

## Western Regional Homeland Security Advisory Council

### Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, June 17, 2025, 10:00 am

**Council members present:** Nina Barszcz (Westfield Dispatch), Dave Desrosiers (Granby DPW), Jeanne Galloway (West Springfield Public Health), Stephen Gaughan (EMS/Amherst Fire), Tom Grady (BCSO), Jay Hastings (Westfield State PD), Sam Lemanski (Westfield State EMD; alternate for Jay Hastings), Thomas Sammons (Pittsfield Fire), Alan Sirois (Agawam Fire), Kristen Smidy (Gateway Regional), Benjamin St. Amand (PVTA)

**Non-members present:** Michael Archbald (MAPHCO/Whately BOH), C.J. Bartone (West Springfield Fire / Hazmat), Raine Brown (FRCOG), Scott Flebotte (MEMA), Nick Licata (HMCC), Sandra Martin (BRPC), Jeff McDonald (Hampden County Sheriffs Dept), Nina Miscioscia (MAPC), Brian Nichols (EOPSS), Chris Norris (Easthampton Fire), John Warren (DHS/CISA), Paul Wentworth (Mercy Medical Center)

**Council members absent:** Paul Burns (PVTA; alternate for Benjamin St. Amand), BJ Calvi (Springfield Fire), Bruce Cullett (Peru PD), Anthony Gentile (Wilbraham Dispatch; alternate for Nina Barszcz), Larry Holmberg (HREPC), Steve Kozloski (Monson PD/WMLEC), John Paciorek (Deerfield Police/Western Mass Police Chiefs), Norene Pease (Shutesbury BOH/MAPHCO; alternate for Jeanne Galloway), Don Willard (Chesterfield Selectboard)

*This meeting was conducted in person at the John Olver Transit Center in Greenfield, with additional participants joining on Zoom. The meeting was recorded.*

Chair Tom Grady called the meeting to order at 10:06 am.

#### **Approval of Minutes**

The Council considered the minutes from the May 20, 2025 meeting.

<p><b>Motion:</b> Kristen Smidy moved to approve the minutes from May 20, 2025 as submitted. Thomas Sammons seconded the motion. Thomas Sammons, Alan Sirois, Tom Grady, Jeanne Galloway, Kristen Smidy, Ben St. Amand, Jay Hastings, Nina Barszcz, and Stephen Gaughan voted in favor. The motion was approved.</p>
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#### **Introductions**

A round of introductions followed.

#### **Updates from the Chair**

Tom Grady had no updates to report.

#### **Updates from EOPSS**

Brian Nichols reported. There are no updates on funding going forward, and we may not know until September 30, as that is the deadline for the budget. He spoke with Kathryn about the MCI concerns, and she is going to speak with Kevin to see if there's anywhere they can go with that. Tom Grady noted that with the big push on ASHER, it is crucial to have a Statewide MCI Plan for success.

## Western Regional Homeland Security Advisory Council

### Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, June 17, 2025, 10:00 am

#### Updates from Disciplines

- FIRE: Alan Sirois reported that departments are keeping an eye on global and national events to be prepared for civil unrest. In the region, there are changes ongoing as a result of actions from the State Fire Marshal. The District 4 and District 5 Hazmat teams will be merged into one team covering all four Western Mass counties. No one is being cut from the team, but there will be a reduction in team size over a period of years through attrition. Final numbers are still being discussed. There will be no significant impact in the short term in terms of response. Thomas Sammons echoed the warning that there's some crazy stuff going on in the world now and we all need to stay alert.
- POLICE: No one was present to give an update.
- EMS: Steve Gaughan reported. They approved blood products as an emergency protocol change that should be coming out when it goes through DPH. There has been some discussion about a nasal epi in the pre-hospital setting; currently, EMTs are approved to assist someone with their nasal Epi but it does not fit within the current protocols. The MCI issues continue to be a concern, but they are continuing to work on it. Tom added that the nasal Epi issue was brought up in a meeting in Berkshire County, and it might be a good idea for agencies to train with it, especially as it looks a lot like Naloxone.
- EMD: Larry Holmberg was not in attendance but sent an update through Raine. There was a successful training on Friday at Smith College on school-based reunification, taught by the I Love You Guys Foundation, with whom we developed our plans. They had 115 participants.
- PUBLIC HEALTH: Jeanne Galloway reported. There are still diseases circulating and mosquitoes breeding. Temperatures are rising rapidly; anyone who has events should be concerned about that.
- TRANSPORTATION: Ben St. Amand reported. They have quite a bit of expansion with a number of routes, adding more frequency and greater service. PVTA has a partnership in which they are running a service connecting Amherst and Greenfield. Thanks to some grants through Mass DOT, there will also be a connector service from the Berkshires to Greenfield to Northampton, though it has not launched yet. Things are quiet at UMass for the summer and they are looking forward to having plenty of staff for the startup in the fall.
- DPW: Dave Desrosiers reported that it is the heart of construction season. He has been hearing rumblings that Mass DOT is pushing for blue lights on the back of trucks, with more deaths of highway workers recently. DPWs have been pushing for green lights, and there is a bill in Boston right now. But it is also important to take a step back and look at construction zones in general and come up with a better game plan. Some states issue fines via camera to people speeding through construction zones. That might get people's attention more than the color of the light, because even police officers are getting hit on the sides of roads.
- CORRECTIONS: Tom Grady reported that there is an interim sheriff in Franklin County, Lori Streeter, following Sheriff Donelan's retirement. She will be running in the special

## Western Regional Homeland Security Advisory Council

### Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, June 17, 2025, 10:00 am

election next year. Sheriff Bowler has been appointed to fill Sheriff Donovan's seat on the MPTC executive board.

- **COMMUNICATIONS:** Nina Barszcz reported. Certificates of Compliance for PSAPs are due by the end of July. There is one new requirement for the Certificate of Compliance for telecommunicators, sending in a completed QA form on EMD. Development grants usually have award by the end of June; there is still no information on that.
- **HOSPITALS:** No one was present to give an update.
- **LOCAL GOVERNMENT:** No one was present to give an update.
- **K-12 EDUCATION:** Kristen Smidy reported. Schools are coming to a close for the summer. They are still keeping an eye on the State and Federal budget to see how some things will shake out. There is legislation going through the House and the Senate restricting student cell phone use in schools. There is a new Commissioner of Education for Massachusetts starting July 1, Pedro Martinez, who is coming from Chicago Public Schools. Kristen is resigning from the position of Superintendent and has accepted a job with the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, so we will be looking for a replacement on the Council.
- **HIGHER ED:** Jay Hastings had no updates to report.
- **Massachusetts State Police (MSP):** No one was present to give an update.
- **MEMA:** Scott Flebotte reported that there has been an influx in requests for threat assessments, so much so that they are probably putting together a team. They are also doing many Event Action Plans. The Iron Man went smoothly. They are standing by to see what will happen with funding and with FEMA. They are doing an MDOP class on the 30<sup>th</sup> in Agawam.
- **DHS/CISA:** John Warren reported that with school out for the summer, their focus and effort is shifting to other ongoing projects, including assessments of Northampton, Lenox, and Easthampton facilities. Planning for Big E is underway. Baystate invited him to do some active shooter training at their last disaster boot camp. Both Baystate and the VA have been approved for Office for Bombing Prevention courses. They are advertising internally first; any remaining seats will be advertised externally. They are also doing an infrastructure visualization project for the Southwick Motocross National Championship.

### Updates from Subcommittees

**All Hazards Planning and Equipment:** Raine Brown reported. The subcommittee has two active projects. The cybersecurity project in Pittsfield will be wrapping up next week. The plans for the Franklin County and Cummington Fairgrounds are pretty much complete, along with a template that we will offer for others to use to build their own plans. That project should wrap up by the end of this month.

**Interoperability/Information Sharing:** No one was present to give an update.

**Western Regional Homeland Security Advisory Council**

**Meeting Minutes**

**Tuesday, June 17, 2025, 10:00 am**

**Training and Exercises:** Tom Grady reported. There are some ongoing trainings. The subcommittee has one motion to bring before the Council, namely the allocation of \$9,000 for WMFCA Aerial Fire Apparatus Training.

**Motion:** Tom Grady moved to approve \$9,000 for the aerial apparatus training. Nina Barszcz seconded the motion. Thomas Sammons, Alan Sirois, Tom Grady, Jeanne Galloway, Kristen Smidy, Ben St. Amand, Jay Hastings, Nina Barszcz, Dave Desrosiers, and Stephen Gaughan voted in favor. The motion was approved.

**Equipment /PPE:** Raine Brown had no updates to report.

**CBRNE/IED:** Alan Sirois reported that procurement for body armor is ongoing. POs should be issued in the next week or two. Raine is coordinating with the vendors to try to get a delivery date. MEMA will act as a distribution site. We are expecting the Greenfield Prime Mover in July. The TRT Prime Hauler is moving forward; a quote is under review. The portable barriers were promised by the end of June but there have been some hold ups. WMTRT and Hampden County MERT equipment purchase orders are coming in the next few weeks. The Ludlow drone is still waiting for DHS approval.

**Fiduciary Report:**

Raine reported. FFY21 is scheduled to end at the end of June. We only have the cybersecurity project in that, which will be done next week. In FFY22 the only outstanding project is the Greenfield Prime Mover; we are keeping our fingers crossed that it will come in before July 31<sup>st</sup>. We are hoping for an extension for FFY23. If we don't get it, we will be in a very hard spot. In FFY24, we are moving forward on some projects and getting specs together for others. We have some funding that isn't allocated for specific projects yet. It is not clear if we need to consider how to prioritize that money because it might be the last of the Homeland Security funding, or if we should wait until the end of September to see if we will have more funds coming.

**MAPC:** Avery Serra reported that regarding the FFY23 extension, they have a request prepared that will be sent to EOPSS in the coming days.

**Old Business:**

**Hospital Representative** – Tom reminded the Council that we have an open position, and he encouraged Council members to reach out to their networks. Nick Licata has a meeting with the hospitals on Friday and will ask them again.

**New Business:**

**K-12 Representative** – Kristen Smidy will help to look for a replacement, but Tom asked that others also go back to their communities and speak with superintendents who might be interested in filling that seat on the Council.

## Western Regional Homeland Security Advisory Council

### Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, June 17, 2025, 10:00 am

#### **Business Unforeseen by Chair:**

Tom echoed the sentiment that there is a lot going on in the world and in the country, and there are a lot of large events coming up locally and across the State. This is a good time to pull out your plans and review them with partners, leadership, and emergency management directors. MEMA is offering a professional certification for emergency management directors. It would be nice to start putting some credentialing and professionalism towards that discipline.

#### **Next Steps/Future Meetings**

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, July 15, 2025 at 10:00 am, on Zoom.

**Motion:** Alan Sirois moved to adjourn. Dave Desrosiers seconded the motion. Thomas Sammons, Alan Sirois, Tom Grady, Kristen Smidy, Ben St. Amand, Nina Barszcz, Dave Desrosiers, Jay Hastings, and Steve Gaughan voted in favor. The motion was approved.

The meeting adjourned at 10:37 am.

#### List of Documents Reviewed at the Meeting

- WRHSAC Council Meeting Agenda for June 17, 2025
- WRHSAC Council Meeting Minutes from May 20, 2025 (draft)
- WRHSAC Fiduciary Report for FFY21 Homeland Security Grant, 6/17/2025
- WRHSAC Fiduciary Report for FFY22 Homeland Security Grant, 6/17/2025
- WRHSAC Fiduciary Report for FFY23 Homeland Security Grant, 6/17/2025
- WRHSAC Fiduciary Report for FFY24 Homeland Security Grant, 6/17/2025
- WRHSAC FFY21 Budget Report through 6/13/25
- WRHSAC FFY22 Budget Report through 6/13/25
- WRHSAC FFY23 Budget Report through 6/13/25
- WRHSAC FFY24 Budget Report through 6/13/25

Respectfully submitted by:

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