

1 **Chittenden County Regional Emergency Management Committee**

2 **Wednesday, October 19, 2022**

3 **9:00 – 10:30**

4 **Meeting Notes**

5
6 **Attendees:**

7 REMC Members

8 Bolton – Amy Grover, Emergency Services Rep

9 Charlotte – Karina Warshaw

10 Colchester – Assistant Chief Seth Lasker, Emergency Services Rep

11 Essex Junction – Regina Mahony, City Manager and Ashley Snellenberger, Essex Junction

12 Communications Director

13 Huntington – Barbara Elliot, EMD

14 Jericho – Aaron Little, Emergency Services Rep

15 Milton – Michaela Foody, EMD

16 South Burlington – Steven Locke, EMD

17 Shelburne – Lee Krohn, Emergency Services Rep

18 Winooski – Elaine Wang, EMD

19 Others

20 Vermont Emergency Management – Taiga Christie, Ian Kilburn

21 University of Vermont - John Marcus, Emergency Manager

22 Vermont Department of Health - Derek Cronin, Emergency Preparedness Public Health
23 Specialist

24 Red Cross, RACES (Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service)/ARES (Amateur Radio
25 Emergency Service) – Bob Henneberger

26 Vermont Air National Guard -- SMSgt James Fitzgerald, Instillation Emergency Manager

27 Vermont Gas - David Attig, Safety & Compliance Manager

28 UVM Medical - Kate Hammond, Emergency Management Program Manager

29 Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission – Christine Forde, Pam Brangan, Dan
30 Albrecht

31
32 **Public Safety Authority Update, Chief Steven Locke**

33 This is an effort of five communities in Chittenden County – Burlington, South Burlington,
34 Colchester, Williston, and Winooski – to form a public safety dispatch center. It has been in
35 the works for several years.

36 **Current Status**

- 37 † About \$3 million in capital is needed to upfit the building and buy equipment. Just over \$2
38 million has been collected so far from grant sources and municipal contributions. The
39 funds will cover all costs from construction to furniture.
- 40 † Working on hiring an executive director. The first round of interviews were held last week
41 and the second round will happen soon.
- 42 † Working on securing an architect for design build options for the facility.

1 Working towards fall of 2023 operation.

2 **VT-Alert -- Ian Kilburn, VEM VT Alert Administrator**

3 Vermont Emergency Management launched VT-ALERT in 2013 as a means of reaching
4 Vermonters directly with emergency information via their cell phones, email, or home
5 phones. The system allows users to sign up and choose which alerts they receive, how
6 they receive them, and for which specific geographic area.

7 Municipalities can adopt VT-Alert and can dispatch alerts within municipal boundaries to
8 all people who have signed up to get messages. Many communities are already on VT-
9 Alert and VEM is trying to expand the program.

10 Municipalities can also set up groups and send messages to predefined sets of contacts. This
11 can replace phone trees and send out one message to the whole group. There is a way to
12 verify that the message was received.

13 **Types of Public Broadcasts**

- 14 † Public broadcasts to all web-registered subscribers -- gets public safety information out to
15 as many people as possible using email, text message, mobile or land line phone. Also, to
16 twitter and Facebook.
- 17 † Landline phone notifications using e911 -- for life safety notifications.
- 18 † IPAWS – Integrated Public Alert Warning System. Only the state can issue warnings to this
19 group. Have to go through VEM but municipalities can request this type of message be
20 sent out from Watch Officer. Two types of alerts --
 - 21 – Emergency Alert system – over broadcast radio and television.
 - 22 – Wireless Emergency Alert (WEA) System – geotargets cell phones within an area. All
23 cell phones are WEA compatible. If you are within a certain area you will get a message
24 pushed to your cell phone.

25 Permitted Notifications – long list. If the notification involves public safety, it is most likely
26 allowable. Weather notifications are usually handled by the National Weather Service but a
27 municipality can send reminders such as making sure vents are clear.

28 Notifications not allowed include things like routine meetings, reminders to vote, event
29 advertisements, and town meeting notices.

30 The Agency of Transportation monitors state road closures. If there is a closure impacting
31 state highways let them know at 802-828-2648. VTrans will send VT-Alerts on state routes.

32 Municipalities can request that VEM send out a VT-Alert. Contact the Watch Officer.

33 Questions – Does VT-Alert support other languages?

1 Answer – Right now VT-Alert is English only but working on translation in up to 9 languages.
2 The subscriber would sign up for the language they want. Aim to have this operational in the
3 summer of 2023.

4 Question – Can a municipality find out how many subscribers there are in their municipality?
5 Answer – Yes, send a request to Ian. Can give residents and businesses.

6 **Local Liaison Reporting Process -- Taiga Christie, Southern Regional Coordinator, VEM**

7 The Local Liaison reporting process is an information gathering tool of VEM with the goal of
8 determining the resources municipalities need for response after an incident and begin to
9 determine recovery needs.

10 Generally, this happens after life safety issues have been address and stabilized.

11 It is a component of the State Emergency Operations Center and within the Situational
12 Awareness Section. The goal is to get an early snapshot of the incident’s impact on
13 individuals and households. This process sets the stage for federal assistance programs such
14 as Public Assistance or Individual Assistance.

15 Regional Planning Commissions fill the role of Local Liaison and are deployed by VEM. RPCs
16 are contacted by VEM and requested to collect certain information in a specified timeframe,
17 and they submit that information to VEM.

18 RPCs contact the three points of contact from the LEMP to answer a series of questions
19 about the town response to the incident and what damages have been reported. If state
20 assistance is needed municipalities are directed to call the Watch Officer.

21 Christine noted that District 5 also collects road damage information and CCRPC and District
22 5 are in communication to coordinate this effort. The District will contact the municipalities
23 prior to a predicted storm event to remind them that damage reports are needed for
24 assistance to be provided. The District will visit all storm damage areas to document the
25 damage and provide preliminary cost estimates.

26 Comment – Bob Henneberger noted that the questionnaire doesn’t ask whether
27 communication equipment is functional and doesn’t ask if RACES (Radio Amateur Civil
28 Emergency Service) should be activated. Christine asked how RACES get activated and Bob
29 noted that VEM activates RACES and volunteers can move equipment to where it is needed.
30 It was noted that this could be a useful future tabletop exercise.

31 **Chittenden County REMC Approvals – Pending Quorum**

32 Christine noted that we can’t approve these items today because we don’t have a quorum.
33 Quorum is defined as 50% of the members, and each municipality has two members. VEM is
34 reviewing the quorum requirements and may proposed changes.

1 Members may designate their other member as their proxy, and this would count towards
2 quorum. Barbara asked if a perpetual proxy could be designated and Christine said yes, she
3 thinks this is allowable. Christine will send sample language that members can use to make
4 this designation.

5 Regarding the Regional Plan Barbara suggested that the electric, telecommunication and
6 internet services be added.

7 **Vermont Emergency Management Updates, Taiga Christie**

8 VEM is planning for the next statewide catastrophic exercise scheduled for October 15-17,
9 2024. The exercise is called binary blizzard and VEM would like to have municipalities
10 participate in the exercise by activating local emergency operations centers and exchanging
11 information with, and making information requests to, the State Emergency Operations
12 Center. Stay tuned for more information.

13 The Local Emergency Management and Emergency Operations Center Enhancement grant is
14 open and provides 50% funding for upgrades to local emergency operations centers.
15 Information can be found at <https://vem.vermont.gov/funding/empg>

16 **Next Meeting**

17 This group is meeting quarterly on the third Wednesday at 9 am. The next meeting would be
18 on January 18, at 9 am. Christine questioned if we should revisit this day and time. Barbara
19 noted that people who are not present would not get this message, so Barbara suggested
20 that the question be posted to all members.

21 **Meeting adjourned at 10:15**