

CHITTENDEN COUNTY, VERMONT
LOCAL EMERGENCY PLANNING COMMITTEE #1
110 West Canal Street, Suite 202
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Meeting notes – August 13, 2019

Present:

Al Barber, Hinesburg Fire Department
Zachary Borst, UVM Emergency Management
Josh Estey, CSWD and Shelburne Fire
Kate Hammond, UVM Medical Center
Bob Henneberger, Red Cross and RACES
Ashley Bishop, VTrans District 5
Andy Squire, Richmond Rescue
Steve Cushing, St. Michaels College
Matt Ward, American Red Cross
David Attig, Vermont Gas
Max Kennedy, Vermont Emergency Management
Christine Forde, Marshall Distel, Regina Mahony - CCRPC

Al Barber called the meeting to order at 0900. There were no changes to the agenda, nor public comment on items not on the agenda. Introductions were made. There were no comments on last month's minutes.

Presentation/discussion with Chief Sandy Ladd, Colchester Center Volunteer Fire Company and Battalion Chief Erik Haversang, St. Michaels Fire and Rescue, on the Fire at J&B International Truck Center in Colchester

Chief Sandy Ladd and Chief Erik Haversang presented a timeline and discussion of a fire that took place on November 28, 2018 at J&B International Trucking in Colchester. Erik reviewed a map of the facility location which is in a highly visible and congested area near I-89 Exit 16. The location is also environmentally sensitive and as a result HazMat was called to the scene early to contain contamination.

The following is a general timeline of events.

- 0927 -- The first call was received and identified the incident as a natural gas leak
- 0928 – One minute later another call was received identifying the incident as a structure fire. Colchester Center Volunteer Fire Company (CCVFC), Mallets Bay Fire Department (MBFD), Colchester Rescue Squad (CRS), and Winooski Fire Department (WFD) were dispatched to the scene

- 0931 – 3 minutes later the Police Department confirmed that the building was on fire with explosions
- 0933 – The Winooski Fire Chief was the first on scene and determined the need to go to another alarm because of the volume of fire
- 0935 – It was thought that there might be a natural gas truck inside the structure. 2nd and 3rd Alarms were requested
- 0938 -- HazMat was requested
- 0945 – St. Michaels Fire arrived on scene and assumed command
- 1000 – The third alarm arrived on the scene
- 1130 – The fire was under control

The facility had multiple garage bays full of vehicles, equipment and tires and there were multiple vehicles on fire inside building. The fire department was initially unsure of exactly what was on fire and were concerned about a boiling liquid expanding vapor explosion (BLEVE). The Emergency Response Guidebook was used in the consideration of an evacuation of up to a 1-mile radius for a natural gas leak. It was determined, however, that a compressed natural gas vehicle was on fire and evacuation was not necessary. All employees evacuated safely.

I-89 was closed temporarily by the Vermont State Police. VT Gas and Green Mountain Power both shut down services in the area.

The building was construction with a firewall separate the garage from the office space and the firewall effectively kept the fire from spreading into the office space.

The response involved 55 fire fighters from 9 departments.

The Vermont Hazardous Materials team contain runoff on site and decontaminate the equipment. They remained on site until 5 pm.

A lot of equipment was lost due to contamination. The insurance claim for damaged equipment was over \$100,000. Colchester has a hazardous materials ordinance managed by the Department of Planning and Zoning that allows them to re-coup equipment lost and cost of time. It took several months to compile a complete inventory of everything that was damaged for the insurance claim. This is a significant issue for small fire departments because they have very limited budgets and cannot absorb the cost of damaged equipment.

On scene challenges –

- Radio communications across different departments
- Establishing a timeline of the event – when would the fire be contained enough to reopen the interstate
- Media – the Police Department did the initial communications, but the media wanted to speak to a fire department representative
- A front-end loader was needed for salvage

- › Clothing for decontaminated members
- › Community impacts including having the interstate closed for 2 hours.
- › St. Michaels College concerned students and parents
- › Classes at Winooski schools were held inside
- › Environmental concerns from contaminants

Questions – Did they consider opening an Emergency Operations Center? Answer -- No. If evacuations had been necessary, an EOC might have needed.

Question – What would have triggered the decision to evacuate. Answer – it there had been a propane delivery truck inside the building.

Question – What lessons were learned? Answer – Would go to more alarms faster, but maybe stagger arrivals so everyone doesn't arrive at once. Also, as more departments respond there may be a need to use a different communication channel.

Discussion item -- Should alternative fuel vehicles be worked on in a different location?

VTrans district 5 had trailers with interstate closure packages but VSP did not contact District 5.

Update on TIER II Lists and Maps to be sent to first responders in each town for review

CCRPC staff updated the committee that the Tier II lists and maps that are going to be sent to the fire departments in each town are almost ready to be mailed. CCRPC has requested some additional 2018 information from the SERC and will be able to complete the lists and maps when that information is received.

That group thought that the short version listing only facility names and locations would be use for quickly identifying non-reporters.

It was also discussed that it would be useful to explain what the fees collected through the Tier II program are used for.

It was discussed that it would be useful to make the information compatible with Active 911 and that paper and digital formats would be useful especially to new fire fighters.

Request VEM to come to a future meeting and discuss their vision for the Tier II/LEPC program.

Continued discussion on Local Emergency Planning Committee Response Plan for LEPC#1

We did receive news that we were awarded funds to complete an Emergency Response Plan. This will be discussed in more detail in future meetings.

Project updates

UVM has purchased a new vehicle barrier system for events. It was purchased for graduation but is mobile and will be made available through agreements with local communities. The

system can shut down a 4-lane road in both directions in addition to have other uses such as partial closures. It can be deployed in 20 minutes.

St. Michaels College – the first wave of students has arrived. Buildings on north campus have been sold because they are no longer in use and Founders Hall will be taken down.

Richmond has a new police chief – Larry Muldoon

Al Barber adjourned the meeting at 1100.

The next LEPC meeting will be held on September 10th at the CCPRC offices in Winooski.

Respectfully submitted by Christine Forde

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/>