

Emergency Management Meeting Minutes

Friday, September 1, 2023

Call to Order: 9:06 AM

EM Members Present: Chief Jason LaForest, EM Director (JL); Lucinda Vermeulen, EM Public Relations Officer (LV), Mary McGurn, EM Deputy/Clerk (MM); Select Board Chairman George McGurn (GM); Fire Chief Joe Schneider (JS); Highway Superintendent Jim Noe (JN); Buildings & Grounds Superintendent Tom Reynolds (TR); Board of Health Director Juliette Haas (JH); and Council on Aging Administrator Peg Muskrat (PM). Absent: Water Department Operator Nat Stalker (NS).

Guests; none

Minutes 8.1.2023 Approved, 8:0 with one Absentation

Task List Updates

Blackboard Connect

- JL noted the recent acquisition of Blackboard Connect. JL reported on his conversation with Great Barrington Police Chief Storti regarding their use of CodeRED. Storti was positive about its user-friendliness and capabilities; he noted that Cara Becker operated the CodeRED.
- JL will reach out to Cara to attend an EM Meeting to discuss her experience.
- Further questions raised by members were: do other Berkshire towns use CodeRED; is it used only for emergencies or all types of resident communication; can Blackboard's list be migrated to CodeRED; what would be Egremont departmental usage; and what cost, including setup fee?
- MM called out CivicPlus' Alert System as another possible replacement for Blackboard.
- GM advised members that mid-fiscal year change in alert systems would not be possible; the earliest a changeover would be July, the start of a new fiscal year.
- Members discussed achieving a 100% resident opt-in to an alert system.
- The discussion closed with JL offering to contact the new owners of Blackboard to find out their plans for Blackboard.

Mt. Everett & Simon's Rock Shelters

- JL reported that Sheffield Police Chief Munson will open the Mt. Everett shelter; Simon's Rock on-campus security will open the Kilpatrick Athletic Center, Egremont's other shelter.
- JL will ask Munson about his plan for staffing the Mt. Everett shelter, especially when used by multiple neighboring towns.

- LV brought up the transportation issue to shelters; Egermont's van and the Tri-Town Connector were mentioned.

Town Hall Warming & Cooling Center

- TR questioned storage for supplies; the annex is only suitable if it is retro-fitted with a closed, climate-controlled room.
- JL & LV cited the Police Department's basement as the best storage location near Town Hall.
- JL will investigate what will be involved in creating a closed space in the basement.
- JL will contact MEMA Berkshire County Rep Chris Marsden for suggestions and assistance with supplies.
- GM noted the upcoming All Boards Meeting as the time to request a line item in the Town's budget.

Adding Transportation Department to Emergency Management

- GM will put the appointment of the Department's Administrator, Melanie Vicneire, on the Select Board's agenda for its upcoming meeting.

List of Vulnerable Residents

- PM will recheck her list's accuracy.

Portable Generators

- The few generators are housed at the Fire Station; JS and TR believe they are of little use due to the amount of time left idle.

Survey

- JL set up a working group to develop a resident emergency preparedness survey and appointed JH, LV, and MM.
- JH offered the MVP survey experience as a resource, and the BCBOHA Personal Emergency Preparedness Survey sent earlier to members.
- The possibility of testing a survey with PM's vulnerable resident list was raised.

Communication Equipment Inventory

- JS shared his concerns over the effectiveness of 2-way radios due to compromised radio frequencies.
- Members decided that more information on radios for emergency communication among members is needed.
- JL will ask Chris Marsden to discuss the subject at a future meeting.

Contact List

- MM will update the list with contact information for Simon's Rock Security.

COA Luncheon Speaking Event

- JL will confirm a date with PM.

Egremont's MVP/HMP

- JL encouraged members to read both plans; given the report's length, JL cited the charts as a quicker way to get familiarized with the content.
- MM noted both plans are available as PDFs on the Town's website.
- While the MVP focuses on climate change, the HMP is possibly more relevant to the objectives/plans for Emergency Management.
- JL reported that the HMP is updated yearly.

Next Meeting: Monday, October 2, 2023, at 8:30 AM

Adjourned: 10:18 AM