

Niagara County LEPC Minutes

Wednesday, June 14, 2023

Public Safety Training Facility – Lockport, NY

Call to Order

Tim Balunis began the meeting by leading the pledge to the flag at 9:01 am, followed with reading of the mission statement. A motion was made from Sandra Miller to accept the April 12, 2023 meeting minutes and second by Sal D'Angelo. All present approved, motion carried.

Presentation

None

Notifications and Updates

Sandra Miller – Avantor. Now officially classified as a PSM (Process Safety Management) plant. Moving forward on projects to bring them into compliance with PSM regulations.

Walt Garrow – Retired. Would like for LEPC to do a tabletop exercise on railroad hazmat in light of the recent railroad issues across the nation. Rail lines have been strengthened to handle heavier cars. Tim Balunis agrees that we should coordinate with Jonathan Schultz to put one together.

Sean Costello – Niagara Falls Water Board. Recently had an inspection performed by EPA contractors. 1 area they were found to be lacking was coordination with the LEPC. Sean is looking forward to learning and participating with the LEPC.

Joseph Sikora - Fire Chief, North Tonawanda. NT is ramping up for the summer event schedule. Working closely with Mark Banks to organize Canalfest.

Chris Banach – VanDeMark. To follow up with Walt, rail cars are heavier but material handled is still the same amount as before. They are designed to be more robust and to be safer. Tim Balunis asked if Chris could speak at future meeting regarding rail cars. Chris believes it would be better for the producers of the material to provide this info. Rob Meyer from Olin stated they will be holding a knowledge session in October. Will provide more info at future meeting.

Mike Emery – DEC. Niagara County has been working with the DEC to finalize geographic response plans for rail lines. This covers a half mile on either side of railroad to recognize access locations, points of interest that should be evacuated and other info.

Rick Ziff – Goodyear Chemical. Went through ISO 2021 safety audit last week. Need to make minor corrections and then can be certified next month. Have a PSM audit coming up in July.

John Kelly – US Coast Guard Port Security. Port security grant closed today. There were no applications from a Niagara County agency or organization. There were 17 received for sector Buffalo. Working with Niagara County on the solar eclipse for next year. There is an Area committee meeting today in Cleveland with a virtual option available. LCDR Peet will be departing at the end of the month. New supervisor, Eric Lundy, will be starting Friday. They have hired a Port Recovery Specialist, a retired Coast Guard officer.

Gregory Kulka – GM Components. Lockport plant is in production and tooling up for EV parts. They now have automated guided vehicles that are powered by Lithium Ion batteries. The batteries are almost the same size as the ones found in EV cars. They will be updating their Tier II report with the new battery info and are coordinating with fire departments and Hazmat teams.

Kathy Moguel – Durez. They are interested in doing a tabletop exercise with emergency responders. They have not had one in at least 7 years.

Tim Bathory – Glen Springs. Focused on completing the secondary decontamination of the former processes and eventual demolition of processing equipment at the former Oxy Chem Niagara site.

David Godfrey – Niagara County Legislature. On Friday, ENH will close as well as their Urgent care on Transit Road. Mount St. Mary's will be opening an emergency room at ENH's former urgent care facility within 48 hours of urgent care closing. The new Mount St. Mary's is scheduled to open in September. At the end of June, the main Mount St. Mary's facility in Lewiston will be ending inpatient, maternity and OR services. For ambulance services, there will be a contract going out this week with Mercy EMS to provide 2 ambulances, 12 hours a day, 7 days a week to cover the volunteers in support of them. The county is also working with a contractor to see what the county should be doing going forward, either a county run system, a blend of something, or a contract with someone like Mercy EMS. That is yet to be decided. For the short term, over the next 3 months, Mercy EMS will cover through October and then the county should have some idea as to where to go from there. Jim Suitor asked doesn't the county already have ambulances and what happened to the county program? Legislature Godfrey responded stating we do have ambulances but they are not online, not staffed and we are not ready yet. Jim then asked the anticipated time to start ambulances. David responded that we should know by October in what direction we are going in after the consultant reviews and advises what is best for the county. Jim then stated at a meeting last week, the county could be up and operating by January 1st. David responded that it could be possible if that is the model that is selected. Jim's concern is that, since Catholics will now be transporting their patients to Buffalo, there will be a lack of ambulances in the county. David stated there will be a lot of transports, Catholic Health will provide transport from Lockport to their other locations for a higher level of care. Fortunately they all have helipads.

Mark Banks – City of Tonawanda. Working very hard to keep Canalfest on track. Next week Friday, Police Chief William Strassburg will be retiring after 10 years as police chief. Bob Clontz will be interim chief. City of Tonawanda has an elaborate railroad emergency plan that was done 5 years ago and is being reviewed. Plan is to test plan in the raised S-curves in the city. Problem is trying to get in contact with railroads. Have reached out with no response. John Kelly states he may have a CSX contact, will provide Mark with it. Other events in the next couple of weeks will be the Ride for Roswell that brings 3 to 4 thousand riders through the city. 4th of July fireworks will have close to 10,000 people in the city. City is working with the schools in planning for the 2024 solar eclipse.

Mike Seibel – RACES. Problem he is having is the lack of new people. There are only about 100 new licenses issued over the course of the year and has only seen 1 interested in RACES. Mike has no answers or solutions as to how to recruit. RACES has dropped from 49 people to only a handful. Many new licensed operators don't even go on and transmit. Mike is open to any suggestions or ideas.

Kevin Hodgson – HazMat. As to Walt's idea, would like to set up MARPLOT, CAMEO and/or ALOHA in the next meeting or 2. Can show how many people would be affected by an incident, how many need to be evacuated and plume models. Dave Mack states they use system at the base. Tim Balunis asked if he would be able to do a presentation at the next meeting or 2. Dave will contact Bill Perry if able to do.

Harry Meyer – Former Chair of Erie County LEPC. He is encouraged at the participation in the Niagara County LEPC. When he is in Florida for the winter, their version of LEPC is for upper level people, not the public. The public has no idea what is going on down there. People are invited on a need to know basis. It is nice to know what resources are available before an incident occurs.

Tim Balunis – LEPC Chair. In the aftermath of Love Canal, there was a need to get more info to the public, as well as coordination with the government and the public and private sector. LEPC came from this.

Walt Garrow – May want to keep track of the Lake Ontario Ordinance Works. Army Corp of Engineers has approval for the removal of their radiation materials. There is 25,000 cubic yards of hot radioactive material and more than a third of a million cubic yards of contaminated material. While approved, they have yet to secure the funding for removal. Once approved, LEPC may want to know what routes will be used for transporting the material as to the potential of traffic accidents, spillage and remediation methods.

Report of the Chairperson

None

Report of the Emergency Manager

None

Report of the Vice Chair

None

Old Business

None

New Business

None

Good of the Order

None

Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 9:51 am. Next meeting will be on August 9, 2023.

Attendance:

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| Bridgette Baldwin | Tim Balunis |
| Chris Banach | Mark Banks |
| Tim Bathory | Sean Costello |
| Sal D’Angelo | Michael Emery |
| Walt Garrow | David Godfrey |
| Marc Gschwend | Dean Hall |
| Kevin Hodgson | Norm Izard |
| John Kelly | Gregory Kulka |
| Dave Mack | Harry Meyer |
| Rob Meyer | Sandra Miller |
| Kathy Moguel | Ken Moore |
| Joe Pedulla | William Perry |
| Mike Seibel | Joseph Sikora |
| Ryan Sinatra | James Sutor |
| Rick Ziff | |
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| Catrina Gray - Excused | Tom Liptak – Excused |
| Peter Maybee - Excused | Mike Serach – Excused |
| Dan Skelly - Excused | |
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