LOCAL EMERGENCY PLANNING COMMITTEE

McElroy Room, McCulloch Building

182 Green Street, Weymouth, MA

September 14, 2021, 9:00 a.m.

Minutes

**PRESENT:**  John Mulveyhill, Chairman

Charlotte Jenkins, Emergency Management

Daniel McCormack, Health Department

James Mannion, MEMA

Jonathan Tose, Citizen Representative

Stephen White, Citizen Representative

Brian Pomodoro, South Shore Health/EMS

Mary Heinrichs, WETC

Joan Cooper-Zack, South Shore Health

Lt. Richard Abbadessa, Weymouth Police

Lt. Jeff Wall, Weymouth Fire

Ed Amrock, DPW

Mike Faiella, School Department

Robin Magner, Weymouth Health Department

Sara Nelson, MetroEast MRC

Pascale Burga, District 1 Councilor

Chairman Mulveyhill called the meeting of the Local Emergency Planning Committee to order at 9:00 a.m.

**INTRODUCTIONS:**

Attendees introduced themselves and their role with the committee.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Chairman Mulveyhill stated the committee has not met since November 2019 and the minutes from that meeting were approved remotely and will be emailed to the members.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

**Compressor Station:** Chairman Mulveyhill stated the compressor station continued construction during COVID-19 and went online one year ago. The town has completed an extensive emergency response plan. Chief Stark spearheaded that project. They recently put together the harbor division plan. There have been a few glitches at the station. They are staying on top of it and it is still a work in progress. There are many subgroups who worked on the plan and it needs updating, such as mutual aid pieces. Lt. Jeff Wall stated the Fire Department has had multiple walk throughs with the compressor station personnel and they will be scheduling their mutual aid partners to do a complete walkthrough of the site. They will also invite their EMS partners to participate as well.

Chairman Mulveyhill asked if there have been any recent demonstrations at the compressor station. Lt. Richard Abbadessa, Weymouth Police, stated there have not been any in some time. He follows the page of the opposition group to see what they are planning. He stated it has been at least a year since there have been any arrests.

James Mannion, MEMA, stated their dispatch station now has a communication plan so if they hear of anything happening at the compressor station they call Mr. Mulveyhill or any EMD in surrounding communities. They wanted to create a call tree to make sure everyone knows what is going on.

**Coronavirus Response:** Dan McCormack, Health Department, introduced the new Assistant Director, Robin Magner. He stated a large portion of their time has been taken up with learning about COVID-19 and doing contact tracing for the thousands of individuals who have tested positive. The two public health nurses have put in countless hours doing this work. Over the last year and a half, they had to learn all the restrictions and daily changes, educate businesses, and conduct enforcement. They were hoping in June this was done, but their numbers are currently up a little. In December and January, they participated in vaccination clinics and then the state decided they were no longer providing vaccines for clinics. They started working with South Shore Health, unfortunately, that did not pan out as the hospital was limited in obtaining vaccine as well. The state opted to use large clinics, which worked but was not as convenient for citizens. He stated they are now talking about possible booster vaccines and he is unsure if they will be able to participate in this with all the other work they are doing, including providing flu vaccines.

**Hazmat Incidents Since Last Meeting:** Mr. McCormack stated he is unaware of any Hazmat incidents since the last meeting.

**Tabletop Exercise by Massachusetts Maritime Students:** Chairman Mulveyhill stated at their last meeting, prior to COVID-19, they were working with Mass Maritime students to put together a tabletop exercise, which was going to be an incident at the compressor station. They did create that but were unable to run it. He stated they will look at that in the future and will see if it is feasible to run. He had several interns this past winter, spring, and summer and updated a lot of the plans they have. He was able to get Weymouth on the docket this fall for some students, who take a class to create an HSEEP approved tabletop exercise. The internship is their clinical and they run the exercise. He is hoping to do this in the spring, depending on the status of COVID-19.

**UPDATES:**

**MEMA:** James Mannion stated their COVID-19 response consisted of mainly distributing PPE. They are still getting PPE in due to contracts they signed. They had National Guard doing deliveries. He stated they are giving out a lot of money. They have an Emergency Management Performance grant that comes out every year. Every community is getting the same amount as the past. The Hazard Mitigation Grant Program is getting a $110 million dollar FEMA bonus which will be provided to communities for water management systems, culverts, generators for water pumps, and other items. This information will be available in a couple of weeks. The Hazardous Materials Emergency Planning Grant is for EPC’s. Every emergency planning committee is going to be eligible for up to $3000 to help put their hazardous materials response plan together.

He stated they are also preparing for weather emergencies. Tropical storm Henri took an unexpected track and it was a good practice for their response. He stated there have been four tornadoes recently with some damage.

**Weymouth Fire:** Lt. Jeff Wall stated COVID-19 provided challenges for the Fire Department as well. He thanked the state and South Shore Health for providing PPE and the Health Department for vaccinating members. He stated Station 2 will be opening as of October 1, 2021. This is important for response time. Three new pieces of apparatus have been provided to the department which is already in service. They just finished some boom training with Calpine which is designed for fuel and oil spills. They are in the process of doing a lithium battery study with Calpine, as they are looking to store lithium batteries at the compressor station and they want to understand the hazards involved. He stated in the fall every member of the department went to the Mass Firefighting Academy gas school training. They mirrored a scenario that may occur at the compressor station so they would be prepared if something were to happen there. He stated they are working with South Shore Health on mass decontamination unit to be prepared for any type of decontamination that may have to happen to protect the hospital.

**Weymouth Police:** Lt. Richard Abbadessa stated that Chief Grimes retired and Chief Fuller took over. They had a couple of dozen cases of COVID-19 on the department. They are now all wearing bodycams which are linked to a dashcam in the cruisers. This will provide accountability for both the public and the police. He stated with the loss of Harbormaster Paul Milone, natural resources (animal control) and the harbor patrol have been combined under

Lt. Morse, with two officers operating the boat. They also have a quad they use to patrol the parks.

**School Department:** Mike Faiella, who is a new member of the committee, stated he is just settling into his new role and does not have much to provide at this time. Chairman Mulveyhill stated the schools provide the emergency shelters in the town, along with the McCulloch building and the new library. He stated prior to COVID-19 there was a shift to getting away from using school buildings as shelters, however, with COVID-19 they had to revert back to that because of the space needed for social distancing. They also are responsible for the safety of the students and the evacuation of three schools within the vicinity of the compressor station. He stated the whole school district is impacted by the planning for the compressor station in the case of an evacuation. He stated there are also all hazard plans for each school building which he should become familiar with. Chairman Mulveyhill welcomed him to the committee and stated he can bring him up to speed in the future.

**South Shore Health System (SSH):** Joan Cooper Zack stated as a Red Cross shelter they have worked with many agencies to make plans for a shelter at Weymouth High School. They would like to create a more detailed plan given the large amount of people who could be impacted by an emergency. Chairman Mulveyhill stated they have received a $30,000 grant from the Homeland Security Department to assist with this and have gone out to bid to get a consultant. He stated there are a lot of pieces to this puzzle and this is more than they can handle on their own. He stated the Red Cross recently visited the high school and recertified the shelter. They are also going to look at the lower level of the library to see if it is feasible to use the large room as a shelter.

Ms. Cooper Zack stated over the last 560 days South Shore Hospital has been responding to COVID-19 and it is not over. She stated hospitals have been extremely busy and have had extreme census numbers. Patients are trying to catch up on care and hospitals are low on staff for the fact that people are leaving healthcare and this has had a significant impact. There is an increase in behavioral health population and increase in violence. Natural occurring hazards of concern include weather, such as high heat advisories. She provided information on the COVID-19 numbers at South Shore Hospital. Technological events that are of concern are water failure plan, sewer plans, HVAC, and supply chain management. She stated they were worried about Route 18 construction and how it would impact the hospital. There was a water main break a few weeks ago and they were in incident command for three to four days. Mass care, mass casualties, and hazardous materials events are of a high level of concern and they have conducted an exercise this year. Workplace violence and substance issues continue to be a huge concern. She stated the shelter plan is very important to this town and the region as a whole.

**EMS:** Brian Pomodoro stated a challenge has been staffing, however, they have managed to add staff and response units. The biggest challenge is maintaining training. EMS is a skilled base profession so they have been moving to a model with smaller, multiple trainings, in order to maintain EMT and paramedic skill levels. They are also adding skills, such as mass casualty training and professional development for managers. He stated they ran a COVID-19 swab station at Weymouth High School for six months, with tens of thousands of people going through. They have a mobile integrated health program which has been stellar for them. They manage people with chronic illnesses in their homes, rather than in the hospital, and they are finding better outcomes because they prefer to be in their homes, and this cuts down on the number of 911 calls generated.

**DPW:** Ed Amrock stated they also had issues with COVID-19 and had to implement split shifts and putting one person on a truck, which was challenging. They were able to get PPE from various sources but it was challenging. He stated water breaks have been terrible over the past two years and there are continuing sewer issues.

**Assistant Health Director:** Robin Magner introduced herself, as a new member of the committee. She stated she is very impressed with what she has heard so far at this meeting and is happy to be in Weymouth.

**Medical Reserve Corp (MRC):** Sara Nelson, also a new member, stated she has been in her role only a couple of weeks and is still learning. She manages volunteers in 19 communities. She will work with Dan McCormack and he will let her know if anyone needs volunteers, medical or nonmedical. They have 1400 people available and are there to serve their member communities.

Chairman Mulveyhill stated there are subgroups who are meeting regarding the compressor station plan and they will be inserting updated data into the plan on the town website. There is additional data that is available but cannot be published due to Homeland Security regulations. He provided an update on upcoming town events. There is a full-scale training exercise for fire department and harbormaster conducted by the Mass Department of Environmental Protection, which will be an oil spill drill, off of the Metropolitan Yacht Club in Braintree, on Thursday, October 7, 2021. This will be an all-day event.

Chairman Mulveyhill stated they will be going back to their quarterly meetings, held inhouse. As of this time, if there is a public hearing the meeting will have to be hybrid, conducted through WETC.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

*Motion to adjourn made by Sara Nelson at 10:00 a.m. Motion second by Dan McCormack and unanimously voted.*

Patricia McDonnell

Recording Secretary

Approved by:

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John Mulveyhill, Chairman

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_