

1 **Franklin County Regional Emergency Management Committee**

2 September 28, 2023

3 Virtual Meeting Notes

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5 **Attendance:** Micah Genzlinger (Fairfax FD), Harry Shoppmann (VEM), Sharon Bousquet (Highgate EMD),  
6 Eva Gillilan (Fletcher EMC/Red Cross), Tiana Smith (GMP), Shaun Coleman (NRPC), Jacqueline Kelley  
7 (VDH), Zachary Borst (Maple Run SU), Sam Dillner (VEM), Mike Olio (Richford EMC), and Shane Garceau.

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

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11 **Adjustments to the Agenda:** None.

12  
13 **Green Mountain Power Resiliency Presentation – Tian Smith, GMP**

14 Tiana provided a presentation on GMP's efforts with disaster response, recovery and energy resiliency  
15 programs.

16 GMP has been meeting with towns and REMCs to discuss how storms are changing and how they  
17 prepare for storms.

18  
19 Due to climate change, storms are becoming more severe and more likely to include heavy, wet, and  
20 cement-like snow, which are the most challenging conditions that lead to more outages and more  
21 difficult restoration. The most recent major storm on December 16th, 2022 was the largest outage in  
22 the state's history. The storm was followed by a similar storm on December 24<sup>th</sup> and a March nor'easter.  
23 Outages lasted longer than typical winter storms. Restoration for these events took longer compared to  
24 other types of events like high winds. People were not prepared for the length of time it took to restore  
25 power.

26  
27 In terms of resiliency work, GMP is upgrading infrastructure with storm hardening (including steel wires  
28 where trees can fall without disrupting power), undergrounding rural overhead lines, using self-healing  
29 distribution lines and battery storage / microgrids. GMP conducts extensive public outreach before  
30 storms, including critical care customers to ensure they are prepared for outages. Communities with  
31 LEMPs and staffing for storms are more resilient and can communicate information more effectively.

32  
33 GMP monitors 4 forecasters and weather models to inform its outage prediction models, but these are  
34 not always reliable. They participate in the state-wide utility storm preparedness conference calls when  
35 severe events are predicted in the days leading up to the events. When severe storms hit, GMP has to  
36 increase its workforce and relies on crews from outside the region through mutual aid.

37  
38 Smith reviewed GMP's power restoration process, which starts with clearing hazards and making  
39 conditions safe, repairing transmission and substation facilities, repairing main distribution lines,  
40 ensuring hospitals and critical facilities have power, restoring areas with largest number of customers  
41 and finally restoring isolated events. Unfortunately, rural customers often are the first without power  
42 and the last to have it restored.

43  
44 GMP has major concerns about vulnerable populations, especially the elderly and those dependent on  
45 medical equipment that require power. Many places do not have resilience plans, and that local  
46 tolerance for power outages has been less in recent storms. She recommended that individuals and local  
47 emergency managers need to prepare better, including providing backup generators for critical facilities.  
48 GMP is also exploring battery storage for municipalities and residents. The goal would be to have each

customer utilize a backup battery (like a Tesla) to provide power for their residence or critical facility. Shoppmann noted that VEM has few resources to provide municipalities and residents during power outages.

Smith also reviewed a resilient neighborhood pilot project in South Burlington called O'Brian farms. They are partnering with O'Brian Brothers to create 150 fully electric homes including electric hvac, solar, battery backup and EV charging stations. The neighborhood will be a flexible load and generation resource for the grid, reducing cost for all customers.

#### **VT-ALERT – Sam Dillner, VEM**

Sam introduced himself to the group and provided a presentation on the VT Alert system. VT-ALERT is used by the state and local responders to notify the public of emergency situations. Those include, but are not limited to, evacuation information; chemical spills; shelter-in-place alerts; severe weather advisories; boil water advisories, and roadway interruptions. Residents can tailor the alerts to specific locations, types of alerts and on which devices they will be notified. Municipalities can designate individuals such as EMDs to administer VT-ALERT for their jurisdiction. This is helpful for fire districts, municipal water/waste water managers, highway departments and first response chiefs to notify the public during emergencies. Administrators have the option of targeting specific areas of town such as neighborhoods.

There was a brief discussion regarding use of VT Alert and IPAWS (Integrated Public Alert and Warning System). IPAWS is FEMA's national system for local alerting that provides authenticated emergency and life-saving information to the public through mobile phones using Wireless Emergency Alerts, to radio and television via the Emergency Alert System, and on the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Weather Radio. Zach noted he attended a workshop on IPAWS recently. There was information on providing alerting authorities (AA) with instruction on use of IPAWS to alert, warn and notify the public via the Emergency Alert System, Wireless Emergency Alerts, Non-Weather Emergency Messages among other methods. A national test on IPAWS will be made on October 4.

Sam noted that Everbridge is the company that programs the VT-Alert interface. The state may be moving away from Everbridge. The contract is due up and the state will be going through their procurement process to select a vendor. For more information or to register as an administrator, go to <https://vem.vermont.gov/vtalert> or contact Sam Dillner [Samuel.Dillner@vermont.gov](mailto:Samuel.Dillner@vermont.gov), or 800-347.0488.

#### **VEM Updates – Harry Shoppmann, VEM**

Harry reported that VEM is still very active in the recovery efforts from the July flooding event.

- October 12 is the new deadline for applications for Individual Assistance, Public Assistance, Small Business Association, and Emergency Watershed Protection grants. Please direct questions to: [ADM.2023floods@Vermont.gov](mailto:ADM.2023floods@Vermont.gov)
- State Hazmat Team offers a variety of trainings - Air Monitoring, Compressed Natural Gas, Clandestine Lab Awareness, Lithium-Ion Battery training - additional details, including how to schedule, are available on their website: <https://firesafety.vermont.gov/emergency/hazmat>
- Crisis Management for School-Based Incidents for Key Decision Makers - this in person class is happening in Northfield on October 9 & October 10, 8-4 each day. Registration and details available: <https://ruraltraining.org/course/MGT-417/?scheduled=true&id=9030>
- MGT 484 Nature-Based Solutions for Mitigating Hazards - 10/24 1-5pm. Information available in the learning management system.

97 **NWVT Medical Reserve Corps - Jacquie Kelley, VDH**

98 Jacquie reported she has been working with community partners on Cold Weather Sheltering for the  
99 area. The MRC will be scheduling a Red Cross Shelter Manager Training for its membership.

100  
101 This past summer, the MRC visited state parks in the region in an effort to increase public awareness  
102 regarding ticks and Lyme disease. They put together tick kits and distributed them to park visitors.

103  
104 Jacquie and MRC members have also been staffing the Multi-Agency Resource Centers in Montpelier  
105 and Barre as part of the state's on-going recovery efforts for individuals and families.

106  
107 The NWVT MRC recently held a state-wide MRC workshop on Emergency Preparedness. It included the  
108 following topics: models of disability etiquette, Vermont CARES registry, Covid 19 impacts and POD  
109 strategies. The workshop is available on-line: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1lze5Pw4Uxs>

110  
111 **Officers (Chair, Vice Chair) & Committee Reps**

112 No quorum.

113  
114 Harry reviewed the three committee\working group seats available for REMC representatives: the  
115 Statewide Local Emergency Planning Committee, Threat Identification Risk Assessment, and the State-  
116 wide Three Year Training and Exercise Planning Workshop. There were no volunteers.

117  
118 **Other Business**

119 None. Shaun thanked everyone for attending.

120  
121 **Public Comment**

122 No comment.

123  
124 The meeting ended at approximately 10:05 a.m.