

**Grand Isle Mutual Aid Meeting
GI-REMC
February 5, 2024 – Draft Minutes
Grand Isle County Sheriff's Department and Virtual**

Attendance: Ray Allen (GICSO), Bill Baron (GI EMC), Nancy Frantz (SHR) Brandi Latimer (NH EMC), Brandi's Assistant (NH), Carmine Centrella (ILM EMD), Pat Robinson (SHVFD), Peter Clark (Clarenceville/Noyan FD), Melissa Boutin (Treasurer), Jacqueline Kelley (VDH), Mike Murdock (NHVFD), Harry Schoppmann (VEM), Ron Kumetz (Alburgh VFD), Shaun Coleman (NRPC) and Reg Beliveau Jr. (DFS).

Mike Murdock chaired the meeting which began at 7:00 p.m. followed by roll call.

Changes to Agenda

None.

Minutes of December Meeting

Ray motioned to accept the minutes. Pat seconded. Motion carried.

Treasurer's Report

Tabled. Treasurer said she will be late.

Grand Isle – REMC

Fire Prevention and Community Risk Reduction (CRR) Program – Reg Beliveau, VT DFS

Reg reviewed the CRR program and provided an overview of the educational outreach efforts by DFS. This section of DFS provides support services, technical assistance, educational equipment and resources to help fire departments, fire and life safety educators, and other community organizations address and reduce the fire problems in their communities. DFS recommends that establishing CRR partnerships so that the whole community is involved in the solutions. CRR become part of the local "all hazards response" mindset.

The presentation included an overview of fire statistics statewide, and it noted that in the last 10 years, 70.6% of Vermont's fire deaths have been over the age of 50. The elderly and young children are still the most vulnerable populations. Vermont has one of the largest number of firefighters and fire departments per capita. It ranks first in the nation for its per-capita use of wood for heat, with at least one in six Vermont households now using wood products as their primary heating source.

CRR concepts include identifying risk, prioritizing risks, developing strategies and tactics to minimize risks, preparing and implementing a CRR plan, and monitoring, evaluating and modifying the CRR plan. CRR will help with justifying local fire budgets, addresses changes in community demographics, improves fire safety and occupational health and improves community relations. More information can be found here: <http://www.strategicfire.org> and here: <https://www.nfpa.org/News-and-Research/Resources/Community-Risk-Reduction>.

Reg also reviewed the Fire Safe 802 Program. This is a statewide community risk reduction and rural home fire safety improvement project developed by DFS. It builds on past fire prevention efforts and

works to enhance the safety of most at risk rural residents. He noted that home safety visits have been singled out under CRR as one of the more effective measures that the fire service can take to improve public safety. The home safety survey is a key part of the Fire Safe 802 program.

He concluded with a review of the NFPA's *Steps to Safety (STS) - Prevent Fire and Falls at Home* program. STS pairs fire and EMS professionals with community partners to educate older adults about home fire and fall safety through group presentations, home visits, and the creation of a local resource network. STS resources and information may be found here: <https://www.nfpa.org/education-and-research/home-fire-safety/older-adults/steps-to-safety>.

VEM Updates:

Harry announced:

- There will be a total solar eclipse on April 8. State EOC will be partially activated. VLCT offering bi-weekly community meetings around the eclipse.
- Spring Flood Outlook workshop for NW VT to be held virtually on February 6th, 12-1 pm. Link to workshop and agency videos was emailed to all EMDs.
- EMD job description and manual finalized. For more information, click here: <https://vem.vermont.gov/document/emergency-management-director-job-description> and here: <https://vem.vermont.gov/document/emergency-management-director-manual>
- EMD Training will be held on Feb 14 and 15 from 1 – 5 pm. Contact Harry.Schoppmann@vermont.gov if interested.
- VT Homeland Security grants now available. Click here for more info: [Homeland Security Unit website](#).

Vermont Department of Health Update – Jacquie reported the NWVT MRC will be delivering “Stop the Bleed” training program local organizations and to the public. The team will be putting together “Stop the Bleed” kits to distribute during the training sessions. Contact Jacquie if you would like to host an event.

The MRC will also be working with areas schools on the Bright Lights at Night campaign. The goal is to increase awareness in K-12 schools regarding night time safety. The team will be handing out reflector kits to school kid and putting on school events.

The NWVT MRC members also completed mental health first aid training. One member will be finishing the train-the-trainer program and will be responsible for delivering the training twice in the area.

The Health Department participated in a RACES training at Northwest Medical Center recently.

Committee Appointments: Shaun and Harry reviewed the available seats for state working groups. There were no volunteers.

GICMAA

Budget

Mike reviewed FY24/25 budget items the treasurer sent out by email on January 19th. The total county budget is \$50,257. It includes dispatch services, insurance, Frontline Camp, PO Box & postage and Amerigas/DC Energy. Proposed prorated FY25 dispatching expenses include 25% for Alburgh, Grand Isle and South Hero, 15% for North Hero and 10% for Isle La Motte.

There was a brief discussion on budget. Bill J. and Mike agreed to splitting the non-dispatch costs equally among the five towns.

Bill J. motioned to approve the FY24/25 budget of \$50,257. Ron seconded.

Mike noted that dispatching increases in first quarter starting July 1. GICMAA's fiscal year begins July 1.
Motion carried unanimously.

April 8 Eclipse Planning

Ray noted his concerns about the impacts of potential traffic among the communities and potential conflicts with eclipse tourists and residents, high school bus drop offs, and the exodus of tourists. Area Inns and B&Bs are booked for the event. Earlier today, Alburgh School decided to close on April 8th.

Ron added that there will be a 3 day eclipse festival at the Alburgh industrial park. Pat noted that Apple Island Resort is having an eclipse event as well.

Brandy reported that state parks will be open for visitors during the day. Knight Point State Park is being referred to by the state as the best viewing location. Grand Isle State Park and Alburgh Dunes will also be open for the day. Everyone is concerned about road conditions during mud season.

Shaun added that St. Albans and Swanton will be posting warnings to stay off the ice at municipal park/beach locations. North Hero was considering it as well. Some towns are designating viewing sites to limit traffic conflicts and congestion in case a large number of tourists arrive.

Jacquie reported NMC is hosting a tabletop on the 13th for the eclipse that is specific to EMS. It is a state-wide exercise put on by Department of Health Planning Team Liam Knight.

Ray invited everyone to an eclipse planning barbecue on April 1 at 6 p.m. This is prior to the regular GICMAA/REMC meeting at 7 p.m.

Critical Incident Response Team

Pat reported he is looking at the new round of homeland security grants to see if the funding can be used for team equipment. South Hero Fire purchased their own vests and helmets.

County Emergency Services Administrator Position Update

Bill B. reported he met with all 5 selectboards to gauge interest in supporting the position. All were supportive of moving forward with the concept but wanted additional information on costs and governance. GICMAA is not in a position to have staff but the position could fall under a town's payroll. Bill asked for volunteers to help him gather data and figure out administrative issues.

Department Updates

South Hero VFD – Ice suits are waiting to be picked up at the Burlington Dive shop.

South Hero Rescue – No updates.

Grand Isle VFD – The department had a hazmat response when a 275 gallon fuel tank leaked and the fuel migrated towards the lake. The department used an underflow dam to stop the flow. This led to a discussion about the county hazmat trailer condition and resources. Ray will unlock the trailer for inventory and inspection. Bill B. thanked South Hero for assisting.

Grand Isle Rescue – No updates.

North Hero VFD – The new pumper arrives in March. An architect was hired to design the fire station and the public works building. The Fire Department ordered new FirstWatch suits.
Isle La Motte Fire Company – Bill J. thanked everyone who assisted in the ice rescue while he was out of town. It was greatly appreciated.
Alburgh VFD – Chassy for the new pumper is being delivered soon. AVFD should have new truck by the summer of 2025.

Training

Bill B. reported that Grand Isle VFD will be hosing ice rescue training on February 23rd and 24th. The training is being authorized by Lifesaving Resources Inc. Joe Clark, Adam White, Bill Gett and Bill Baron will be instructing. They are getting pressure from outside agencies to attend so please send Bill a list of those who are interested in the County. The sign-up deadline is the 17th. Class room session will be on the 23rd then field work the 24th. The field work will feature fully dressed wing mannequins.

Other Business

The Ice Fishing Derby is cancelled due to poor ice conditions.

Ron offered to get prices on a video conference setup for the Sheriff's Office.

Treasurer's Report (reprise)

Melissa reported the balance of the checking account is \$28,717.04.

Ron motioned to accept the Treasurer's Report. Ray seconded. Motion carried.

Melissa presented two bills for payment: Shelburne PD for \$9,575.00 and Amerigas for \$154.29.

Pat motioned to pay the two invoices. Ray seconded. Motion carried.

Public Comment

None.

Adjourn

Ray motioned to adjourn. Pat seconded. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at approximately 9:00 p.m.