

Niagara County LEPC Minutes

Wednesday, February 8, 2023

Public Safety Training Facility – Lockport, NY

Call to Order

Tim Balunis began the meeting by leading the pledge to the flag at 9:03 am, followed with reading of the mission statement. A motion was made from Walt Garrow to accept the December 14, 2022 meeting minutes and second by Mark Banks. All present approved.

Notifications

None

Presentation

107th – Catrina Gray, Richard Burns, Daniel Olszewski, Zach Hausmann

The JISCC communications package was built with the Homeland Response Force responsible for FEMA Region 2 and is housed at the Niagara Falls Air Base. The system is portable to the scene and would need space for trailer, generator (if not power source) and to raise antenna masts. If requested, the system can be deployed by the state to an operations center. The JISCC package is a C2 command and control communications element, built from lessons after 9/11. The system allows radio interoperability in an emergency environment. The agency and/or organization would need to provide a donor radio to connect to the system. When connecting the donor radio, it is “plug and play,” taking the encryption and frequencies for the radio and using them on the JISCC system. The link creates talk groups between radios that normally do not function together. JISCC has 6 built in radios to program with UHF, VHF, 800 MHz and 900 MHz signals and can extend the coverage range significantly. If needed as part of a Mutual Aid, the request would need to be sent to Jonathan Schultz to send to the state.

Catrina notified the LEPC that this system is one of many resources at the 107th to support domestic operations and the local community. She will make an Informal Catalog of resources they have and bring to the next LEPC meeting.

Report of the Chairperson

None

Report of the Emergency Manager Jonathan Schultz

For the November 2022 storm, 17 counties were in the disaster declaration but only 6 got significantly hit. For the Christmas blizzard, only 2 counties and the city of Buffalo were declared a disaster. Erie County and Buffalo had 38 hours of snow and Niagara County had 20

hours, with North Tonawanda receiving snow of records. Niagara County was not included in the disaster declaration. Jonathan is working to get Niagara County added as part of the disaster declaration, including sending a letter to the governor the week of the storm. There is a struggle to have all municipalities provide costs to get funding. With the December storm having snow of record, that should help. Niagara County needs to break \$944,000.00 in costs/damages to receive funding (which has been exceeded).

There are currently discussions being held with FEMA to update the definitions for a blizzard, which can take years. The Christmas blizzard, 38 hours with blizzard conditions, was the longest on record for the nation.

After Action Items from the blizzard:

- At a county level, working on obtaining tracked vehicles.
- 245 people were rescued from vehicles, many not from this area. Many got off the thruway at Rochester, went north to 31 and 104 to continue into the area and got stuck. Now working with State, Google and Apple that when the thruway is shut down, to have everything north and west in red on maps and to have better messaging from state for closures.
- With the blizzard, many Emergency Plans were used for the first time in a long time. In doing so, people realized they need to update these plans. Jonathan is working with some facilities to update their plans.

The county Hazard Mitigation Plan is with FEMA for final approval. Once approved, creates a 5 year window before needing to be sent for new approval. There will be meetings in Niagara County every 6 months to review and update the plan. The Hazard Mitigation Plan is now 100% digital and can be found at <https://niagara.mitigateny.org/>

Report of the Vice Chair

None

Old Business

None

New Business

Brief discussion regarding some personal generators (Generac) failing during blizzard. May have been due to snow accumulating in the unit.

Good of the Order

The Western New York Safety Conference will be on April 19th and 20th at the Seneca Events Center in Niagara Falls. The program info and how to register can be found at www.wnyesc.com

Marc Kasprzak – There is a NYS initiative to have Interoperability repeaters in all counties with National Interoperability channels in every band. The county has added 3 additional towers and all bands (UHF, VHF, 700 MHz and 800MHz) will have national interoperable repeaters.

Coast Guard –

- There will be a Marine Firefighter Taskforce with meetings starting in April. No set date yet.
- The Port Security Grant will be coming soon with most likely a focus on cybersecurity again.
- With the 2024 Solar Eclipse there have already been meetings in Erie County. Per Jonathan Schultz, only informal meetings in Niagara County, but there will be meetings as we get closer to the event.

Mark Kreyer –

- Scott Patronik, will primarily be a cybersecurity advisor and engaged as part of the Incident Response Team. He will be great asset with years of knowledge and experience.
- Post-Christmas storm, Mark is working with one municipality on a Critical Infrastructure List, identifying most critical assets.
- This will be his last LEPC meeting due to retiring.

The Niagara County LEPC would like to show its appreciation to Mark Kreyer for all his years of service.

Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 9:46 am. Next meeting will be on April 12, 2023.

Attendance:

Balunis, Tim	Banach, Chris
Banks, Mark	Bathory, Tim
Burns, Richard	Costanzo, Vincenza
D'Angelo, Sal	Dimmick, Clayton
Garrow, Walt	Godlove, Katie
Gray, Catrina	Gschwend, Marc
Hamernick, Jodi	Hausmann, Zachary
Hayes, Miranda	Hejmanowski, Ryan
Himes, Jill	Hodgson, Kevin
Horner, Ian	Kasprzak, Marc
Kornacki, Tim	Kreyer, Mark
Maybee, Peter	Meyer, Rob
Miller, Sandra	Moslow, Greg

Pedulla, Joe	Perry, William
Olszewski, Daniel	Schultz, Jonathan
Seibel, Michael	Serach, Mike
Sikora, Joe	Sinatra, Ryan
Spencer, Michael	Wojcik, Bob
Ziff, Rick	
Dewey, Laura – Excused	Emery, Michael – Excused
Godfrey, David – Excused	Liptak, Tom – Excused
Meyer, Harry – Excused	Skelly, Dan – Excused