreements should be updated every 3 to 5 years.

There was discussion on the ARC's *Sound the Alarm* campaign. Currently, ARC is limited to 1 or 2 communities in state, however, ARC will install fire alarms year-round if fire department or other community group is willing to assist.

There was a discussion regarding animals/pets at shelters. All agreed that pets and service animals have to be welcome in the shelter. ARC works with VDART to accommodate pets.

Michaela's email is Michaela.Olin@RedCross.org and the 24 Hour Disaster Services is (833) 583-3111.

4. Sheltering Review and Lessons Learned – Max Kennedy, VEM

Shaun reported there was an interest by some towns in the County for an after-action review of warming shelter activation during the December 23-24 wind/power outage event as well as the severe cold spell a few weeks ago.

Max reported he attended several similar reviews for other areas in the state. He read through a list of lessons learned including having a backup website administrator for posting public safety information, defining warming shelter (overnight) vs. warming station (limited hours), reviewing Red Cross shelter agreements and prioritizing resources, prioritizing warming shelters with limited resources, managing large demand for VT-Alert messaging, shelter generators were not sized to power HVAC system of shelter, signage needed to direct public where to go for shelters and warming centers, issues with dissemination of CARES registry and transportation issues around sheltering.

For Swanton, Reg reported there was some discussion about opening the Armory for a warming shelter and possibly overnight. Local intel between Village and Town EM staff and the EOC led to the decision not to. Some individuals were given welfare visits during the event and many stayed with other families or friends.

For Fairfield, Cathy reported no shelters were open. There was some consideration of opening the Town Hall as a warming station. Some areas in town were without power for over 2 days and most individuals had either backup heat or stayed with friends and family members.

For Fletcher, Eva reported they considered using the school and/or Town office for a warming shelter but most people stayed with friend and family members.

For Fairfax, Micah said they could handle a shelter surge in the Fairfax area if needed with the High School gym and generator.

For St. Albans City, Maurice noted the City was largely unaffected by the power loss.

There was a discussion about getting information on vulnerable populations affected in a disaster. The CARE registry form (911 Board) is one source of information for those who self-register. It is uncertain how the CARE registry form may be accessed. Typically Home Health and CVOEO have good intel on those who are vulnerable as well as first response agencies. Green Mountain Power also has address information and some vulnerable population information for those at risk. All agreed it was worth a follow up discussion.

Northwest Vermont Medical Reserve Corps

Shaun reported that Jacquie couldn't be here due to a conflict. He reported that the MRC received a National Association of Community Health Organizations grant which will be used for capacity building and shelter management training/support for communities. The Team has been trying to recruit more members after a brief hiatus from supporting state run COVID testing and vaccination clinics. They will be staffing a table at the Franklin County Home Show event and handing out swag bags and information on volunteering.

Program Updates – Max Kennedy, VEM

- HSEEP training at St. Michaels college on 4/1 and 4/2.
- IC-402 for Executives on 4/28 from 4 – 8 p.m. at the Grand Isle Sheriff's Dept.
- Cyber Security Training on 4/26.
- ICS/EOC Interface (G-191) training in early September at the Grand Isle Sheriff's Dept.
- State/FEMA Mitigation Funding available on an array of projects. See <https://vem.vermont.gov/funding/mitigation> for more information.
- Emergency Preparedness Conference will be held in September at Burke.
- Statewide catastrophic exercise (cyber-attack) called *Binary Blizzard* scheduled for 2023.
- VEM has several open positions they are trying to fill.

Local Emergency Management Plans

LEMPs are due on May 1st. Feel free to contact Max or Shaun if assistance is needed. Once plans have been locally adopted, submit to Shaun at NRPC and he will file them with Public Safety through WebEOC. If anyone interested in having access to WebEOC, contact Max. Shaun is keeping virtual open office hours every Thursday via Zoom from 11 am to 1 pm through April for anyone who would like assistance with updating plans. Max will join in when available. <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89597081199?pwd=bnF0REg1bXB0V0tEK1J0RE9SSUZnQT09>

Roundtable

No comment.

Public Comment

No comment.

Adjourn

Meeting ended at approximately 10:30 a.m.