

Western Region Homeland Security Advisory Council
All Hazards Planning and Equipment Subcommittee Meeting
Tuesday, January 7, 2025, 9:00 am

Subcommittee members present: Loren Davine (HPHPC/MRC), Jeanne Galloway (West Springfield), Larry Holmberg (HREPC), Nick Licata (HMCC/FRCOG), Sandra Martin (BRPC), Carolyn Shores Ness (Deerfield)

Non-members present: Anthony D'Amico (Sentinel), Bob Dean (FRCOG), Rachel Mason (FRCOG), Michael Nelson (Franklin County Fairgrounds), Brian Nichols (EOPSS)

Subcommittee members absent: Tom Grady (BCSO), Hugh O'Callaghan (Baystate), Xander Sylvain (HMCC/FRCOG)

**This meeting was conducted remotely on Zoom. The meeting was recorded.*

Call Meeting to Order

Larry Holmberg called the meeting to order at 9:00 am.

Approval of Minutes

The committee reviewed the minutes from the December 3, 2024 meeting.

<p>Motion: Carolyn Ness moved to approve the December 3, 2024 meeting minutes as submitted. Sandra Martin seconded the motion. Larry Holmberg, Sandra Martin, Jeanne Galloway, Carolyn Ness, and Nick Licata voted in favor. The motion was approved.</p>
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Introductions followed.

Public Health/Flu Update

Jeanne Galloway reported. Someone died from the avian flu in Louisiana recently, but there is still none in our area. Flu is at high levels across the country now. Covid, norovirus, and other respiratory viruses are also circulating. Carolyn Ness added that atypical pneumonia is also circulating. Sandra Martin noted that avian flu spreads through chickens, so no one should take a sick chicken into their house.

Fairground Security Project Update

Tony D'Amico from Sentinel provided an update about the project. During December, they conducted a site assessment at the Franklin County Fairgrounds and followed up with a call with police and fire. They are now putting together an event plan draft. Traffic control is narrow coming in and going out; they are trying to help with that and with vehicles inside. They also went to Cummington for a site assessment and met with Chief Perkins and got on a call with Albert from the Agricultural Society. Tony has a follow-up call set up for EMS and is trying to schedule one with fire to hear their concerns. Traffic control is also a concern there, especially getting emergency vehicles in and out, given the distance to hospitals. They are working on developing plans now. Larry added that he joined the site visit in Cummington and that it went well. There will be a lot of similarities with Franklin County, but also differences. Tony may be following up with Larry to learn more about what resources the State can offer.

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Current Projects

FFY21: Cybersecurity Spenddown – Rachel Mason reported that the two-part project was approved by the Council in December and then by EOPSS. MAPC is currently working on procurement for the first part of the project, installation of secure network ports in Pittsfield. Once we have a solid number for that, we will use the remaining funds to purchase as many multifactor security keys as possible for Gateway and Hampshire regional schools.

FFY22: Fairground Security Planning – Discussed above.

FFY23: Election Security – Rachel reported that reimbursement requests were supposed to be submitted by the end of December, but not all towns have done this, and several others have submitted incomplete documentation that Linda Gross is following up on. So far, we have processed about \$12,000 worth of reimbursements, though that was not yet reflected in the budget as of when it was printed for today’s meeting handouts. The required spending for election security is \$34,400 so we will need another project to spend down the remaining funds. We may be able to shift the remaining funds to the T&E de-escalation project and push out the trainings through the town clerks as part of election security, unless anyone has other suggestions. Larry agreed that it makes sense to tie in de-escalation. Jeanne wondered if there were gaps discovered post-election that we can help fill. Sandra asked what the other Councils are doing with this. Brian responded that some are doing training, but he doesn’t entirely know. He knows that there have been struggles in other Councils, too. He can find out.

Budget Review

Rachel Mason reported. FFY21 is on track with the cybersecurity project. We have \$115,000 allocated for the fairgrounds project in FFY22, but the contract with Sentinel is for \$109,000 so we have some funds left there. In FFY23, we will have the remaining election security funds as discussed above. There will be an additional \$100,000 in FFY24 for the next phase of the fairground security project or for other soft target projects.

Old Business

WesternMassReady website – This remains on the agenda as a placeholder.

New Business

None.

Items unforeseen by the chair

Carolyn asked if anyone had an update about whether there will be an extension of the law allowing Zoom meetings. Bob Dean replied that the law will sunset at the end of March unless a new law passes. MMA is trying to make that happen, but we’re very early in a new legislative session.

Next Meeting

The next All Hazards Planning and Equipment subcommittee meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 4, at 9:00 am, on Zoom.

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Motion: Carolyn Ness moved to adjourn. Sandra Martin seconded the motion. Larry Holmberg, Sandra Martin, Carolyn Ness, Jeanne Galloway, Nick Licata, and Loren Davine voted in favor. The motion was approved.

The meeting adjourned at 9:31 am.

List of Documents Reviewed at the Meeting

- All Hazards Subcommittee January 7, 2025 Meeting Agenda
- All Hazards Subcommittee December 5, 2024 Meeting Minutes (draft)
- WRHSAC FFY21 All Hazards Budget Report through 1/3/2025
- WRHSAC FFY22 All Hazards Budget Report through 1/3/2025
- WRHSAC FFY23 All Hazards Budget Report through 1/3/2025

Respectfully submitted by:

Rachel Mason, Program Assistant
Western Region Homeland Security Advisory Council
Franklin Regional Council of Governments