

METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
National Capital Region Emergency Preparedness Council

Meeting Minutes

Date: October 10, 2007

Time: 2:00 P.M. – 4:00 P.M.

Place: Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments
Training Center, Lobby Level
777 North Capitol Street, NE
Washington, DC 20002

1. Call to Order, Introductions, Announcements and Approval of Minutes

Description from Agenda:

Gerry Connolly, Chairman, Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, Chair, Emergency Preparedness Council

Summary of Discussion:

Chair Connolly called the meeting to order at 2:22 P.M. He welcomed everyone and thanked them for their participation on the EPC. He apologized for the late start due to a late finish of the meeting of the COG Board. Chair Connolly asked for and received a motion to approve the EPC minutes from the July 11, 2007 meeting. The motion was approved unanimously by members of the EPC.

2. Briefing on Outcomes of Senior Leadership Seminar.

Description from Agenda:

At the request of the EPC, the Senior Leaders Seminar was held on September 20th to discuss how roles and responsibilities intersect when responding to incidents with regional impact. Mr. Williams will brief the committee from an elected official perspective followed by a limited roundtable discussion on outcomes and next steps.

Recommended Action: Receive SLS briefing and discussion

Summary of discussion:

Bruce Williams provided an overview of the seminar from an elected official viewpoint. More than 90 people attended, including approximately half of the people present at this meeting. The seminar provided an opportunity to discuss roles in a scenario-based format. The objective was to develop an understanding on the part of EPC members on the impact and response, especially communications and mutual aid, and the interaction of Federal, State, local and private actions.

The EPC members discussed their observations. Some saw a need to incorporate the media as soon as possible and to recognize the importance of private sector resources in the response. For the media, it is important to recognize the regional significance early and to deliver one message with the regional voice. The media will begin coverage immediately. We need to be ready to provide reliable sources or they will use sources such as cell phone reports and pictures. Mr. Connolly suggested that political leadership can fill the media's need for a response when agencies, such as law enforcement need to withhold information during investigation, by being timely and accurate, and avoiding false reassurances. Mr. Snyder

recommended developing a tight regional information structure pre-event to make sure everyone across the region gets the same message and instructions. Ms. Garvey commented that residents need to hear from their own elected officials also with local information. She suggested using the same scenario and focusing on the messages. Mr. Dinegar offered to work with broadcasters and COG to talk about crisis communication. Mr. Williams proposed a follow-up as suggested on media and messages. Dave Robertson said COG staff would develop a recommendation to hold similar seminars in the future that would include the media and the private sector.

3. Urban Area Work Group – Update on FY07 UASI Grant Award and NCR Project Plan Prioritization

Description from Agenda:

Steve Kral will provide an update on the FY07 UASI grant awarded September 10th. Mr. Griffin will provide a prioritized listing of the NCR Project Plans approved for FY07 UASI funding by the Senior Policy Group and the Chief Administrative Officers' Committee.

Recommended Action: Receive briefing

Summary of Discussion:

Charles Madden explained that he had replaced Steve Kral, and thanked Chair Connolly and the committee for giving him the opportunity to come before the EPC and update the members on UASI matters. He provided an overview of FY05 and FY06 spending and said that FY07 is just getting started with a new management process. The FY07 funds of \$61.65 million were awarded on September 10, 2007 and were back dated to July 1, 2007. The DC government has been granted budget authority for UASI funds. The award period is for three years. Project plans are for two years to allow decision makers time to extend or reprogram projects. Approximately 75 sub-grants were described on a spread sheet that he provided. The state shares have not yet been allocated. Pass-through to the locals will account for 85% of the funds. An online reporting system puts control in local hands. Sub-grantees will access a data base directly that will be able to track performance schedule and generate red flags, a process that is currently being done manually. The system will also generate the reports that DHS needs. Local jurisdictions can check the status, submit and receive feedback and the system will reduce errors. EPC members will be able to look at their own jurisdiction sub-grants and check status. After FY07 is loaded they will work back until all years have been included. This system will show funds as they are encumbered prior to being "expended" for a more accurate view of progress. Mr. Madden responded to a few questions from EPC members and informed members that if they have further questions they could contact him.

4. Quarterly Strategic Plan Review, DHS Target Capabilities Review, and Discussion of Possible Strategic Plan Update

Description from Agenda:

The EPC adopted the National Capital Region Homeland Security Strategic Plan in late 2006 and agreed to review the plan quarterly to measure progress on implementation. DHS requires the NCR to track its level of readiness in regard to the 37 Target Capabilities. Steve Kral will brief the EPC on plan implementation, including the 30 approved initiatives and readiness in regard to the DHS Target Capabilities List (TCL) using Dashboards that have been developed to track each of these items. Mr. Kral will lead a discussion of a possible update of the Strategic Plan in the coming year.

Summary of Discussion:

Mr. Madden who has replaced Mr. Kral presented a spreadsheet summary of initiatives. The spreadsheet shows percent completion as of June 2007 along with FY07 UASI projects. The initiatives were updated because congress and the GAO wanted more measurable outcomes. The end users provided more input, especially on revising milestones. Each initiative has a designated lead and support groups. Consultants met with the chairs to describe the progress on the milestones. Projects are proposed by RESFs and RPWGs. Any comments on the milestones should be sent to the SAA and to the chair of the primary lead R-ESF or RPWG. Mr. Snyder requested that at the next meeting the EPC focus on a couple of initiatives and have a gap analysis and risk assessment to see how this work is really showing up in the region. Chair Connolly said we need to go beyond meeting DHS guidelines and look at our readiness in the NCR. Mr. Madden mentioned that the funding of personnel working in the intelligence area is limited to two years. At the end of that time, local jurisdictions may assume financial responsibility if they desire the continued service of those individuals. Chair Connolly thanked Mr. Madden for the two presentations.

5. Evacuation and Sheltering Planning

Description from Agenda:

Director Darnell will provide a briefing on the status of the outcomes and deliverables regarding the Evacuation and Sheltering planning contract.

Recommended Action: Receive briefing and discuss next steps

Summary of Discussion:

Mr. Darnell said DC was the sub-grantee for this project. The deliverables were prepared for the NCR jurisdictions and funded through UASI. The project has been coordinated with West Virginia, Pennsylvania and Delaware as mandated by Congress. It created a database for resources that include shelters, senior care facilities, hospitals, etc. and a corrective action matrix to identify items requiring follow-up action beyond the development of this plan. The primary tasks were:

- Develop an NCR sheltering and evacuation plan to include a profile for each identified evacuation route
- Perform a vehicle and driver inventory
- Develop common profiles for transfer/pickup points; hospitals; senior and assisted living facilities, and nursing homes; prisons
- Assess identified shelters
- Plan for leveraging mass and alternative transit

The stakeholder group was extensive, with strong involvement from RESF# 1 - Transportation, RESF #5 - Emergency Managers, RESF #6 - Mass Care, Housing and Human Services, and RESF #8 - Health and Medical Services.

Mr. Darnell provided an overview of the plan which provides overarching guidance to all jurisdictions on evacuation and sheltering. It does not replace or supersede existing plans, nor does it diminish the need for jurisdictions to plan and prepare for emergency response. The plan content includes:

- NCR planning capabilities and assumptions
- Concept of operations

- NCR plan implementation: determination of specific resources, e.g. routes, transfer/pickup points, shelters
- Vehicle inventory
- Alternative forms of evacuation transportation
- Shelter identification and selection
- Confined populations, e.g. prison, hospitals, senior care facilities.
- Community profile: list of supplies required to shelter 10,000 people
- Corrective Action Matrix which includes recommended corrective actions and estimated timelines for remediation; identifies jurisdiction(s) affected by issue; prioritizes issues by impact on NCR; and identifies organizations with interests in resolving issue.

The benefit of the plan is that it offers a comparison of local/state/regional plan similarities and differences across the NCR and has established working relationships that form the foundation of future regional planning. The next steps include a review by stakeholders, to be completed by October 15, and completion of the plan expected mid-November.

Mr. Connolly asked why no shelters were assessed in Virginia. Mr. Darnell explained that Virginia is not using super shelters because there are no large structures capable of holding over 1,000 people in the region. Mr. Dinegar requested that the EPC be provided with a copy of the corrective action matrix. Several EPC members asked about how information would get to the population. Mr. Darnell said that the educational piece is not a part of this plan. Some EPC members said the document was an incredible piece of work, and informed them, but seems to be more of a list of problems than a plan. Mr. Darnell said we may not be able to come up with an overall NCR plan. We all need to operate on the same information and know where to get resources. The region has gotten as much as possible out of the contractor, but there is still a lot to do with our own resources. Mr. Couch said the SPG is dissatisfied with the product and it needs to be built out. The 22 new planners being funded with FY07 UASI funds will be charged with building this out. Congress expects an NCR evacuation plan. Also, the dialog needs to have a broader approach as an event in the NCR has impact beyond this region. Mr. Darnell said the contractor will finish by November 15th, and then the region must decide on the release of associated documents. He recommended that the annexes not be released. Mr. Connolly said there is no realistic scenario that would require a total evacuation, but localities might need to evacuate. We are expected to have an evacuation plan that will work. We don't have our arms around the issue and need to re-visit it. Mr. Dinegar said he hesitates to release it without action steps. We need to prioritize the corrective actions and make this a priority when allocating future UASI funds. Mr. Connolly requested an update be provided at the next meeting.

6. Presentation by the Fire Chiefs Committee on Metropolitan Medical Response Systems

Description from Agenda:

The Metropolitan Medical Response System (MMRS) is a locally organized, trained and equipped system that is designed to respond to mass casualty events. Its original intent was to focus on events that resulted from weapons of mass destruction. The idea was not to build anything new but to look at what systems a jurisdiction had in place right now and then work to expand their capabilities. This effort is underway in Virginia. Chief Schwartz will brief the committee on the status of the Northern Virginia program and recommend the establishment of a program in the District and Maryland.

Recommended Action: Receive briefing and discuss next steps

Summary of Discussion:

Chief Schwartz provided an overview of the federal program which is in 124 cities. It was started after the Saran gas attacks in Tokyo. Arlington County already had MMRS, and they wanted to expand the program to all of Northern Virginia in order to enhance the ability to protect human health for 48 to 72 hours. It is based on the assumption that Federal support would not be available in the first hours. The goal is to handle up to 1,000 victims in a chemical event or 10,000 victims in a biological or radiation event. The expanded MMRS includes 5 regions and the Northern Virginia Hospital Alliance. It is an integrated system and is expected to work together in a large scale incident. This is the only federal program that joins government and private health care. Each jurisdiction does their own plans for responders, hospitals, training, and equipment, but there will be a unified regional response. Each jurisdiction has pharmaceuticals, a cache of supportive care equipment, and a cache of ventilators. Radiation detection for police was expanded and the same protocols are used by police and fire. MMRS is a system, it is a way of operating, and it is a dynamic process. The system ensures that responders are well cared for so they will be available to protect citizens. It has been funded through the state share of UASI. Arlington receives \$235 to 240,000 per year from Federal funds. Currently it is limited to Northern Virginia, and should be expanded to region wide.

7. New Business

Description from the Agenda:

Chairman Connolly will invite members to share information or recommend topics for the next meeting.

Summary of discussion:

Dave Robertson commented that several people in the room had received RICCS notification of an incident on I-95 south involving an overturned tractor trailer with possible explosives or fire caused by fuel spilled.

8. Adjournment

Description from Agenda:

The EPC is scheduled to meet quarterly, with additional meetings on an as needed basis. The next scheduled meeting is January 9, 2008, 2:00-4:15 P.M.

Summary of discussion:

Chairman Connolly adjourned the meeting at 4:10 P.M.