

Western Regional Homeland Security Advisory Council  
CBRNE/IED Subcommittee  
Meeting Minutes  
March 6, 2020, 10:00 am  
Longmeadow Fire Department,  
44 Williams Street, Longmeadow, MA

**In Attendance:** Raine Brown (FRCOG), John Dearborn (WMass Chiefs), Matt Kirchner (Pittsfield PD/BCSRT), Patrick Major (HC Regional SRT), Rachel Mason (FRCOG), Tim Nelson (D4 Hazmat), Barry Ross (HC Regional SRT), Alan Sirois (WMFCA, Agawam FD), Zachary Smith (South County EMS), Daryl Springman (WMTRT), Sean Walker (Arson & Bomb Squad / Springfield Fire)

This meeting was audio recorded.

### **Call to Order and Introductions**

Chair John Dearborn called the meeting to order at 10:05 am.

A round of introductions was made.

### **Approval of Minutes**

The committee reviewed the minutes from the April 9, 2019 meeting.

<p><b>Motion:</b> Alan Sirois moved to approve the minutes from the April 9, 2019 CBRNE meeting as submitted. Matt Kirchner seconded the motion. The motion was approved.</p>
---

### **Review of Current & Upcoming Projects**

Raine Brown provided an overview of current and upcoming projects. For Hazmat, the Homemade Explosives training was held, and the Anhydrous Ammonia training is upcoming. The WMTRT MoBEX and Wide Area Search Training were held in the fall. Structural collapse remains on the table. The equipment trailer project is complete, and the trailer is in service. Instead of basic life support equipment, we moved funds to get trucks purchased. There is some money left from the purchase of the tow vehicles. Money left in FFY18 includes over \$12,000 from the FEMA audit of EOPSS. The Berkshire County Fit tester was originally allocated in FFY19, but we bumped it to FFY18 to get it done faster. All of the FFY19 projects are now open and we can start spending on them. Additional money for FFY19 includes almost \$48,000 from the FEMA audit; it is available to the entire Council, but no one has claimed it yet. There are also some tech rescue funds available from projects that came in under budget.

John noted that there are a lot of proposals before the committee and the totals will probably exceed what we have available. He explained that the committee would try to fund / recommend to the Council to move forward with funding as much as possible.

Raine calculated that for FFY18 we have a total of \$81,863 available to use by the end of July 2020. This includes the unspent tech rescue funds plus the general WRHSAC funds. For FFY19, we have \$62,740 unallocated to spend by the end of July 2021. This includes the funds originally allocated for the fit tester plus the additional WRHSAC funds.

Western Regional Homeland Security Advisory Council  
CBRNE/IED Subcommittee  
Meeting Minutes  
March 6, 2020, 10:00 am  
Longmeadow Fire Department,  
44 Williams Street, Longmeadow, MA

Yesterday we learned that the FFY2020 WRHSAC award will be about \$1.2 million. On average, this subcommittee uses about 20-25% of that, which would be about \$300,000. Alan asked if the Council is anticipating a push from Public Health for these funds. Raine replied that we are anticipating requests for PPE, but there is none available at the moment. Boards of Health might request fit testers. The regional ones we have are heavily used by first responders. But the Pan Flu committee will also have their own money out of the full budget.

There was agreement to hear all proposals first and then decide how to allocate funds.

### ***WMTRT Proposals***

Daryl Springman presented the WMTRT requests, mostly for equipment, which was broken down into 5 categories (see handouts for more detail):

- 1) Purchase a search and rescue camera.
- 2) Secure the beds of the new trucks with covers.
- 3) Continue to build out radios to improve communications. [John asked if this should go through the Interoperability committee; Raine replied it should be discussed there, and then a decision made about where to draw money from.]
- 4) Upgrade or replace things that have expired, e.g. lay line ropes, or new things like lighting. Build up a cache so they have what they need. The team prides themselves on buying things that are not on fire trucks, but they are starting to be deployed separately so they need more of their own equipment.
- 5) Build up PPE supplies and rescue equipment, including for Field Force Extrication. They would work with state police or others; if people barricade themselves or put themselves in traps, tech rescue teams are often called. There are a lot of legal issues involved. A number of chiefs have asked them if they are capable in this, but even though some of them have done a training they have no procedures yet. There is a state team, but their primary mission is the highways. Alan explained that the steering committee does not want redundant resources, but it is good if they are working in conjunction with each other. He added that in the current political situation it is good to know how to do it correctly. From a local intelligence standpoint, the potential for need is there. Daryl added that this is a low cost item. They have already done the training and have a lot of the big equipment; they mostly need smaller items. Matt pointed out that the tools being requested are useful in other situations, including structural collapse. John cautioned that if we are adding new initiatives, we need to make sure they are sustainable.

Tim asked about priorities. Daryl responded that the “Group 2” truck enclosures are the most important, because they have vulnerable equipment, and also the “Group 1” camera equipment to fill gap of not having structural engineers. He rated the radios as least important. Alan asked if Marquette could match the lower price of truck bed unit. Raine noted that we have to run procurement, so we would be stuck with lowest vendor price.

Western Regional Homeland Security Advisory Council  
CBRNE/IED Subcommittee  
Meeting Minutes  
March 6, 2020, 10:00 am  
Longmeadow Fire Department,  
44 Williams Street, Longmeadow, MA

***FFY19 BCSRT Ballistic Shields Budget Correction***

Matt Kirchner explained that it took a while to get this year's funding released, and there have been some contractual changes in prices in the last two years. Spec'ing it again recently came in over the original \$115,000 request. The new total is closer to \$135,000. Raine clarified that the \$115,000 is already allocated for this in FFY19, so only \$20,000 would need to be approved.

***Regional SRT Request from Hampden Sheriff***

John welcomed Barry Ross and Pat Major from the Hampden County SRT. He explained that he met with them yesterday and cautioned them that the committee will probably ask for a little more work, but overall he thinks they have a viable proposal. Barry explained that Hampden County is starting a regional Special Response Team with five participating departments: the Sheriff's Department, Chicopee, Ludlow, Palmer, and Ware. They started last April and are now up to 40 operators on the team. There are MOUs between participating departments, and they are coming along with policies and procedures. The Sheriff and four Chiefs comprise the Board of Directors. They intend to add hostage negotiation and tactical EMS, and they are coming to the CBRNE committee for help getting started. They are setting up budgets for the other departments to contribute every year moving forward, but they need help with start-up costs.

The team has already hosted a basic SWAT class, and they have three more scheduled for this year. They realize that they need to coordinate with other counties in Western MA, too. They are also talking with the Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF), who will use this regional team. They have talked with the FBI SWAT team in Boston, who have agreed to do some training. They are still getting up to speed, but would like to cross train with Springfield and other counties.

Pat explained that the costs involved are not small. The big ticket items are already in place or coming in. Ballistic vests for everyone except the TEMS team are already in place. The team will eventually be open to all of Hampden County and parts of Hampshire County. This will help to narrow down individual department costs. He noted that we are in a busy area with the Westover AFB and the I-90/91 corridor, and it takes a lot of people to handle a large-scale incident. Their requests include an updated communications platform for negotiators, as the current one is outdated. They have already had successful talk-downs/de-escalations. They are also requesting a small robot to get into small spaces. See handouts for the full list of requests. Their priorities are the robot, communications platform, and ballistic vests.

Matt said that the Berkshire SRT has trained with Chicopee and others in Hampden County, and that they are on board with supporting the Hampden SRT. When Berkshire regionalized it was very successful. They have operators and subject matter experts from all over the county, so they do not have to rely on the state SRT which might be slow to arrive. He sees the equipment on the request list as essential. There are a ton of hidden costs that add up. Having community buy-in and support is huge. He encouraged the Council to support this.

Western Regional Homeland Security Advisory Council  
CBRNE/IED Subcommittee  
Meeting Minutes  
March 6, 2020, 10:00 am  
Longmeadow Fire Department,  
44 Williams Street, Longmeadow, MA

John noted that the Council is getting a lot of proposals for SRTs, and there is starting to be a concern about trying to sustain all of the teams. Are we going to get to a breaking point, just paying to operate SRTs? There are many other great initiatives and new threats always emerging.

Resource and information sharing among counties was recommended and could involve the creation of a subgroup that meets regularly. Matt pointed to the full-scale event at Six Flags as a good example of a useful cross training exercise. It was their first time training with Chicopee and it was very useful. It would be great to do regional exercises a few times a year.

Barry explained that they are looking at NEMLEC as a model for self-sustained funding. They have talked to NEMLEC about how to get the team up and running. WMLEC exists, but as Matt pointed out, it has not been used that way, though perhaps it could be expanded.

John noted that the TEMS part of the proposal got a lot of attention from Western MA Fire Chiefs. They discussed it yesterday; they need more work before implementing it. Many fire departments are way behind, but John thinks everyone can make it work.

Alan asked about coordinating with the state police SWAT team. Pat replied that they have worked with them in the past and have a good relationship, but that they are limited with resources and response time. They have done trainings together. Pat is willing to have them involved. Alan wants to make sure there is good operational coordination between assets, including dispatch, command and control, etc. He also wants to make sure state and local assets work well together at a “boots on the ground” level. He cautioned that from the EMS and medical operation standpoint, adding a TEMS component can get muddy. Paramedics need to be certified by the Commonwealth to do advanced medical procedures, and anything that deviates from standard practices and policies must be well documented. He supports the concept but advises using caution and care in setting this up.

The number of medics also was discussed. Pat explained that they intend to have a group of ten, mostly from the fire side. They also have some deputies who have combat medic background. Alan reminded him that they, too, would have to be OEMS certified. Matt explained that in the Berkshires they have one tech medic assigned to the team, OEMS certified, and that he thinks it is sufficient. He believes that a ten-person group is ambitious, both for certification and management, and the rest of the team would be strained trying to keep them safe, if they assign two others per medic. Alan thought it might be a reasonable number because you would probably never have all ten show up. Tim also has had an embedded medic for over twenty years; he trains a lot with the team and it works well. There are different models for embedded medics, varying from credentialed carrying arms to none. Sean noted that the full-time bomb squad carries weapons for defense, but the department owns the guns and they do not come out of the holster except as a last resort. They always work with the police and have no arrest abilities.

Barry asked if they could use Alan as a consultant and he agreed.

Western Regional Homeland Security Advisory Council  
CBRNE/IED Subcommittee  
Meeting Minutes  
March 6, 2020, 10:00 am  
Longmeadow Fire Department,  
44 Williams Street, Longmeadow, MA

John observed that many questions were arising and wondered if it would be worth the investment to get Dr. Beltran and/or Eric Stratton to come to a committee meeting to answer questions. The regional EMS Council also needs to be brought into the loop. This will generate more and more questions. Alan said he would be happy to discuss it further. From a funding standpoint we do not need to get too deep in the weeds with procedures, but we need to be able to answer questions. John believes that this project is do-able once some questions are answered.

Matt noted that he supports the team's desire to purchase smaller robots. Sean said that the Springfield robot could be used regionally if needed until others get their own.

***MedCat Request from South County EMS***

Zachary Smith introduced himself and South County EMS, a municipal department in Deerfield. Their only focus is medicine, primarily in Deerfield, Sunderland, and Whately though they also routinely do mutual aid in other places. Zach is a paramedic and law enforcement officer, and also a TEMS instructor. South County EMS is part of the Franklin County SRT. About 90% of what TEMS staff does is not "exciting stuff." But for the other 10%, they have purchased full kits for hot zones, and they train with the SRT team. They routinely respond to a large area, about 900,000 square miles with about 153,000 people. There are no ballistic protected vehicles anywhere in that area. They want a regular resource to be available. It would also be useful in flooding, UMass blarney blow outs, trees down, etc. The MedEvac that they are requesting is a Bear Cat elongated and designed to use to treat people. It is a solution for all of the needs they have encountered over time.

South County EMS is staffed 24-7 and is the premier EMS service for Franklin County. Police are used to calling them. They are centrally located and can get anywhere in 15 min. All staff are trained to drive all vehicles. They can get on the road immediately with on-duty staff. Zach has trained people on how to use Bear Cats, including other counties, so they do not need to add the cost of training. This would not be duplicating efforts, but rather making sure the resource is there. Zach acknowledged that \$300,000 is a large request, but this is an ambulance, and they are committed to getting this resource in the county. They are asking the Council to fund it, or even to offset the cost. They are also looking for funding at the federal level and it would be helpful to have matching funds.

John asked if they currently have a Bear Cat on the Franklin SRT. Zach replied that they do not, and that they could not affect a rescue in a hot zone now. John noted that the Council funded a Bear Cat a long time ago, but there have been a couple of requests denied since then as the Council has been concerned about costs. We do not even have the money if we wanted to. He noted that the proposal is excellent, and he mostly agreed with the need, though he wondered why they were not seeking a tactical Bear Cat instead. Matt replied that he has seen the truck and likes it, but thinks of it as more useful for large cities. This would be a multi-use vehicle; they can use it as a Bear Cat and help get someone out to an ambulance, and it is less scary looking.

Western Regional Homeland Security Advisory Council  
CBRNE/IED Subcommittee  
Meeting Minutes  
March 6, 2020, 10:00 am  
Longmeadow Fire Department,  
44 Williams Street, Longmeadow, MA

Following further discussion, Matt noted that there needs to be more communication within the SRT community, as he did not even know that South County has TEMS. John agreed that this was a general concern from the Council, which led to the atypical letter that the Council recently wrote. He admitted that he was not sure what to do with this, as it is well supported by the chiefs in the region, and the proposal was very thorough. One suggested first step was more coordination among SRTs, including all regional teams. Matt said that from the police side they are working toward this, but TEMS is fairly new in the region. If requests came from a working group with participation from WMA fire chiefs, police chiefs, EMS, it would help a lot. This could lead to regional entities identifying priorities and how to sustain them. John added that there is value in proposals that can show how they affect the largest population possible.

***Fit Tester***

John presented a request on behalf of the Western Mass Fire Chiefs. There is a constant waiting list for fit testers. They discussed this at the last Chiefs' meeting and believe two more would fill an identified gap. The \$28,350 quote includes calibration and maintenance for five years.

Raine asked where these would be housed. None of the new ones are in Franklin County. John could not remember what was decided. There is an annual requirement and pre-academy fit testing. Raine explained that when you purchase something new you can get an extended warrantee beyond the current grant cycle.

Raine reported that the fit tester ordered for Berkshire County needed additional funding. The Council had allocated \$15,000, but the quote just came in for \$18,844.

The committee considered the requests that had been presented.

**Motion:** Matt Kirchner moved to allocate \$3,844 from FFY18 for the Berkshire fit tester. Alan Sirois seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

Raine calculated that this leaves just over \$78,000 for FFY18. Daryl's requests mostly are fairly quick to obtain and could be done before the end of July. Alan asked if we could make radio purchases by that time, if needs to go through Interops first. Raine acknowledged that the timeline is tight, as there could be delays working with Motorola.

**Motion:** Tim Nelson moved to allocate funds from FFY18 for the Western Mass Tech Rescue Team as follows: \$32,987 for the Group 1 requests; up to \$7,000 for Group 2; \$11,326 for Group 4; and \$4,627 for Group 5. Alan Sirois seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

Raine calculated that this would leave \$22,000 in FFY18.

**Motion:** Alan Sirois moved to allocate \$20,000 from FFY18 for the BCSRT Tactical Armor. Sean Walker seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

Western Regional Homeland Security Advisory Council  
CBRNE/IED Subcommittee  
Meeting Minutes  
March 6, 2020, 10:00 am  
Longmeadow Fire Department,  
44 Williams Street, Longmeadow, MA

Raine noted that the remaining \$2,079 in FFY18 could go back to the full Council.

With regard to the FFY19 funds, John suggested completing Daryl's Group 3 requests and also purchasing the fit testers. That would leave just over \$8,000 to use before July 2021, which we could hold onto for anything emergent.

**Motion:** Alan Sirois moved to allocate \$26,080 from FFY19 for the WMTRT's group 3 requests. Tim Nelson seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

**Motion:** Alan Sirois moved to allocate \$28,350 from FFY19 for the WMFCA fit testers. Tim Nelson seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

John recommended that the regional SRTs get together, and he noted that we need more info on TEMS, but he suggested that we set aside \$100,000 for the 2020 budget for the Hampden SRT. Tim and Alan agreed that this would be a good earmark. Matt suggested increasing it \$125,000 for upgrade ability for radios, and to leave some breathing room. Others agreed.

**Motion:** Alan Sirois moved to earmark \$125,000 from FFY2020 for the Hampden County Special Response Team. Tim Nelson seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

John suggested that we table the MedCat for now. He recommended that groups get together, look at the Council's concerns, develop a regional team or working group, with some kind of governance. That will make it easier to support in the future.

Raine reported that this still leaves \$175,000 for the committee for FFY2020. She noted that the committee often puts aside \$30,000 for regional Hazmat, as well as some level of support for the Tech Rescue Team. There may also be other things we want to support, including continued build-up of swift water rescue training. John suggested putting \$125,000 towards the Tech Rescue Team, and \$50,000 for Hazmat.

**Motion:** Alan Sirois moved to earmark \$125,000 from FFY2020 for the Western Mass Tech Rescue Team and \$50,000 for regional Hazmat team training. Sean Walker seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

### **Business Unforeseen by the Chair**

None.

**Motion:** Tim Nelson moved to adjourn the meeting. Sean Walker seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

The meeting adjourned at 12:05 pm.

Western Regional Homeland Security Advisory Council  
CBRNE/IED Subcommittee  
Meeting Minutes  
March 6, 2020, 10:00 am  
Longmeadow Fire Department,  
44 Williams Street, Longmeadow, MA

**List of Documents Reviewed at the Meeting**

- CBRNE/IED Subcommittee Meeting Agenda for March 6, 2020
- CBRNE/IED Subcommittee Meeting Minutes for April 9, 2019 (draft)
- WRHSAC FFY18 CBRNE Budget through 3/5/2020
- WRHSAC FFY19 CBRNE Budget through 3/5/2020
- WRHSAC Support to Specialized Teams spending to date, March 2020
- WMTRT Remaining Budget and Projects FFY18 & FFY19
- WMTRT Equipment Request
- WMTRT Equipment Request Spreadsheet
- Berkshire County SRT Ballistic Armor Funding Increase Request
- Berkshire County SRT Ballistic Armor Funding Spreadsheet
- Hampden County Sheriff Funding Request for Regional SRT and Tactical EMS
- South County EMS Request for Regional Emergency Response and Rescue Vehicle

Respectfully Submitted by:

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