

STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

April 23, 2009 / 10:00 AM
100 Maple St, Shrewsbury, MA

IN ATTENDANCE: Chris Montiverdi (Leicester/Worcester); Phil Leger (Athol); Paul McNulty (Westborough); Trish Parent (Upton); Roger Mallet (Orange); Cheryl Rawinski (Sutton); Lois Luniewicz (Grafton); Elizabeth Swedberg (Westminster); Darlene O'Connor (Leicester); Missy Kakela-Bottoms (Mendon); Lenny Izzo (Hopedale); Sandi Knipe (Hubbardston); Kalene Garbarz (NABH); Matt Pearson (Phillipston); Dennis Costello (Boylston); Bill Fisher (Medway); Mike Graff (Bellingham); Derek Brindisi (Worcester); Kerry Clark (Reg II PHEPC); Shawn Winsor (Reg MRC Coord); Seth Peters (Reg II PHEPC); Ken Gikas (Reg II PHEPC); Sara Delisio (Reg II PHEPC); Barry Lein (Reg II PHEPC); Forrest Price (Reg II PHEPC).

The Meeting was called to Order by Chris Montiverdi at 10:12am. He started the meeting by having all individuals present at the meeting introduce themselves.

Minutes of the February 26, 2009 Steering Committee Meeting were presented for approval. Lois Luniewicz made a motion to approve the minutes as presented and this was seconded by Lenny Izzo. During the discussion Lois mentioned that Bill Fisher was from Medway, not Medwick. The motion was passed unanimously with this one change.

Next Meetings:

- Executive Committee: May 14, 2009/9:30am/25 Meade St., Worcester.
- Executive Committee: May 28, 2009/9:30am/25 Meade St., Worcester.
- Executive Committee: June 11, 2009/9:30am/25 Meade St., Worcester.
- Executive & Steering Committees: June 25, 2009/9:00 & 10:00am/25 Birch St., Milford.

Host Agency Report: Chris Montiverdi

- Chris briefly previewed the trainings scheduled for today's meeting. Dave Clemmons from the Worcester Communications Department was going to give a class on the Motorola CP200 radio. Peter MacDonald from the Sunrise Assisted Living Facility in Leominster was going to give a presentation on their forced evacuation during the December ice storm. Additionally the group was going to recognize Nancy Allen on the occasion of her retirement.
- Chris then discussed the recent changes in Public Health and Human Services brought about by the budget situation.
 - Jay Gardner's position as Commissioner of Health and Human Services has been eliminated.
 - The Disabilities Director has also been cut.
 - 75% of the Public Health nurses have been let go.
 - The person who ran the Tobacco Control Program elected to retire.
 - Chris along with Karyn Card will be leaving Public Health and going to the new Emergency Management Department.
 - Kerry, Seth, and Shawn and their programs will be remaining in Public Health.
 - Pretty much all of our clerks have been laid off.
 - Public Health has been reduced from about 25 persons down to 5.
- At this point Chris opened the discussion to any questions or concerns which people may have.

- Derek stated that with Chris and Kerry in place he did not feel the need to be as involved with the emergency preparedness program. But that with Chris' departure he will be re-engaging with the coalition.
- Derek also said that the City Manager, in view of the budget cuts, wanted Public Health to concentrate on what he thought were our core operations. However this was different that what the Steering Committee may consider that our core operations were. The City Manager felt that core operations were dictated by law or regulation. Derek covered several different programs which public health and the coalition had put into operation which were not mandated but which we considered to be good public health programs and/or promoted emergency preparedness. Derek was able to defend some of our programs which allowed them to be retained. He felt that the new Public Health program would look different than the past but which would become stronger in the future.
- Paul expressed strong concerns about the Tobacco Control Program and whether towns like his would get the services they needed. Derek stated that both he and MDPH had let the city know that they were also concerned about the future of this program. Derek will run this program for the short-term to insure that it continues.
- Derek expressed his willingness to come to the local boards to discuss any programs or concerns which they had.
- Derek suggested that a core group might want to get together to discuss any problems issues. Roger wanted to know if we were going to pursue this. Chris suggested that the Strategic Planning committee might be the forum to take this responsibility on.
- Wibby suggested that we might consider staying after our meetings if we need to discuss specific issues.
- Phil suggested that we should let the town manager know that we are happy with the host agency program but if they try anything similar to moving Seth or Kerry that we would consider that as unacceptable. Derek supported this and strongly urged the committee to be careful of letting anyone do away with any of our programs.
- Roger stated that if we needed to have a get-together that Orange would be willing to host it.

Program Manager Report: Kerry Clark

- Kerry briefed the Program Coordinator Update message he had sent out yesterday.
- He also reviewed the budget summary, letting people know that the figures did not include the Northborough emergency management project, the FRS radios, and the recently approved trailer purchase. He said that we were much better at this point then we have been in past years.
- In response to a question Kerry said that he was still working on the EDS signs.
- We are also working on a HHAN training session to teach people how to use this system.
- In response to a question on the battery re-conditioners Kerry and Chris stated that this would help extend the life of the batteries for some period of time. The program will try to be responsive to the needs of the community.
- Lois asked if we were still considering buying new radio batteries. Sandi answered that she could address that question during the EAT Committee report.
- Mike Coughlin's Best Practices website is still under development.

Mutual Aid: Andy Pelletier

- Chris reported that Boylston had signed the Mutual Aid Agreement bringing the number of communities who have signed to about 49. We are doing fairly well when compared to other regions, especially when the size of our region is considered.
- Phil reminded the group that we had voted that any town wishing to receive regional assets would have to have signed the regional mutual aid agreement before they would be considered. He also stressed that providing mutual aid was voluntary and would occur only if a town had the ability to provide the requested assistance.
- Wibby asked if we had developed a telephone listing for communities to be able to contact other communities for aid. Chris stated that we did, but because some numbers for a few towns were the home numbers for police and fire chiefs we were hesitant to hand this information out. So the office developed a notification system using a pager and the office personnel to be able to provide a response to help in this. The pager number is (508)327-3432.

Homeland Security Committee: Chris Montiverdi

- Chris stated that the past couple of meetings had been focused with setting the objectives for upcoming grants. There is a focus on Mass Care and Sheltering. The Council held an open public forum meeting about a month and a half ago in Shrewsbury to go over the program, what the council has purchased in past years, what regional assets have been deployed, and to discuss future plans. Chris chairs the Mass Care and Pandemic committees and is the Public Health representative.
- Some of the items they are focused on are Mass Care, Special Needs, and Sheltering. The council has 1,000 cots in the region. The council has set aside \$300,000 for Mass Care and Sheltering.
- Reverse 911 is still through the Sheriff's Department and they are still offering training. If communities have not had training, let Kerry know and Chris will take this back to the council. Phil stated that Public Health should have a seat at any R911 training along with the other town agencies. There was an extensive discussion of how the system works and various considerations of how to develop and distribute messages.

Local and State Advisory Committee: Sandi Knipe

- Sandi briefed on the April 13 meeting attended by her and Phil.
- Mary Clark stated that they did not expect any significant cuts in the next grant year.
- A new equipment purchase list is going around.
- Jeff Wilkerson mentioned that the Commissioner was going to send a letter to the Worcester City Manager showing support to Region 2. The Commissioner is also closely monitoring the situation in Amesbury.
- The Mass in Motion grant was discussed.
- The House Ways and Means Committee released their 2010 budget. There could be a 10-15% additional cut, mostly in Environmental, Communicable Disease, School Health, and Lab services.
- Phil stated that Jeff Wilkerson reiterated that one of the core functions that the Commissioner is strong on the local-State Public Health partnership. One way to support this is to insure that we put in comments for any proposed regulations concerning local public health.

Committee Reports:

Personnel Sub-Committee: Lenny Izzo

- There is nothing new to report.

Equipment/Acquisition/Training Sub-Committee: Sandi Knipe

- Everything is pretty much outlined in the Program Coordinator update.
- We should have some leftover money from some projects which can be used for purchases such as extra radio batteries. If anyone else has suggestions for things we can buy please let us know.

Strategic Planning Sub-Committee: Tom Purcell

- Chris mentioned that one of the potential issues that Strategic Planning could address is how to continue the core functions of Public Health and to keep Public Health solidified. He solicited any input from committee members as to other tasks that could be addressed also.

MRC Sub-Committee: Jamie Terry

- Lois said that the April 16th meeting was cancelled and there was nothing new to report.
- Phil mentioned the recently announced MOU between the American Red Cross and the MRCs.
- Shawn stated that MRC trainings had been a little sporadic but were picking up lately.
- Details of the Red Cross-MRC MOU were being worked out. Nicole Valentine has been an active player in this process. The MOU outlines a closer partnership between the two organizations to include trainings and cross-certifications. Trish pointed out those MRC members wishing to take Red Cross courses were being asked to sign up on the Red Cross website as per the MOU.

Radio Communications Overview: Dave Clemmons, City of Worcester

- Dave gave a brief but comprehensive talk on the characteristics and proper operation on the Motorola CP200 radios and their batteries. Paper and electronic copies of his briefing were made available for all coalition members.

Challenges Faced During the Recent Ice Storm: Peter MacDonald, Sunrise Assisted Living Facility, Leominster MA

- Peter gave an excellent presentation on his preparations for a possible emergency situation in his facility and how it prepared him and his facility residents for their forced evacuation.

New Business:

- Paul McNulty briefed the committee on the upcoming MEHA Annual Meeting on June 4, 2009 at the Danversport Yacht Club. The meeting will discuss Sheltering Operations.

Lenny Izzo made a motion the Region 2 pay the registration cost for any coalition members who wanted to attend this meeting. Paul McNulty seconded this motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Old Business:

- None.

The meeting adjourned at 11:58am.