

**Grand Isle Mutual Aid Meeting
GI-REMC
February 3, 2025 – Draft Minutes
All Virtual**

Attendance: Ron Kumetz (AVFD), Mathieu Gour (Alb. Rescue), Deb Benson (Treasurer), Brandy Latimer (NH EMD), Pat Robinson (SHVFD), Troy Toth (SHR), Desiree Maltais (GIR), Bill Baron (GIEMD), Adam White (GIVFD), Ray Mitchell (GIR), Jaqueline Kelley (VDH), Bill Johnson (ILMFC), Peter Clark (C/N FD), Mike Murdock (NHVFD), Alex Goodard (Alb EMD), Shaun Coleman (NRPC) and Michaela Foody(VEM).

Vice-President Ron Kumetz chaired the meeting which began at 7:00 p.m. followed by roll call. A quorum was present.

Public Comment – None.

Minutes

Troy motioned for approval of minutes. Adam seconded. Motion carried.

Treasurer's Report

Attached at the bottom of the minutes. Deb reported the ending balance of the account is \$18,443.16.

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

Grand Isle Regional Emergency Management Committee

Vermont Emergency Management

Michaela reported:

- Reaching out to communities to update their LEMPs beginning this month.
- VT Spring Flood Awareness workshop is being held on February 13 from 12-1 pm. A series of related videos from various state agencies, NWS, National Guard and RPCs will be posted on VEM's website [here](#).
- For a complete listing of trainings go to the [Events Calendar](#) in the on-line [Learning Management System](#).

Committee Updates (THIRA, LEPC, TPW):

THIRA and TPW: Did not meet.

LEPC: Shaun reported they met in January. Pat McLaughlin gave a presentation on the new state HAZMAT equipment. The HAZMAT team has new drones to assist in supporting incidents. He will ask Pat to attend an upcoming meeting to present the information.

Vermont Department of Health:

Jacquie reported:

- The MRC received a \$10k Operational Readiness grant through the National Association of City and County Health Organizations.
- Funding will be used to support WIC families and services with go bags and family preparedness kits. Also partnering with CVOEO to purchase reflective vests homeless population.
- Chittenden MRC has merged with Franklin-Grand Isle MRC for capacity building.

Grand Isle County Mutual Aid Association

GICMAA Status Update: Deb reported that she is working with the accountant on the 2021 audit and will work their way up to last year. Once the audit is complete, they can move on to the process of reinstating GICMAA's non-profit status.

Critical Incident Response Team update: Pat reported South Hero Fire has trained with the Sheriff's Office and developed SOPs.

County Emergency Services Coordinator Position:

Bill B. apologized for missing last month's meeting due to a conflict and led the discussion.

- No updates from departments since last meeting.
- The property tax increases will likely decrease board support for funding.
- Bill J. suggested polling departments to see if someone is willing to fill this role. If so, then add the position to GICMAA bylaws as a volunteer position with the list of duties.
- Adam is generating a list of training needs, recert deadlines, pump testing, etc.
- A lot of training is available through the Fire Academy (i.e. EV course)
- Chiefs agreed to meet regularly about coordinating training and maintenance (ladder testing, hose testing, pump testing, etc.).
- There was consensus for starting to fill out a schedule during the April meeting and to continue discussion on what GICMAA should be.

Ice Rescue Training

Adam reported the training will be held Feb. 21 and Feb. 22 in Grand Isle. The certification is good for 5 years. He asked chiefs to poll their departments. The training was announced through VSFA channels.

App Based Response/Reporting Update:

Adam led the discussion on possibly switching the county departments over to First Due. He offered to:

- Reach out to all departments to gather user numbers and call volumes for 1st Due software pricing.
- Contact First Due representatives for licensing information, account administration, a demo and Q&A session on software capabilities including the timecard feature (Grand Isle Rescue currently uses Aladtec).
- Schedule a demo with chiefs.

The discussion included:

- Limiting the number of apps used. Stick to one vendor if possible.
- Questions about First Due account admin roles and license management.
- Purchasing all-inclusive software licensing vs individual modules.
- One GICMAA account or individual accounts for purchasing group licensing?
- Comparing features and pricing between other apps such as Fire Station (records, reports, incidents, etc.), Active 911 (call alerting), Aladtec (scheduling), Lexipol (training).
- Experiences everyone has with other apps.

Michaela will contact HSU to see if there is a grant that could cover the costs. There is usually a terrorism angle with HSU grants which might be made given the county includes a US port of entry.

Department and EMD Updates

Alburgh Fire – Ron reported that the Alburgh School Principal asked the fire department if they would assist with training students with CPR and AED. The department is working on a new engine.

Grand Isle Fire – Adam reported the apparatus committee is looking at replacing the brush truck with an International CV Series crew cab with seasonal response equipment. The department has been visiting about 22 “establishments” in Grand Isle for pre plans. Ice Rescue training is coming up.

Grand Isle Recue – Desiree reported they are still waiting on rig they ordered a long time ago.

Ilse La Motte – Bill J. reported that all equipment is in service.

Alburgh Rescue – Matt reported they may be hosting a VFER class this spring and offer it to the public.

Clarenceville/Noyan Fire – Peter reported they are in early discussions on expanding the fire station. Peter’s been pushing for a new station for at least 20 years.

North Hero Fire – Mike reported they are ramping up building committee meetings for public works and fires station projects with a possible bond vote in late spring or early summer. The new pumper should arrive in April/May this year. The Great Ice event is on Feb 14-16 in North Hero. Expecting a huge amount of people trekking out to Knights Island and back. We are expecting a lot of people on the ice.

South Hero Fire – Pat reported the tanker committee has been meeting. They are gearing up to get more people trained on the engines.

South Hero Rescue – Troy reported their protocol update training hopefully will be finished by April 1. The new ambulance is due to arrive in July 2026.

North Hero EMD – Brandy reported the mitigation committee is still working on updating their Hazard Mitigation Plan after a brief hiatus.

Grand Isle EMD – Bill B. reported he is looking forward to updating the LEMP. Bill is also the Town Tree Warden. The Emerald Ash Borer is becoming a force in the County. The prediction is that 40-60% of forested land is primarily ash. EB infested trees fail rather abruptly. If the trees aren’t dealt with quickly, they become very hazardous.

Shaun reported that Alburgh and South Hero are updating their hazard mitigation plans. Alburgh has been having some difficulty with engagement. Invasive species are identified in the state and many local hazard mitigation plans. The plans develop goals to address the hazards. Some towns include developing an EB management plan as a mitigation measure.

Other Business

Ron led a discussion on communications equipment.

- Alburgh Village is replacing their water tank and one of GICMAAs repeaters is on it and will need to be moved to the new water tank. The repeater on the old tank is 15 years old.
- Recommend replacing the antennae and the cable (\$4-\$4.5k). The contractor that is installing the tank is willing to install the antennae and cable so GICMAA will only have to pay for materials. The antennae are made in Canada and may be subject to price increases.
- Recommend purchasing from Todd because he is holding some that were previously bought. Ron will call Todd to find out what and where the antennae are.
- Need to find a spot for the South Hero repeater. The Alburgh repeater is a shared repeater. North Hero uses it when they are in Alburgh and it covers Missisquoi Bay.

Mike motioned to fund the costs of the coax purchase sooner or later for the Alburgh repeater. Pat seconded. Motion carried.

- Discussion on who would own antennae and cable. Alburgh bought it originally with a grant and likely won’t object if it became GICMAA property.
- GICMAA owns one VHF repeater. North Hero and Alburgh repeaters were awarded through a VT HSU VCOMM grant.
- Alburgh and North Hero pay the insurance for the repeater stations and equipment. Technically the antennae at the St. Albans Radar Base and at the Grand Isle Fish Hatchery belong to GICMAA. The repeater at the fish hatchery belongs to GICMAA. The repeater at the Radar Base belongs to North Hero Fire.

- 150 • At some point, Alburgh repeater station will need to be replaced but it is operating fine for now.
- 151 It is not made in Canada.
- 152 • Add asset discussion and insurance on assets as an agenda item for the next meeting.
- 153 • Ron spends a lot of time helping departments get the FCC licenses because of personnel turnover.
- 154 If they all become GICMAA assets, that might be a good idea for record retention.
- 155 • Ron represents the fire service on the state Communications Task Force.
- 156 • Vermont is not a good candidate for a statewide trunking system like in other places.
- 157 • Advocating for a regional simulcast voting system.
- 158 • A voting configuration solves the problem of coverage by having multiple receiver stations all
- 159 operating on the same frequency deployed at various locations over the area, providing reception
- 160 coverage everywhere that it may be needed. These receivers all have a backhaul (i.e. microwave,
- 161 wire or radio) connection to a central device known as a voting controller.
- 162 • Once the voting controller picks (i.e. votes for) the strongest received signal, it passes this signal
- 163 onto the intended location via a backhaul connection or radio re-transmission.
- 164 • Grand Isle County is in a good position to be a pilot project for that because departments are all
- 165 on the same repeaters, use the same frequencies, and we are not fighting for frequencies.
- 166 • If the project moves forward and gets funded, GICMAA is in a good position to be pilot project.
- 167 Link all the repeaters up and move this simulcast voting to solve a vast majority of our coverage
- 168 problems. If GICMAA owned all the equipment, then it would probably be easier to be a pilot
- 169 project versus a few individual departments.
- 170 • Mike added that GICMAA still needs to get the last repeater site up to fill the gap in South Hero.

171

172 *Desiree motioned to adjourn. Mike seconded. Motion carried.*

173

174 Meeting adjourned at 8:33 p.m.



**GRAND ISLE COUNTY
MUTUAL AID ASSOCIATION**



Serving:

ALBURG FIRE & RESCUE
CLARENCEVILLE, QUEBEC FIRE
GRAND ISLE FIRE DEPARTMENT
GRAND ISLE HEAVY RESCUE
GRAND ISLE RESCUE SQUAD
GRAND ISLE SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT
ISLE LAMOTTE FIRE DEPARTMENT
NORTH HERO FIRE DEPARTMENT
SOUTH HERO FIRE DEPARTMENT
SOUTH HERO RESCUE SQUAD

January 19, 2025

Treasurer Report

Beginning balance	18,443.16
Ordered Check Charge Community Bank	13.00
Ending balance	18,430.16

Outstanding deposit: Isle LaMotte, Alburgh, Grand Isle, North Hero 40,076.40

Outstanding bill: South Hero 10,180.60

Bills for Payment: Oct24-Dec24 Dispatching Services to Shelburne Police Dept: \$10,241.00
Amerigas St. Albans Radar Base bill: \$416.58.