

CHITTENDEN COUNTY, VERMONT
LOCAL EMERGENCY PLANNING COMMITTEE #1
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Meeting notes - February 13, 2018

Present: Chair Al Barber, Hinesburg Fire; Vice Chair Mike Collins, Global Foundries; Judy Dunn, Burlington Police/Fire; Bob Henneberger, CERT/RACES; Prescott Nadeau, Williston Fire; Natalie Elvidge, VEM; Andy Johnson, ENPRO; Kate Hammond, VDH; Andy Squires, Richmond Rescue; Josh Estey, CSWD; Zachary Borst, UVM EM; John Berino, UVMMC; Mary Thompson, Milton Public Safety Department; Cathy Hamilton, General Dynamics; Dave Attig, Vermont Gas; Christine Hallquist, Vermont Electric Co-op; Lee Krohn, CCRPC.

The meeting was called to order at 0900. There were no changes to the agenda, nor public comment on items not on the agenda. Introductions around the table were offered, and the notes from the January 9, 2018 meeting and site visit were accepted by consensus.

Prescott Nadeau, Firefighter and Public Information Officer for the Williston Fire Department, described helpful practices and issues to watch out for in use of social media for emergency services and allied partners. Used well and with regular postings to keep followers engaged, social media can be useful in promotion, education, and recruitment. It can be useful to have policies in place for who can post to a site and what can be posted, being pro active with content, and having a 'verified page' so users may know this is actually your site. Before posting something, "THINK": is it true, helpful, inspiring, necessary, and kind. See @bangormainepolice for an example of a site. Nadeau maintains multiple sites for Williston Fire, including Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Like any tool, it can be used well, or not. Don't be afraid, learn how if you don't already know how, be clear about purpose and policies, and put it to good use for your agency.

Natalie Elvidge, Homeland Security Program Manager, offered background about changes at Vermont Emergency Management, and that Homeland Security is now separate again and under Vermont State Police, with its own emphasis on counter terrorism. She described certain grant programs with a due date of 2/28/18, and that current priorities included critical infrastructure, cybersecurity, small unmanned aerial aircraft ("drones"), and preventative programs related to radioactive/nuclear material. The application process was also reviewed.

Christine Hallquist, CEO of Vermont Electric Co-op, gave an informative presentation about the electric grid generally; issues, concerns, and complexities that have increased exponentially in the past 10-15 years; the importance of monitoring weather, solar activity, and cyber concerns, as well as maintaining redundant data systems, and other matters on both micro and macro scales; and their use of social media for public education. VEC has a clear protocol for sequencing power restoration and participates in a national mutual aid system for major incidents or outages. They offer training for fire departments and can shut down power in a specific area very rapidly upon request.

Hallquist offered a useful “safety minute” on matters of voltage gradients and step potential in case of a car accident into a power pole where lines may be down. If you can, stay in the car until first responders arrive. If you must exit the car, jump out, do not touch the car, land on both feet, and shuffle slowly away.

LEPC partner updates:

Krohn offered summaries of the recent First Net workshop, SERC meeting, and need to re-register for VT-ALERT, as the State is now using a new vendor for this emergency alert system. Upon request, to keep organizational matters in order between LEPC and CCRPC, Collins moved approval of the administrative services agreement for this fiscal year; seconded by Henneberger and approved unanimously. The representatives present from entities that must file Tier II Extremely Hazardous Substance reports were thanked for participating. By federal law, all such EHS reporters must participate in LEPCs, but few do. That said, if all such entities in Chittenden County were present, we’d need a much larger meeting space.

Borst: there is a recent outbreak of mumps at UVM (and at SMC, as well); an epidemiological study is underway, as symptoms are very similar to the flu (itself widespread this season).

Henneberger: Quiet at the Red Cross, but the Disaster Action Team has been very busy recently, with 15-20 incidents in the last month due to fires.

Bond: nothing to report.

Estey: nothing to report.

Thompson: Taylor Yeates is the new Public Safety Director in Milton; Thompson will be assisting, as well. They are working with Kate Hammond toward a Closed POD as part of their emergency operations/preparedness activities.

Berino: The Medical Center is busy and full, due to a hard flu season and other matters. Challenges abound with new initiatives for health care coalitions and changing grant funding protocols.

Hallquist noted that motor vehicle/power pole accidents have been 3X normal, due to icy roads.

Johnson: ENPRO is hiring hazardous waste technicians, if anyone knows any prospects.

Attig: VT GAS had record throughputs in January, due to the cold snap. They are offering a safety seminar on April 4 in South Burlington for contractors and other interested parties; breakfast will be served. Register online if interested.

Upcoming meeting dates and topics were reviewed. Then, with no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 1130 hours. The next meeting will at CCRPC offices on Tuesday, March 13, 2018 at 0900.

Respectfully submitted by Lee Krohn, AICP

Please note: LEPC meeting agendas, minutes, and other information may also be found at <http://www.ccrpcvt.org/about-us/committees/local-emergency-planning-committee/>