

## Franklin County Regional Emergency Management Committee

June 25, 2024

### Virtual Meeting Notes

**Attendance:** Jacquie Kelley (VDH), Keith Ellery (NMC), Pat McLaughlin (VT Hazmat), Cathy Ainsworth (Fairfield TA), Sharon Bousquet (Highgate TA/EMD), Zach Borst (Public) and Shaun Coleman (NRPC).

Shaun began the meeting at 1:00 pm followed by roll call. There was no quorum. He noted that Reg Beliveau, DFS called to say he would not be presenting due to a prior commitment.

**Adjustments to the Agenda:** None.

**Minutes Approval:** Tabled.

#### **Vermont Haz Chem Program – Patrick McLaughlin, Chief VT Hazmat Response Team**

Chief McLaughlin is the Chief of the state's Hazmat Response Team and he is also the Tier II Program Manager. The team is housed in the Division of Fire Safety. He provided a brief history of the state's HAZMAT response team. The team has 18 HAZMAT trailers positioned in local fire departments around the State including one in Swanton and near Chimney Corners. These trailers contain equipment which may be used for operations level HAZMAT response as well as decontamination. He gave an overview of resources, team capabilities, educational and training programs and the Hazchem fund.

Recent activities include purchasing spectrometers, community education and awareness, and adding 2 drones what were recently put into service. The drones were purchased through grants. This morning, the team responded to two hazmat incidents; one involving propane and the other involving hydrochloric acid. Both were mitigated.

The Chief discussed the GIS (ESRI) web-based Vermont Tier II Dashboard which can be accessed with any web browser. It contains Tier data that is updated annually. The dashboard shows the location of facilities storing hazardous chemicals as well as average daily quantities stored at the facility. The data comes from Tier II reports submitted by facilities. Facility contact information is also provided and other information provided by the facility can be viewed. Users can select facilities by town and the dashboard will display all reporting facilities on a map. The program has a lot of capacity and additional features can be added such as the location of critical infrastructure that can be used to identify risks within a certain distance of a Tier II facility or downwind of a facility. The dashboard will not be publicly available. Fire Departments can request access but will need an ESRI license. Email Chief McLaughlin to request access.

Keith introduced himself as NMC's new Safety and Emergency Preparedness Manager. His background is with higher education and law enforcement. He asked about training and resources for Northwest Medical Center. The Chief offered to bring the decon trailer over to NMC so can see what capabilities the team has. There was a brief discussion about hosting a First Receiver training for clinicians and other hospital staff who may receive or treat patients contaminated with chemical, biological or radioactive materials.

Zach noted he was the EM for UVM and had professional EM experience with UAS. He asked about the drone model, capabilities and discussed public safety flying exemptions. Pat noted they are Matrice 350s with infrared, 200x zoom and to be used strictly for hazmat incidents.

### **VEM Updates**

Shaun reported the Harry Schoppmann was unable to attend the meeting. Harry emailed a report for the meeting that Shaun will forward.

- Hazard Mitigation Funding available state-wide (agenda item later in the meeting)
- Hot Weather Preparedness information for local EMDs and the public
- NOAA's National Hurricane Center released its hurricane outlook recently. The Atlantic/Caribbean basin is expected to experience an above-normal season.
- The 2024 Emergency Preparedness Conference is scheduled for September 10 and 11 at Lake Morey Resort in Fairlee. <https://vem.vermont.gov/conference>
- EM trainings require a Learning Management System (LMS) account. If you don't have an account, you can register for one at the following link: <https://vermont.csod.com/selfreg/register.aspx?c=%255e%255e%255eQGm2wxcSUvINsXvXjRYs1A%253d%253d>. Contact Hillarie Scott, State Training Administrator at [Hillarie.Scott@vermont.gov](mailto:Hillarie.Scott@vermont.gov) if you need help registering with LMS.
- Visit the Vermont Training Calendar for viewing and registering classes and workshops <https://vem.vermont.gov/training/trainingprogram>
- VT- Alert Manager Training: This training is now an anytime training in the LMS. We will still host the virtual live training. You can take this training at the following link on the LMS: <https://vermont.csod.com/ui/lms-learning-details/app/video/588bdf66-6e68-490e-aa8b-18ccdd115184>

### **Vermont Health Department and NWVT MRC - Jacquie Kelley, St. Albans District EP VDH**

Jaquie Kelley provided updates from the Health Department and MRC. The Health Department has been involved locally with partner organizations (NMC, United Way, CVOEO) with issues around housing and homelessness. The changes to Vermont's emergency shelter (motel voucher) program, there are more individuals and families experiencing homelessness.

May 31st was Heat Safety Awareness Day. We will continue to see an increase in the number of extreme heat days and overall higher temperatures which will lead to heat-related illnesses. The Health Department's hot weather website can assist communities with preparing for hot weather. <https://www.healthvermont.gov/environment/climate-health/hot-weather>

The NWVT MRC can now deliver Stop the Bleed training to any business, municipality or school that is interested. They have two training tracts: one is geared more toward the medical response side and one for lay people.

The NWVT MRC is also gearing up for the summer safety public education program. They will be assembling summer safety kits and handing them out to visitors at state parks this winter. The education program components include tick safety, heat illness, poison ivy, sumac and oak identification, sun safety, etc. Cathy asked Jacquie to contact The Fairfield Community Center Association coordinator for providing a booth during their summer concert series.

### **Hazard Mitigation Grant Program**

Shaun provided an overview of the funding available through VT Emergency Management. There is \$90 million of federal funding is now available to Vermont municipalities to implement hazard mitigation measures that reduce future flood risk. These funds are available to all Vermont towns with no local match requirement. The state will cover the match.

The Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) provides funds to municipalities to harden infrastructure against future flood losses and for voluntary buyouts of homes in flood plains. Municipalities can submit letters of intent by August 16. The state and FEMA will review the list of projects submitted, determine whether the projects are eligible and then invite those with eligible projects to submit full grant applications. Currently, there are more grant requests than funding available do the application process will be competitive. More information may be found at [www.vem.vermont.gov/fundI ng/mitigation](http://www.vem.vermont.gov/fundI ng/mitigation).

Cathy said that the Town of Fairfield would be interested in submitting for a flood mitigation project for the Ryan Road. This was a project that had been submitted to FEMA before (under PDM funding) and the town was told they would be receiving the award but never did. The project is nearly identical to the mitigation project that was completed a few years prior on Brusso Road which parallels Ryan Road. Cathy and Shaun agreed to meet about the project feasibility.

**Officers (Chair, Vice Chair) & Committee Reps**

Tabled.

**Other Business**

Keith reviewed the generator project NMC has been involved in. He noted the hospital is interested in conducting an emergency exercise involving area municipalities and first response agencies.

**Public Comment**

No comment.

The meeting ended at approximately 2:15 pm.