

LEPC #12

LOCAL EMERGENCY PLANNING COMMITTEE



LEPC12@TRORC.ORG

C/O TWO RIVERS-OTTAUQUECHEE REGIONAL COMMISSION
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**August 19, 2010 - 6pm - 8pm
Bradford Fire Station, VT**

MINUTES – DRAFT

Attendees: Jennie Hubbard, Anthony Ercole, Lt. William Jenkins, Doug Merrill, Randy Bronson, Gary Moore, Tig Tillinghast, Neil Fulton, Jan Williams, Chris Calhoun, Kevin Geiger, Bill and Dot Burden, Mike Manning, Mark Belisle, Ken Goss, Cindy Spaulding, Bill Baylis, Tracy Simon, and Rita Seto

1. Call to order – Meeting was called at 6:08pm by Bill Burden.
2. Introductions made.
3. Approval of minutes for June 17, 2010 – Neil motioned to accept. Mark B 2nd. Approved and accepted.
4. Treasurer's report – Ken reported that \$5 still remains in account. TRORC has submitted FY'11 LEPC12 terms of contract agreement on behalf of LEPC12 to State for \$4000. State has not given contract yet.
5. Community Advisory Boards – Lt. William Jenkins from Royalton Barracks addressed group about restarting Community Advisory Boards. This is designed to develop/continue working relationships with the community and VSP. Lt. Jenkins hopes the LEPC group returns to Selectboards to gauge possible interest. He will check in October's meeting to see interest level, and if sufficient, will send a form letter out to towns for official appointment of a rep person. CABs will meet periodically to express local concerns to VSP.
6. VCOMM update – Bill presented notes on "Preparing for the 2013 Changeover to Narrowband" (attachment 1). Additional points include:
 - If you cannot use your VHF radios, please recycle to RACES. Will cost around \$10 per equipment to discard. Let Bill know if you have scrap to discard.
 - Kevin noted that some depts. are already changing licenses, resulting in no longer being able to use old radios/wideband. Now stuck to narrowband. The sooner you transfer licenses, the better chance you get to use the same frequency.
 - Neil noted the next round of grants for narrowband properly licensed base stations will be late Sept/early Oct.
 - Cindy noted that FCC also has another possible deadline in 2011, if you need to add additional equipment to narrowband. Bill will follow up to confirm this.
 - Bill also reminded group to access APCO who handles licensing and provides free assistance to municipalities.

7. Training and Exercise Planning Workshop report – Kevin Geiger passed out the tentative training schedule (attachment 2). Some training sessions will hit several objectives that are outlined in TEPW report. The draft TEPW will be available to anyone requesting a copy. With regards to LEPC sponsored exercises, we're scheduling 2 per year. Our next meeting in October hopes to have Fred Messer attend to provide training. Kevin reminded that all who have pagers are required to play with them in an exercise. If you are interested in HAZMAT training, there are funds available until 9/30 so call Randy at VEM pronto!
8. Joint Town Emergency Planning Meeting – Tig Tillinghast, Selectboard Chair of Thetford discussed his experience in a recent FEMA 900 course training. This course was geared towards Mayors and top town / city officials. Tig realized some of the weaknesses that were evident when trying to coordinate with towns and that most town officials are unaware and unprepared for them (e.g. operating EOCs). Perhaps there is utility of having a centrally shared facility that is located among multi-town jurisdictions? There's been growing discussion of joint police/fire resources, similar to an emergency mutual aid. There's already a mutual aid effort going on with town road foremen on resources. Why not emergency resources? Tig is suggesting this idea to gauge response of LEPC group. He's hoping to evaluate that during an emergency incident where multi-jurisdictions come together to work, what the current status quo is, what's missing and what works as being complementary (where do all players fit in, what services can they provide best, what services are being redundant and can improve efficiency, what elements are missing/being overlooked?).

Gary noted that with EOCs, significant money is spent outfitting EOC with infrastructure but little is spent on training personnel to use resources, so when incidents happen, things are poorly run. Towns vary in EOC operations training and may conflict when trying to use another town's support.

Randy indicated that the State will provide local support and will not circumvent existing local plans nor will take over incident.

Gary also mentioned that Maine has 3 Incident Management Teams that move around the State. If Vermont has a similar setup of 2 IMTs that can be flexible and move around State, those training skills would be highly useful.

Tig mentioned there is a Regional Shelter training being offered with folks from Thetford, Norwich, Strafford and other surrounding towns participating.

9. Other Business/Upcoming training – Kevin: In mid-Oct in Sharon, there is a cooperative Emergency Services training being offered. LEPC training: 1 to 2 RCC trainings/Mass Casualty sessions, planning section training for ICS, simulated EMAC deployment (contact Ross Nagy).

Ken discussed current LEPC12 budget of \$4000 of not being sufficient. He suggested asking each town (29) for a contribution/donation of \$75 to \$100 for additional training to provide to towns, LEPC reps, or as a rainy day fund to assist a town that may require extra financial support during an incident. Randy cautioned to verify the LEPC if it's a 501C nonprofit which can accept donations, but it seems like LEPC is a quasi-state status? Rita will verify status.

Randy said he'll check on contract money. There's a new round of HMEP grants out on Oct 1. Tier 2 facility updates – if you notice a property that could be Tier 2 (even ones with electrified loaders), to contact Randy. There's a Lake Champlain Spills Conference on Sept.16 in Plattsburgh, NY – should send an LEPC12 rep to conference as we could face similar situation along Connecticut River.

Bill reiterated success at Prouty in July with 5000 participants walking and bicycling. There are 4 existing bike routes, in 2011, they will add another route in VT, to go along VT14 to So. Royalton, up VT110 to Chelsea, across VT113 and back down RT5.

10. Meeting adjourned 7:42pm. Next meeting – October 21, 2010

Respectfully submitted,
Cindy Spaulding and Rita Seto

PREPARING FOR THE 2013 CHANGEOVER TO NARROWBAND

BE PREPARED:

- RADIOS OLDER THAN 1998 CANNOT BE USED AFTER JANUARY 1, 2013. DON'T EVEN BOTHER TO TRY TO HAVE THEM CONVERTED.
- EVEN SOME OF THE RADIOS BUILT AFTER 1998 MAY HAVE PROBLEMS IN CONVERTING TO NARROWBAND OPERATION. THIS CAN USUALLY BE FIXED BY YOUR RADIO SUPPLIER.
- IN ORDER TO CHECK OUT NARROWBANDING BEFORE THE DEADLINE - HAVE YOUR SUPPLIER PROGRAM, IN A SEPARATE MEMORY AREA,
- ALL THE CHANNELS YOU WILL BE USING IN NARROWBAND. THIS WAY, YOU WILL HAVE THEM ALL IN BOTH CURRENT BROADBAND AND NARROWBAND.
- TEST THE NARROWBAND OPERATION ON THESE FREQUENCIES TO DETERMINE IF YOU ARE GOING TO EXPERIENCE ANY RANGE LOSS. YOU CAN OPERATE NARROWBAND ON YOUR CURRENT LICENSE.
- DETERMINE IF YOU HAVE ANY "QUIET TALKERS" AMONG YOUR USERS. THIS CAN SIGNIFICANTLY IMPACT THE RANGE OF THE SIGNAL. MAKE SURE THAT ALL USERS ARE TRAINED IN GOOD OPERATING PRACTICES.

TO-DO CHECKLIST:

1. CHANGE YOUR LICENSE TO NARROWBAND BEFORE THE DEADLINE.
2. ONCE YOU HAVE MODIFIED THE LICENSE, YOU CAN HAVE THE OLD WIDEBAND CHANNELS REMOVED FROM YOUR RADIO.
3. KEEP IN MIND THAT THE V-CALL AND U-CALL FREQUENCIES ARE ALREADY NARROWBAND. HOWEVER, VCOMM EXPECTS TO SEE SOME CHANGES IN THE CHANNELS AS RESULT OF THE U.S./ CANADA BORDER ISSUES.

LOSS OF RANGE:

THE LAWS OF PHYSICS DICTATE THAT YOU WILL HAVE SOME RANGE LOSS IN THE CONVERSION TO NARROWBAND. HOW MUCH LOSS OF RANGE IS A FUNCTION OF TERRAIN, OPERATING HABITS AND AUDIO QUALITY.

TERRAIN - THE HILLS, RIDGES, VALLEYS AND OTHER TERRAIN FEATURES

COMMON IN VERMONT. ALL WILL AFFECT THE RANGE PERFORMANCE. CHECK OUT YOUR WORST AREAS USING THE NARROWBAND CHANNELS BEFORE YOU HAVE TO CHANGE YOUR LICENSE TO NARROWBAND.

SOLUTIONS - CAN BE EXPENSIVE OR SIMPLE.

- YOU MAY NEED TO ADD A REPEATER OR MODIFY AN EXISTING REPEATER TO OFFSET THE RANGE LOSS.
- REPLACING YOUR EXISTING MOBILE OR FIXED STATION ANTENNA WITH A HIGHER PERFORMING ANTENNA MAY HELP.
- INCREASING THE POWER OUTPUT OF YOUR RADIOS - THIS REQUIRES A CHANGE IN THE LICENSE AND NEEDS TO BE INVESTIGATED WELL BEFORE THE CHANGEOVER.
- INCREASING THE HEIGHT OF AN EXISTING TOWER CAN ALSO IMPROVE PERFORMANCE.

MISCELLANEOUS NOTES:

- REMEMBER - CHANGING TO NARROWBAND IS **NOT** AN OPTION -- IT IS A REQUIREMENT!
- THE FCC WILL BE REVIEWING LICENSES FOR MODIFICATIONS TO NARROWBAND.
- IF YOUR LICENSE HAS NOT BEEN MODIFIED BY THE DEADLINE, YOU CAN EXPECT TO BE CONTACTED BY THE FCC.
- CHECKING OUT NARROWBAND PERFORMANCE USING THE METHOD DESCRIBED HERE CAN SAVE YOU TIME AND MONEY IF DONE EARLY IN THE PROCESS.
- THE VCOMM EMERGENCY GRANT PROGRAM IS STILL OPEN THROUGH AUGUST IF YOU STILL NEED TO REPLACE OBSOLETE RADIOS.

