

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS COORDINATION COUNCIL

DRAFT MINUTES OF July 12, 2013 Meeting

Commissioner Joe Williams: Opened the meeting at 10:05 a.m.

J. Williams: Good morning, I have American Red Cross here, Steve Kamvakis from part of my office (FRES) to talk about CERT and Brett Martinez (one of our Fire Marshals and team leader for our USAR). Hope we never have to use them. Just to let everyone know that the County has to renew our All Hazard Mitigation Plan, which runs out in September? I was talking to FEMA and in the process FEMA has given permission to precede. They realize with Sandy, it is needed and will be going out this week. We are also going to be starting our debris mgt. plan, which is overdue. DPW and everyone else involved did a great job. We are required to have a Debris mgt. plan. There will be grant money used to develop this. The only debate is do we do it in house or use a consultant. My only concern is that FRES and DPW are really tied up with so many other things. I know Brett has another important apt. he has to go to, so he will bring us up to date on the USAR(Area Search And Rescue) team, which is made up of County employees, Vol Fire Fighters and EMS people.

B. Martinez: Thanks Commissioner. I am just going to go over where we are at and where we want to be. Currently we have 115 members. Currently building out cash for \$210,000 worth of gear for our task force. In our past training, we focus on breaching and breaking collapse. What we notice after Sandy, working with FDNY and folks Upstate NY, the 3 key areas were water rescue, de-watering operations (getting water out of high valued IT bldgs.) like the municipal building that had to get back up and running, also tree removal (down limbs and getting roads back open). This year we are going to focus on those three (3) things. Chainsaw operations, we going to send some folks to Wild Fire Academy at BNL in October basically getting them more comfortable / breaking them down & getting them back in service. We do annually mobilization exercise call Mobex (gets all the players together and go out and physically and test our skills). In 2011, we mobilized to do an operation over on Fire Island- after Hurricane Irene. It works out well for us because during Hurricane Sandy, when we got the request that there were people trapped over in Fire Island, we just followed that model. This year we will try to do a mobilization exercise over at Plum Island (supposed to meet with them at end of the month) to focus on our logistics and try to get our equipment across the water (in a flood condition is a big objective). Once we get there we will practice a wide area search (simulate a collapse) during Hurricane or tornado most of the identification has been wipe out (no street signs, no landmarks). We want the guys to practice / figure that out and get those skills set up. We are also giving them the breaching exercise. We are hoping to do that in November. We like to do it in the fall. Last year we were supposed to go down to West Virginia for a Major exercise October 31 (but a little storm got in the way ☺). Maybe we push it back a little further towards November and the Hurricane Season will be passed us and be able to practice. We had some transition, our Task force leader Dick Stockinger has retired. As far as the task force leader goes, we are looking at some of the current members to take over that roll. Right now we have three (3) people in mind and very capable.

J. Williams: Just to follow up, one of the biggest problems we discovered during Sandy is that we put our mandatory evacuation orders out and people ignore them. That is what happened over in Fire Island. Brett is not given himself and his team enough credit. USAR Team went over and rescues about 200 people; in the course we almost lost two Police Officers, we did lose a vehicle. In the start of head of the storm, they had to go over and get people out. A good percentage of those people that stayed on Fire Island (were first responders). They felt that did not want to leave the community unprotected. We got reports that some First responders tied themselves to telephone poles, so they would not get washed away. We had 17 people held up in a school building over there and we couldn't get them. We spoke to them every ½ hour by cell phone. I didn't even have to look outside and could tell how bad the storm was by their voices. That's our biggest challenge. In the mainland people get in their cars and drive away. Fire Island, you are cut off and they do not realize that. The majority of people that stay on Fire Island are the old souls that are born and raised in Fire Island and weather many Hurricanes. Some said they never seen a surge like that. The USAR team started 4 years ago and the State is looking for a team in this area (kind of selected us), so we are working with the State to get certification. We want the Certification, and it may mean that we go to the County Executive one day because we are requested to go to Louisiana or something like that. In this last storm, we realize that the mutual aid situation (because we had people down here from NYS- task force 2) is reciprocal and they understand that.

B. Martinez: We have a couple of issues we are trying to work out. Overall, we have many things in place that are required and are working out with New York State.

J. Williams: We are required to have search k9's. Our arson dogs can't be cross-trained because of legal issues. We did try to have a working relationship with Police Dept. dogs (but they are trained different). One of the dogs found the person, and bit them. There is a Laws suit with the County over that. It is a catch 22. We can get the certification if we have dogs but the company out in California that trains them won't train them unless they are certified.

D. Miller: Brett at the last storm, with my Dept. the biggest thing is fuel. So we started using tool fuel.

B. Martinez: Yes, we actually have a cash of tool fuel. We leave the source empty/ drained until we need them. We use regular fuel to fill them up and then just before we put them away we put the tool fuel back in / run them with the tool fuel and leave them dry. One of the reasons I really want to go to the Wild Fire Academy is that the gentleman out there that runs the saw classes (all the people are from out west) knows saws like no one else.

D. Miller: What about like last time, having the responders using the County pumps? Will you be working out something like that again if we have another incident?

J. Williams: Yes, it was a major issue. Based on what the County Executive did last time, we will definitely do it. It would be internal. It was very confusing and I felt bad for the lady at DPW because the word got out.

D. Miller: So maybe we should probably gear something up on the IT system for next time. As we do with the paychecks, it kind of ties it all together.

J. Williams: We even had a number of Fire Dept. come down and fill up their ambulances.

There was a whole thing with State / FEMA gas and it is only used for certain vehicles.

Everyone knows our Red cross is a valuable partner with shelters and they do a good job for us.

DJ Rosenthal: Right now, we have supply spots that are stationed at our shelters. So we are making sure they are replenished, added blankets and more cots. Today they are going to do another two shelters to replenish them. I have been working from Montauk out. We recently had had a disaster-training marathon for all the volunteers. It is a Full weekend with class all daylong and it trained the service associate, supervisor and management positions. We found during Sandy we were lacking Supervisor capabilities, so we increased that. We have a new kitchen support trailer out here that has come to support during a storm.

J. Williams: One of the things we ran into during Sandy is that we pre- identified the top 125 shelters. We were being inundated with all phones call from Towns that wanted there shelter open, which was physical impossible. Not operational to open that many shelters. We are looking to open bigger shelters that you may have to drive to / and would want you to get there before the event. I met with EMS yesterday on some changes coming up. One is to have co-shelters / one wing would be for extra care and other wing for general population, easy to manage. Two is level of comfort for the family members and won't have to leave grandma (Special Needs Shelter) and go to another shelter. We now have three (3) pet friendly shelters that people can stay close to them (maybe in another shelter across the street) so everybody is happy. The person who needs real heavy intensive care will have to go to a hospital.

D. Miller: what you guys did really well last time, all the workers like the utility company's couldn't get hotels room and we asked FRES to help and you were able to get hotels rooms for them. That was well done.

J. Williams: LIPA, National Grid ate up most of the hotel rooms. When we first heard that LIPA blocked out so many hotels rooms in the County, and we had people coming in with no place to put them.

D. Miller: That was a good job / nice work.

J. Williams: We had little blue Med tents, and had 25 Fire Depts. from Upstate to help us out, we put them in tents that were heated, air-conditioned. The only thing we realized is a need for a bigger generator, cause we got a call 3am in the morning that there was no heat (generator ran out of gas).

DJ. Rosenthal: I work a lot with assigning staff to shelters. I have a meeting on Monday with shelter in Deer Park to work on more assigning / staffing shelters.

J. Williams: Red Cross is our main persons but they also had to support Salvations Army and other needed places, we couldn't have done it without them. The biggest thing here was feeding; it was tough and we appreciate the sheriff's food. However, after a week of jail food we were allowed and actually started catering it.

S. Kamvakis: What FRES was able to do this year was distribute 800-megahertz radios to shelters for communication because cells phones were not working good / no service or electric. So we assigned the 800-megahertz radios to all the shelters, and have someone in their office give us an update. There was unavailable internet as well as cell phones. It worked out well didn't it?

DJ Rosenthal: It was fabulous with the 800-megahertz Radios!

S. Kamvakis: So that is part of our Plan in case it happens again. CERT (community emergency response team) we actually got out first grant in 2003 and held our first class back in fall 2004. We graduated 22 CERT members and drafted the first by-laws for the organization. It is a Countywide organization and broken into divisions (1, 4, 5 & 6th) same as Fire Depts. We have a Board of directors and meet monthly. Quarterly we have a countywide meeting and rotate to different locations throughout the County so everyone can attend. Probably by end of this year, we would have trained about 600 members in all. We try to do two (2) classes a year in the fall (evening classes) and winter (Saturday's classes). Overview of what we trained them in and our goal is that they have fundamentals, they know how to work in a safe environment (safety is priority). We also try to work in the buddy system. We give them Basic Emergency preparedness how to plan & be prepared in the home. Fire safety and we give hands on training with Fire Extinguishers (All the classes are done at the academy). We got a grant to have a Fire & Emergency Mgt. instructors teach them. We teach them disaster psychology, terrorism's (awareness), medical operations, light search and rescue (use the maze for basic search). That is Federal Government identified. Added to that; we bring in DJ from the Red Cross to help with shelter operations. Red Cross is responsible for the General Public Shelters. We have to look at special needs and Pet shelters. So our members are taught how to run a shelter. DJ will run them through an actually simulation of a day at the shelter. We also give them an introduction to

(Cont. Steve K.) incident command 100 and 700. We give them the opportunity to get certified in first aid / CPR. Cert members have taken train the trainer classes. A couple years back they were activated for the Mastic gas leak. So they came into our call center. One of our primary functions they do here is for a weather event. They call everyone on the JEEP program and make sure they are aware and to be prepared. We will supply them with phone # to call. They also man our call center (answer calls) in the EOC. During Irene, they log in about 1600 volunteer hours in the call center. During Sandy there about over 2,000 hours logged in. There was so much mis- information and it was a challenge. Additional training they had is NYS Forest Ranger basic search and advance rescue. In addition, National weather storms spotting and various SEMO/ FEMA training. They assisted in numerous exercises at FRES and McArthur Airport full-scale exercise. CERT has assisted in ½ marathons at Suffolk County. They have been victims at active shooting exercises recently with Islip Ambulance and LI railroad. Throughout the summer, every weekend they are out at fairs (distributing handouts). All their training benefits us here at the County and in EOC. Getting the word out for preparedness is very effective.

D. Miller: Okay what about credentials?

S. Kamvakis: We do a background check through Suffolk County Police Dept. (County gives us the authorization to do that). It's a local background check (when we do it through SCPD, we don't charge us for it). I think it is the same way as VIPS. We have caught some things, usually two (2) or three (3) people the Commissioner and I have to go over their application.

J. Williams: Generally, where we get jammed up is that they ask, "Were u ever arrested" and most of them say no (it comes back as an old charge). Sometimes they come back as a heavy Duty one (as a sex offender). 99.9 % percent of the time, they are fine. We run into a lot of DWI's (we watch them so we don't have a problem, but they don't use County cars).

S. Kamvakis: Most of it is when they were younger (most of them are older). We Issue them and ID card with an expiration Card (only good for 2 years).

J. Williams: Our biggest problem is that they want to do more. They are a big help! This Thursday there is a special meeting with public safety for Hurricane preparedness, some lessons learned from Sandy, want to know where we are, and what we did. One of the changes we were contemplating is that we do bus evacuations. We have contracts with 900 bus companies. During Sandy, we actually evacuated some people with busses. When we set this plan up, it was actually the first time exercising this plan. We started with "what is the easy place to pick everyone up". We used the existing SC buses routes, not knowing that and 99% of the people in this County don't use the SC buses. So people got very confused and next week we are having a meeting with our Leading bus co. One suggested he made is that he can handle (if you call a certain # for him) and pick you up at your house, and take you to a shelter.

B. Chamberlain: I actually just recently signed off for children with special needs; to have a system put in place to identify each bus location.

J. Williams: We have it publically out there on our website. We use mostly school buses they go out and get familiar with their route, so we keep them on that route. Some people are calling saying that they don't know where the bus stops are.

Okay thanks everyone, Ruth will send out our next meeting date and the minutes.

A motion was made by J. Williams to adjourn meeting at 10:49am.

Old Business:

New Warehouse

Members Present	Department	Staff Present
J. Williams	FRES	R. Paladino
	Parks Police Dept.	B. Martinez
	Sheriff's Office	S. Kamvakis
	Health Service	DJ. Rosenthal
	County Executive	
P. Kalan	Police Dept.	
R. Donald	IT Dept.	
D. Miller	IT Dept.	
	FRES	
	Legislature	
B. Chamberlain	Legislature	

NEXT MEETING	October 11, 2013
TIME	10:00 a.m.
LOCATION	SC Dept. FRES Library, Yaphank