

**Western Regional Homeland Security Advisory Council  
Meeting Minutes  
Tuesday, September 18, 2018, 10:00 am  
Hatfield Fire Department, 3 School Street, Hatfield, MA**

**Present:** Raine Brown (FRCOG), Tom Grady, (BCSO), Bob Barry (MEMA), Bob Hassett (CMED), Carolyn Shores Ness (Deerfield BOS/BOH), Nick DaDalt (EOPSS), Chris Bouchard (Beckett Highway), Ann Shea (MMC), Jamin Carrol (PVRTA), Adam Hakkarainen (MSP), Jeff McDonald, (MSP), Allison Egan (BRPC), Steve Gaughan (EMS/Hatfield FD), John Dearborn WMFCA/Longmeadow FD), Jeremy DeMar (Springfield Emergency Comm ), Jeff Stillings (DHS Springfield), Tracy Rogers (FRCOG), Paul Morrissette ( East Longmeadow FD), Melissa Nazzaro (EOPSS), Amy Reilly (MAPC), Bob Dean (FRCOG)

This meeting was audio recorded.

Thomas Grady called the meeting to order at 10:18 am.

### **Approval of Minutes**

The committee reviewed the minutes from the July 17, 2018 meeting.

<p><b>Motion:</b> Carolyn Shores Ness moved to approve the July 17, 2018 meeting minutes as presented. John Dearborn seconded. Motion passed unanimously.</p>
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A round of introductions followed.

### **Updates from the Chair**

Tom Grady noted the State THIRA is still in process. He also asked that people not self-deploy to emergencies and to take the message back to their members. After the recent gas explosions in Lawrence, Andover and North Andover, local incident command had to deal with responders showing up to help, but not having been asked to help. As well-meaning as it is, self-deployment can cause added stress to local responders already dealing with a stressful event.

### **Updates from Disciplines**

- FIRE: No report.
- POLICE: No report.
- EMS: No report.
- EMD: Bob Hassett noted we passed the peak of the hurricane season last Monday. Looks like an El Nino is developing in the Pacific Ocean which can serve to depress hurricanes in the Atlantic Ocean. Season is not over. Second peak comes in the beginning of October, need to continue to watch and to be prepared.
- PUBLIC HEALTH: Allison Egan gave a report for Jeanne Galloway. Flu season is here. Vaccines have been updated and a nasal spray vaccine is available this year. Flu clinics are being scheduled across western MA. There have been twelve confirmed cases of West Nile Virus in humans, which is double last year's total. The entire state is considered at least a

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moderate risk zone for the virus. Shelters have been opened, mainly in local schools, in Lawrence and Andover for residents displaced due to the gas line explosions. Hurricane Florence caused the need for shelters to be opened in the Carolinas. Sixty-one shelters serving approximately 5,500 people were open in South Carolina, and 157 shelters serving approximately 20,000 people in North Carolina.

- TRANSPORTATION: No report.
- DPW: Chris Bouchard discussed the need for mutual aid highway equipment in Andover and Lawrence. E-mail traffic showed that there seemed to be confusion about how mutual aid and ICS works. Chris is hoping the February highway association meeting will include information on that topic to help DPWs pre-plan and use the ICS system. Would like to secure more training for DPW staff.
- CORRECTIONS: Tom noted that they are working through implementation of criminal justice reform. Five sheriffs' offices are collaborating on a three year pilot program for medication-assisted treatment within the jails, to address the opioid crisis. Franklin County jail is one of the pilot participants.
- COMMUNICATIONS: No report.
- HOSPITAL: Ann Shea mentioned that she will be retiring by August 1<sup>st</sup> of 2019 and a process has started amongst the Hospital Emergency Committee to find a replacement for her on the Council.
- LOCAL GOVERNMENT: Carolyn Shores Ness thanked the Council for helping to encourage Great River Hydro to move on their EAP. There is now a commitment to roll out their EAP on October 11<sup>th</sup>. The flooding tool will be very helpful for planning once it is up and running. The Stop the Bleed training was wonderful. They are applying for grant funding for additional Stop the Bleed kits to be available in the schools and throughout the community. She said there has been a lot of support for the 11/3 tabletop exercise. More than 20 communities are participating.
- Massachusetts State Police (MSP): Jeff McDonald talked about a lock-down incident at Chicopee Comp a couple weeks ago. Difficulties arose as decisions were made by school personnel outside the incident chain of command. During the after action discussion with the Superintendent, he made a pitch for them to embrace ICS training for school administration. Some troopers from Troops A and B deployed to Andover and Lawrence following the gas explosions. They helped mainly with limiting vehicle access to the affected area and protecting empty houses. The Big E is underway and there has been minimal impact on MSP resources. West Springfield does a great job with the Big E. Tom Grady thanked MSP for assistance with several Berkshire region events. They were very helpful, especially when the route for the Josh Billings road race had to be changed close to the race date.

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- MEMA: Bob Barry discussed the college EMD meetings in August. Bob LaFord presented at the meeting about the UMass meningitis inoculation project last year. MEMA's mobile EOC has been set up to deal with aftermath of the Andover/Lawrence gas explosions. EOCs are also set up at the Big E and the La Festa event in Ludlow. MEMA deployed three people through EMAC to the Carolinas to assist with the aftermath of Hurricane Florence. Applications are being submitted for this year's EMPG grant, and MEMA is participating in the Vigilant Guard exercise.
  
- EOPSS: Nick DaDalt reported that DHS has officially notified EOPSS that the FFY18 funding is set and awarded at the level expected. EOPSS is working on preparing the contracts. There is a slowdown statewide in the appointments process in the Governor's office apparently due to the time it takes to do background checks for appointments and re-appointments to any board or committee with a set term limit. Indirect effect on appointees to the Council. He talked about the MEMA Statewide Training Calendar that is restricted for official use only and offered to assist interested Council members to gain access to the calendar.  
Melissa Nazzaro talked about the communications work during the Merrimack Valley gas explosions event and about the AAR that is in process. Using information gained during this event to improve communications protocol and inform updates to the MIFOG and COMU.

**Planning/Pandemic Flu:**

Discussion about the FFY2017 Infrastructure Visualization Project and the sub-committee's question asking if the project should continue. As first proposed, the pilot project would choose a few identified locations, such as schools, a hospital or municipal buildings and gather data such as 360° imagery, a walk-through video, and digital building plans. Information would be available to first responders, especially police and fire.

Before spending the money and time to get the project started, the sub-committee is wondering if first responders will use the data, where will it be stored and how accessed, will it be sustained by future investment by municipalities to update information and equipment?

Consensus amongst the Council members is that there is always value in knowing more information about buildings to which first responders are called. However, there are challenges in speed of access when needed and how to keep it current. Many noted how helpful a printed map is as they work whether there is data access or not, and that they prefer having something tangible in hand. Concern expressed about sustainability when local budgets are tight already.

**Interoperability/Information Sharing:** No update. WMRIC Committee is meeting after the Council meeting.

**Training and Exercises:** Tom said there are two large-scale upcoming training events being planned that will deal with cybersecurity (late November/early December) and campus safety and security (early January). He asked the Council to approve the following motion regarding the cybersecurity event:

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<p><b>Motion:</b> Paul Morrisette moved to approve up to \$25,000 for the cybersecurity training, Bob Hassett seconded the motion. Voted unanimously in favor.</p>
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Tom updated the Council on the Officer Down Recertification training scheduled for October 23-25 in Belchertown. Lots of interest and a long wait list. Could easily fill more sessions.

**Equipment/PPE:**

Raine continues to find it challenging to find a vendor to inspect and maintain the sign boards and light towers. Will try a second procurement through MAPC. If not successful, may need to consider alternatives, such as purchasing supplies necessary to maintain the equipment and ask the hosts of the equipment to do the maintenance.

**CBRNE/IED:** Raine mentioned that the Tech Rescue team's application to participate in the Vigilant Guard exercise was approved and they will be deploying to the east. Also wrapping up competitive equipment procurement. Also working on PPE.

**Fiduciary Report:**

Raine reviewed the budget, and noted the FFY16 grant is extended to December 31, 2018. Doing pretty well on wrapping up those projects. Some money is coming in from projects that are underspent. The Council will need to consider how to reallocate that money in the near future. Promotional pens have been purchased for distribution at upcoming trainings and events. Raine will have a request at a future meeting for funding for a required procurement training. The October session she hoped to attend is full. She will check the calendar for another session that fits her schedule.

The FFY17 projects are getting underway. That funding is available through the end of July, 2019.

Amy Reilly said that DHS has raised the threshold for best business practice procurement to \$10,000, effective immediately.

**Old Business:** School Representatives.

Further discussion about adding school representatives to the WRHSAC. The Central region has appointed a K-12 rep and will be appointing a higher education rep soon. The Northeast region added both a K-12 and higher education reps. EOPSS is encouraging Councils to do it, but the decision is up to the Council. Suggestion to add both K-12 and higher education reps if the Council wants to amend its bylaws to add the seats. Adding two seats would maintain an odd number of representatives on the Council to avoid a possible tie vote.

John Dearborn offered to meet with the school superintendents group to discuss participation on the Council. It was also suggested that a general invitation be issued by Council members to interested school personnel to attend the Council's October meeting to observe and get an idea of what the Council does. Raine will draft a potential bylaw change for consideration at the next Council meeting.

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**New Business:** Chief Bernie Forgea from Cummington sent a letter of thanks through Raine to the Council for purchasing and positioning regional assets, such as portable generators, message boards and tower lights, for use at planned events like the Cummington Fair.

Bob Barry mentioned that, due to the heavy rain this morning from the remnants of Hurricane Florence moving through New England, a section of Route 9 has been closed due to flooding, and there is a tornado warning for parts of Eastern MA.

**Business Unforeseen by Chair:** Tom noted the benefits provided by the good work of the Council; getting everyone to work together and share resources, intelligence, communications, etc. It all happens thanks to the leadership exhibited by the people in this room. Bob Hassett said that the opening of the MGM Casino in Springfield went well because of the amount of planning and coordination of resources and cooperation among various federal, state and local agencies.

Jeff Stillings talked about his work in the Homeland Security Investigations Office in Springfield. The investigative arm of DHS, under the ICE umbrella, but with a border-specific focus on who and what is coming in and going out of the country. His office is increasing oversight of critical infrastructure in Western MA, including records checks of employees. He also mentioned Campus Sentinel which is a law enforcement data base keeping track of foreign students at US colleges and universities.

**Next Steps/Future Meetings**

The next Council meeting will be held on October 16, 2018 at 10:00 am at the Hatfield Fire Department, 3 School Street, Hatfield, MA

<p><b>Motion:</b> John Dearborn moved to adjourn. Paul Morrisette seconded. Motion passed unanimously.</p>
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The meeting adjourned at 11:25AM

List of Documents Reviewed at the Meeting

- WRHSAC Council Meeting Minutes from July 17,2018
- FFY2017 Infrastructure Visualization Project: Project Status and Next Steps
- WRHSAC Fiduciary Report : FFY16 Competitive Homeland Security Grant, 9/18/2018
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- WRHSAC Fiduciary Report : FFY17 Homeland Security Grant, 9/18/2018
- West & Central Competitive FFY16 budget for Tech Rescue equipment
- West & Central Competitive FFY16 budget for Tech Rescue training
- WRHSAC: FFY16 State Homeland Security Program 9/17/2018
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- Letter from Chief Bernie Forgea to Raine Brown

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Respectfully Submitted by  
Bob Dean,  
Franklin Regional Council of Governments