



RUTLAND REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

Rutland Regional Emergency Management Committee (REMC)

Meeting Minutes for
Wednesday, December 13, 2023 – 5:30 pm
Rutland Regional Planning Commission - Microsoft Teams

[Join on your computer or mobile app](#)

Meeting ID: 254 269 576 552 | Passcode: 3CoKJZ
Call in (audio only): 802-440-1368 | Phone ID: 749 322 854#

I. **Voting Member Roll Call**

Vice Chair Jan Sotirakis convened the meeting at 5:31 PM. Maggie O'Brien conducted the voting member roll call. A quorum of voting members was present. Sotirakis and O'Brien noted this meeting as the first for the 2024 Federal Fiscal Year.

II. **Approve Meeting Agenda**

Marty Wasserman made the motion to approve the agenda. Motion seconded by Tom Johnston. No further discussion. Motion approved.

III. **Approve September 27, 2023 Meeting Minutes**

Wasserman made the motion to approve the September 27, 2023 Minutes. Motion seconded by Johnston. No further discussion. Motion approved.

IV. **Announcements**

- a. Amended Bylaws – O'Brien reviewed the changes made to the Bylaws and approved by the Committee during the last fiscal year. These amendments include 1) extending the Local Emergency Planning Commission (**LEPC**) representative term to three years, 2) adding language specifying reappointment procedures following voting membership turnover, and 3) modifying quorum requirements such that 11 voting members (~20% of the voting body) now constitutes a quorum. O'Brien asked the Committee to disregard the Bylaws document she sent out earlier that day, as it was missing amendment #2. The correct Bylaws were sent out to the Committee following the meeting. The Bylaws can also be found on the [RRPC Website](#).
- b. Binary Blizzard Buildup (**B³**) Update
 - i. Final Calendar for 2024 – O'Brien gave an overview of the finalized calendar of meetings, trainings, and exercises for the Region in 2024. She explained the "Participation Ranking" metric weighing each activity by importance. She also requested the Committee to review the calendar more in-depth on their own time.

- ii. Upcoming Activities – O’Brien announced the following upcoming events: the American Red Cross Shelter Fundamentals and Shelter Management Courses at the Castleton Fire Dept (12/17); a FEMA Long-Term Power Outage Tabletop Exercise (1/25); the Public Works Mutual Aid Agreement Roundtable Review (2/21); and the Vulnerable Populations Protocol Scenario-Led Discussion (3/12).

V. **VDH Guest Speakers – Health Operations Center Activation**

Heather Rigney and Eric Pulver – representing the Division of Emergency Preparedness Response and Injury Prevention (**DEPRIP**) and the Office of Local Health (**OLH**), respectively – presented an overview of Vermont Department of Health (**VDH**) Operations. They went into depth on how DEPRIP and OLH would interface with municipalities during a public health emergency. In addition to supplying capacity through Medical Reserve Corps (**MRC**) volunteers, VDH oversees a Health Operations Center (**HOC**) that activates and operates in a manner similar to the State Emergency Operations Center (**SEOC**). Questions arose regarding who has the authority to ask VDH for support and the best way to reach the Department during an emergency. Rigney clarified that EMDs are the ideal point of contact and should at least be aware of any outgoing requests, starting with the initial phone call to the Vermont Emergency Management Watch Officer.

VI. **REMC Representative Reports**

- a. Statewide Local Emergency Planning Commission (**LEPC**) Rep, Bob Morlino
 - i. Morlino was not present at the meeting, and O’Brien provided an update on his behalf. The LEPC met last month and elected a new Vice Chair. Morlino is currently traveling the State to give lithium-ion battery demonstrations. While not a requirement, these demonstrations have been heavily requested by fire companies and departments. The next meeting is scheduled for January 16.
- b. Threat Hazard Identification Risk Assessment and State Preparedness Report (**THIRA/SPR**) representative, Michael Ramsey
 - i. Ramsey was not present at the meeting, and O’Brien provided an update on his behalf. THIRA did not have a session this year, and the State Preparedness Report had enough information to move forward without additional surveys or meetings.
- c. Integrated Planning and Preparedness Workshop (**IPPW**) Representative, Tom Johnston
 - i. Johnston stated he had nothing new to report at this time.

VII. **REMC Organizational Tasks**

- a. Appointments
 - i. Chair: Though absent, Ramsey had previously indicated he was interested in reappointment. Johnston made the motion to re-elect. Motion seconded by Bill Lovett. No further discussion. Motion approved.
 - ii. Vice Chair: Sotirakis stated she would be willing to continue her service. Johnston made the motion to re-elect. Motion seconded by Lovett. No further discussion. Motion approved.

- iii. THIRA/SPR Rep: Though absent, Ramsey had previously indicated he was interested in reappointment. Kevin Blongy made the motion to re-elect. Motion seconded by Johnston. No further discussion. Motion approved.
- iv. IPPW Rep: Johnston stated he would be willing to continue his service. Wasserman made the motion to re-elect. Motion seconded by Lovett. No further discussion, Motion approved.
- b. Adopt Resolution: Meeting Time and Place – O’Brien noted that the current Bylaws did not specify a regular time and place for quarterly meetings. According to Open Meeting Law, public bodies such as the REMC must make these details known to the public in an announcement, unless it is already outlined in a resolution or some other form of determining authority. O’Brien therefore proposed adopting a resolution setting the meeting schedule for 5:30 PM EST on the second Wednesday of December and the last Wednesday of March, June, and September. Taiga Christie flagged these dates as potential conflicts for Urban Search and Rescue (**USAR**) Training sessions. Lovett confirmed that 5:30 PM falls within the return commute for individuals from the Rutland City Fire Department. O’Brien and Christie agreed to connect offline to discuss an alternate schedule. Upon adoption of the amended draft, the Resolution will have a permanent home on the [RRPC website](#).

VIII. **Open to the public**

There was no one from the public in attendance. Rigney took this time to promote the next quarterly meeting of the Vermont Health and Emergency Preparedness Coalition (**VHEPC**). They will also sponsor a Medical Response and Surge Exercise (“MERSE”) focused on eclipse planning, given the upcoming total solar eclipse in April 2024. While Rutland is not expected to be in the path of totality, VHEPC and others are anticipating a mass surge of tourism in the North and surrounding areas. Rigney encouraged EMDs and others to participate in the exercise to coordinate with health care partners and streamline preparedness and response activities. The VHEPC meeting will be held on February 8th: interested individuals can register [here](#).

IX. **Next Meeting – Wednesday, March 27, 2024 @ 5:30 PM**

Wasserman made the motion to adjourn. Motion seconded by Lovett. No further discussion. The motion was approved, and the meeting adjourned at 6:51 PM.

Respectfully submitted by Maggie O’Brien, Emergency Management Planner at the RRPC.