

# COUNTY OF SUFFOLK



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COUNTY EXECUTIVE

## DEPARTMENT OF FIRE, RESCUE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

### EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS COORDINATION COUNCIL

#### DRAFT MINUTES OF July 11, 2014 Meeting

Commissioner Joe Williams: opened the meeting at 10:07 a.m.

J. Williams: Let's get started. Naturally Hurricane season started ... Arthur was a big surprise last week. I guess the craziness with all the conference calls with the National Weather Service about Arthur was that normally it works the other way. When it starts down by the south of Florida as a hurricane, by the time it comes up here it is a tropical storm. This is the first time we had a Hurricane on July 4<sup>th</sup>? I know I was on my boat and the water in Great South Bay was only 70<sup>o</sup>degrees, kind of amazing, glad it made the turn. Our OEM dept. started their outreach program, and had a lot of presentations (specific groups) on the hurricanes. I know we have 3or 4 table- top drills that we participated in. After Sandy we had a problem (I know P.D. brought some military trucks) and with some grant money, brought a High water Truck with a pump on it (military truck) to be delivery in August 2014. It has the capability to go in high water and also firefighting. With the firefighter pump on it, it can help with flooded homes (during Sandy- you all seen the pictures of flooded homes). The County, City, Fire Island, and the Marine bureau can use it (it will be an asset). It will be kept here at FRES. The 2015 Capital Budget, (with the County Executive and Legislative) has been told FRES is going to get a new Command van (ours is 10years old). It has reached its point with the new technology out there, doesn't' pay to fix up. The plan is to trade in for a new one. I approached them with maybe to keep that as a spare. We have two (2) Command vans. One (1) we share with SCPD. It is used a lot for the hostage situations. Our big van is being used a lot by SCPD because there generator went on theirs. My idea is to keep as a spare for multi agencies (FRES, Sheriffs) to use it.

Sgt. J. Abernethy: I'm a Sergeant with Emergency services (Special Patrol Bureau). Thirty years I've been with Suffolk County, 10 years with emergency svc. I have a couple of props to show you. One of our officers was schedule to be down here to give an overview, but due to the reschedule, he wasn't able to make it. We are part of four (4) major areas of emergency services, County Haz Mat team, Tactical unit (search warrants and barricades) also the Bomb squad (bomb technicians). I guess this is the meat and potatoes of what we do. The patrol officer is mostly doing rescue work (fire rescue, building collapse) during the day. I brought some props today, to show you the tactical end of some of these tools we use. Technology moves along (things evolve) and we try to minimize our exposure (if there is a disturbed person, and they may be armed) in a barricaded situation. We try to get as much as information as we can without exposing our office. If we know where a subject is, we can confine them more. Some of the devices I have here will work with that. I have an eyeball camera; it has a baseball sense to it (good weight to it).

What we do if we have to approach a house with a barricade and hostage situation, (we will have a hostage negotiator there trying to communicate) we would try to determine where that subject is in the house. We might deploy the camera in the house. We'd have to make an approach on the house; it's like getting eyes in the house. We don't throw it at the window (we break the window and put it in the house).

J. Williams: does it have night vision capability?

Sgt. J. Abernethy: Yes it does, (give a view of what is inside -shows us how the camera works). They are fairly robust and can rotate around to see what we want. If we were in another situation and were in a hall way we can move (remotely) down the hall to see different angle.

E. Moltzen: is it weather resistant?

Sgt. J. Abernethy: Yes it is. We are out in all different kinds of weather. Normally when we are deploying it, it's in a residence.

J. William: Is it battery operated?

Sgt. J. Abernethy: yes it is. Re-chargeable

J. Williams: how long will it last on battery?

Sgt. J. Abernethy: Variable (tested yesterday) they are good for a few years. Usually the weakness is no battery on it. It is for lowering our exposure. (Demonstrating the camera - we can move it left / right). The low light capability is nice. It has an infra-red camera too. We have a number # of robots in the unit. Our biggest is the bomb robot F6A. They are used for our bomb work, very complicated and very involved. Our smallest is the re-con scout. These are for outside the residence and we want to see where the subject might be. During this we are in a safe position (in our vehicles). It is very simple to operate; this also has infra-red capability and audio. Not all that expensive and gives us the capability.

J. Williams: Are your dogs for guard dogs or just one mission dogs.

Sgt. J. Abernethy: They are all general purpose dogs but each has a specialty, drug or bomb dogs. They are also cross trained. Most contact with the bomb dogs, and they are all shepherds.

J. Williams: so do you keep the person inside talking or do you just have to go in at a certain point?

Sgt. J. Abernethy: We are patient and rather talk more than go in a on a hostage situation. If he is by himself, we have time... or if there is another person, we may have to go in sooner. All of our guys have training on emotionally disturbed people. If there is a medical issue or threatening suicide we have to get in and take care of him.

J. Cirillo: I'll walk us through the grants that are active. Starting with SHSP 10 and UASI 10, those grants are both to expire this summer. We have been in constant contact with Police dept. and sheriff's dept., pushing everyone to spend the money prior to end of the grant. At this point all the depts. are on pace to have the money spent or in the process of move it around to get all accepted. Parks, Health Sheriffs, PD and everyone is on date to have it done by end of summer. We also have SHSP 2011 and 2012 both set to expire at end of summer as well. With those grants, we did apply for an extension to have them pushed back till Feb 2015 and still waiting to hear from that. We have been in touch with other depts. working with PD to see if we can move some money around. Everyone is in the process of getting things done to have the money spent by end of summer, in case that extension doesn't come through. On the SHSP 2012 there is a significant amount of money left in that grant, same depts. as I mention and DPW as well. We put the extension request through and for them to put together any additional projects that weren't in their application. The 2013 grant for SHSP is just getting underway, so that doesn't expire till next summer. The big thing we worked on was the 2014 grants getting the application in for the USAI and SHSP. All the depts. involved: Tech, Health, FRES and PD have to put together their project proposal and send over to State. With the recent grant 2014, a lot of the projects that are in there, are specific enough that the money has to be spent a certain way, but with the guidelines of the State, can be a little different. If the health dept. has budget line in there for eligible for pharmaceutical they may be able to use that. The same thing with the money for leasing of the equipment, at the end of time period we go ahead and do that. The active USAI grant 2010 and 2014 we have to spend ASAP. As far as other grants we have active (2012 & 2013 local emergency performance grant – LEMPG) are fully expended. The 2014 grant we put ahead app for that one and are waiting to hear back from that. With this grant, what makes it different is that it is strictly for personnel costs. We find out from the State how much it is awarded (\$560,000); will be able to get that money back, so there is never a need to worry how it is going to be spent. We had the Assistance to fire fighters grants 2012 was specifically used for purchase of smart fire safety and training drill of \$159,000 grant. In that grant the proposal application explained what that grant was for.

As far as active grants like the Technical rescue USAR grant, right now there are 3 grants being used actively, 2010, 2013 & 2014. We are trying to again figure out what we are going to use for (this is a smaller grant), averaging about \$120,000. The other Big grant we have is the Hazmat grant, there are four (4) active. The 2010 entirely spent and will expire end of summer and the 2012 grant which is also set to expire this summer, but extended. The 2013 grant and 2014 are both relatively new. The 2013 grant, we have another year to do that one (1) and the 2014 as well. The application is in but haven't gotten back final acceptance. There are possibly two other grants in the works.

J. Williams: Jared was talking about in the year 2014; why are we trying to spend out of 2010 grant money? The biggest problem we have is not with Suffolk County. It is with the UWAG (Urban area work group), which is us (Suffolk County), Nassau, NYC, Westchester and Port authority. What happens is we get awarded a grant, now we have to go through the process of accepting the grant. It goes through State first, comes to us and we have to do a resolution with the legislature to pass it. It is normally a **two year grant**. It takes us 7 months to get grant approved before we can spend a dime on it. So now our 2 yr. grant gets cut down to a 1 ½ year grant. Then sometime the situation changes and now we have to get a budget modification. We have to apply to State and they have to get it approved by Federal government. So everyone is scrambling because we have grants running out in end of August. So the Federal gov. has consistently given grant extensions (6 months - 1yr). They have really tightened up on that and are not going to do it anymore. We are in constant debates with them all the time. When we go to these meeting and tell them "you gave us 2 years to spend this grant money, but we actually have 14months". They also came back to us (it used to be a State bid & we could buy off that no matter the amount) and said right now anything over \$500 we want to spend, we have to get 3 quotes on it and that takes time. They have road blocked us again. So now we are in the process of purchasing for the USAR team (\$30,000 item). This company is the only one that makes it (gave us all the documentation). Purchasing said we have to go out and bid for these, but we know we will get only 1 bid. Purchasing is now telling us we have to keep open for 3 weeks. So now we are scrambling to get this thing done by August 31<sup>st</sup> or it will expire. We've had numerous meetings with people and have no problem with the 2 year. When the Feds award the bid they award it to the State and they have to accept and approve it. We need to send the paperwork to the State to let them know we are going to buy it. By then we have lost sometimes 8 months before we can spend any of that money. Once they approve it, then we have to go to legislature approval. It is Frustrating. They don't let you know till last minute that the grant has been extended. Right now everyone is out running around to spend the money. You don't want to give a dime back because it doesn't look good. I seen it before, we bought things that we needed and only to find out they extend the grant. We only have two (2) people working on grant tracking. It's not just Suffolk County, it's a problem across the whole United States. There is always a threat not getting grant money. I think we get a lot of grant money because we are so close to NYC. We always try to buy off Federal contracts and the County said we can't buy off it. We did buy some generators a couple of year ago.

J. Cirillo: Like the commissioner mentioned there are time frame limitations. With the 2013 USAI and SHSP grant, the contractor says it starts Sept 1, 2013 but in reality, we didn't start using funds until months ago (takes time to get approval and finalized here at the County level then the State). It is very difficult.

J. Williams: We have here at FRES, 11 employees that are grant funded a 100% percent with benefits. If we never got that grant again, I would have to lay off 11 people. That's how it worked out over the years, with openings and trying to get SCINS signed. If that grant ran out tomorrow we would have to let people go. With my budget a 100% is spend first on them and their salaries (we couldn't do without them). All other commissioners have to do it that way. They do the personnel end of it first.

J. Williams: I know these are short meetings. We plan to keep trying to do some different presentations for this council. At the next one will have the new high water truck and we can take a look at it. As far as we are concerned, if you guys need it come and get it. It is a five (5) ton military truck. It was brought from a company in Copiague. It has been completely rebuilt with a new interior, transmission, and axels. It is a 1992 GMC and unique truck. We can do some training on it; maybe let guys drive it to the airport. If you have a situation and need it, we will help you and can drop it off to you.

Thank you and Have a Safe summer.

The next meeting is October 10th.

**Old Business:**

New Warehouse  
Hazard Mitigation plan.

A motion was made by J. Williams to adjourn meeting; All in favor; motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 10:48 a.m.

Members Present	Department	Staff Present
J. Williams	FRES	R. Paladino
	Parks Police Dept.	
C. Guercio	Sheriff's Office	
	Health Service	
	County Executive	
P. Kalan	Police Dept.	
F. Mathews	IT Dept.	
J. Cirillo	FRES	
E. Moltzen	FRES	
	FRES	
C. Bodkin	Legislature	

<b>NEXT MEETING</b>	October 10, 2014
<b>TIME</b>	10:00 a.m.
<b>LOCATION</b>	SC Dept. FRES Library, Yaphank