

**Franklin County Regional Emergency Management Committee Meeting  
December 18, 2024; Virtual Meeting via MS Teams**

Attendance: Christine Forde (CCRPC), Shaun Coleman (NRPC), Michael LaChance (BFD), Julie Benedict (VEM), Harry Schoppmann (VEM), Jay Perkinson (Buel's Gore), Lissa Laramie (St. George), Seth Lasken (Red Cross), Aaron Collette (WFD Chief), August Toynton (VDH), Bob Henneberger (ARC/RACES), Dorian Evan (UVM), Darren Schibler (CCRPC), Elaine Wang (Winooski TM), M.Genzlinger (FFx VFD), Sara Muskin (CCRPC), Melissa Tesser (Richford), Keith Ellery (NMC), S. Lovelette (Enosburg Falls/Town), M. Lawless (Shelburne Town Manager), Dave Attig (VTGas), and Michaela Foody (VEM).

**Welcome and Introductions**

The meeting began at 9:00 a.m. There was no quorum. The meeting was held concurrently with Chittenden County REMC for efficiency from having similar agendas.

**Adjustments to the Agenda**

None.

**Binary Blizzard After Action Report– Julie Benedict, VEM**

Julie provided an overview of the AAR for Binary Blizzard held in October. The exercise was to test the state response for a cyber attack and power outage event from ice/snow. There were 170 active players. The deadline to address areas of improvement is October 2025.

The strengths included:

- Operational coordination among Federal, State and Local partners. Clear objects were made. Relationships were excellent.
- Intel and information sharing was good and included a robust communications strategy. Information dissemination was excellent.

Areas of improvement included:

- Formalization of agreements. Need to draft policies, plans and procedures for clear framework and exercise them.
- Activation of EOC staff could be improved during power outages. EOC staff need to have a plan in place when power is out while at home.
- Succession of EOC leadership is not established. Need to elevate section chiefs to assume Director's role if Director is out.
- Some RPCs need training in active roles during incidents to understand what to do. Need to hold more frequent local liaison training.
- Need more awareness for EOC staffing around Coordinated Response Advisory Board (CRAB). CRAB includes Agency Representatives, Commissioners, etc. Need to educate on what roles and responsibilities for CRAB.
- DR4744 – August 3-5, 2023 (Addison County) – Severe storms and flooding.
- Undeclared declaration – December 2023 – High winds.
- DR4770 – January 9 – 13, 2024 – Severe Winter Storm.
- DR4816 – June 22 - 24/24 (Stowe and Walden) – Flooding.
- DR 4810 – July 9 – July 11, 2024 – (TS Beryl) Severe Storm, flooding, landslides, and mudslides.
- TBD – July 29 – July 31, 2024 - Severe storms and flooding event. The Governor submitted a Federal Major Disaster Declaration Request to FEMA on 8/28/24 for damages in Caledonia, Essex and Orleans Counties for Individual and Public Assistance.

Elaine asked about whether the issue with State EOC is about losing power at the site. Julie replied the issue is about activation staff.

51 Harry listed the CRAB representatives including the Director of VEM and the Commissioner of Public Safety and noted  
52 that it is not a well-known group.

53  
54 Julie noted the state is applying for funding to host a rail derailment exercise in the northern part of the state in 2025 at a  
55 location TBD. The plan is to involve New Hampshire and Maine. More information will be forthcoming.

56  
57 **FEMA Planning Guides – Dan Beckmann, FEMA**

58 Dan gave a presentation on various guides FEMA makes available to communities regarding emergency management. He  
59 just moved to Burlington and is interested in being a resource to local agencies and communities. Currently FEMA is  
60 looking at the Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (THIRA) that was prepared by the state. Cyber  
61 incident management is high on the list.

62  
63 Existing guides that were released in 2024 may be found here: [FEMA.gov.plan](https://www.fema.gov/plan). Recent updates included Putting People  
64 First Guide (Equity) and Engaging Faith Based and Community Organizations. Something new for FEMA is that they  
65 released a recorded webinar for the new Climate Adaptation Planning Guide for Emergency Managers.

66  
67 A question was asked if printed copies were available. FEMA rarely prints them now. Harry said he will be bringing some  
68 guides to communities during the LEMP update process.

69  
70 **LEMP Changes and VEM Update – Harry Schoppmann, VEM**

71 Harry provided a PowerPoint presentation on the new LEMP changes and methodology. The state hired 3 more regional  
72 coordinators to work with municipalities. The regional coordinators will be assisting municipalities with updating LEMPs.

73  
74 Changes include but not limited to:

- 75 • Identify local shelters and remove regional shelters.
- 76 • Identify REMC representatives.
- 77 • Identify what is not required versus what is required.
- 78 • Option for redacting personal information when the plan is shared with other agencies.
- 79 • Regional Coordinator using Word to update plans.
- 80 • Regional Coordinators will meet with every town they cover to help update their plans.
- 81 • Less NIMS typing.
- 82 • June 1 deadline.
- 83 • Modernized terminology for population references.

84  
85 There was a discussion about sheltering. Shelters must be identified but many towns do not have the capacity, training to  
86 open a day shelter or even an overnight shelter. Harry said the state will be providing shelter guidance documents to  
87 assist towns. Harry noted that towns are required to designate and open a shelter as needed according to statute. He  
88 would find out if overnight shelters had to be identified as a requirement. At the town level there are mutual aid options  
89 when a town is overwhelmed. A neighboring town might have a space to open. If a town decides to open a shelter, they  
90 should notify the State Duty Officer. If a town has capacity issues with a shelter, they can call VEM for assistance and VEM  
91 can offer guidance. If it is just a few individuals the Agency of Human Services has motel vouchers they can offer.  
92 Regional shelter requests can be made for larger populations, but they could take hours to open due to the amount of  
93 coordination involved.

94  
95 There was a question as to whether a town can get reimbursed for opening a shelter. Harry replied that it depends on  
96 the scale of disaster. If it is declared Federal Disaster, then there are some elements that may be eligible for  
97 reimbursement for opening a shelter. There must be plans and policies ahead of time for opening a shelter such as  
98 reimbursing volunteers for assisting with opening a shelter. If it is a just a local incident such as a structure fire, people  
99 who are affected will need a place to go.

101 A question was asked if pet management at a shelter was a requirement. Harry said it is encouraged but not a  
102 requirement. People will not leave their pets behind. Sometime a doggy daycare in town will take in pets during a local  
103 disaster. That kind of arrangement should be made prior to any disaster. VT Disaster Animal Response Team ([VDART](#))  
104 could also assist. Call the duty officer to see if [VDART](#) is available.  
105

106 Bob noted that the Red Cross often can provide motel and basic supplies for individuals and families displaced by fires.  
107 The Red Cross is limited on the number of shelters they can open due to availability of resources. If there is a large-scale  
108 disaster like the July 2023 and July 2024 floods, then other Red Cross volunteers from neighboring states can come in.  
109 Their availability depends on if Red Cross volunteers are not affected by the same disaster. Sometimes the Red Cross can  
110 loan a town shelter cots and materials without sending volunteers.  
111

112 The new plan will be on the new website. There is an adoption form and the plan. There is a short form and a long form.  
113 The long form is more detailed vs the short form which is filling out boxes. The short form is simple and straightforward.  
114 Emily will be sending a super detailed report about all the changes tomorrow.  
115

116 Michaela Foody introduced herself as the new Regional Coordinator for Franklin, Grand Isle and Lamoille Counties. She  
117 was the EMD for the Town of Milton.  
118

119 Harry reported:

- 120 • ICS 300 training in Camp Johnson in January.
- 121 • Local EMD training (4 hours each day) on January 14 and 16.
- 122 • Annual Spring Flood Videos will be available in early January.
- 123 • Annual Spring Flood Q&A workshop in February.  
124

#### 125 **Medical Reserve Corps – (Franklin, Chittenden, and Grand Isle) – August Toynton, VDH**

- 126 • August reported that the Chittenden County MRC merged with the Franklin and Grand Isle MRC (NWVT MRC).
- 127 • 250 volunteers mostly with medical backgrounds.
- 128 • Available to assist municipalities and NGOS with blue sky planning for events within the community. During gray  
129 skies, the Team supports communities with response and recovery efforts such as serving in the multi-agency  
130 resources centers or community shelters.
- 131 • Seeking members on the newly formed advisory board that formed.
- 132 • Applied for an Operational Readiness Grant through the state for \$10,000 to support team efforts such as  
133 providing basic emergency kits items for individuals with disabilities and functional access needs and reflective  
134 vests for the homeless.
- 135 • Helping with a no-cost to low-cost dental clinic in Franklin and Grand Isle area.  
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137 Harry noted that EMDs must call the State Duty Officer to request activation of the MRC during emergencies.  
138

#### 139 **Other Business**

140 None.  
141

#### 142 **Adjourn**

143 Meeting adjourned at 10:34 a.m.