

NH PUBLIC WORKS MUTUAL AID BOARD OF DIRECTORS' MEETING

June 8, 2009

PRESENT:

Board Members & Officers: Alan Cote, Charles Smart, Caleb Dobbins, Kurt Grasset, Jim Terrell (via speaker phone), Bill Herman & Kathryn Myers.

Guests: Johnna McKenna—DES, Dave Danielson—Forcee Advocacy, Fay Rubin – UNH Institute for the Study of Earth, Oceans, Space; Sarah Pillsbury - NHDES.

Meeting called to order at 9:08 AM

PW Mutual Aid & GRANIT

- Fay Rubin provided a brief demonstration and overview of the ability the GRANIT system has of taking the Public Works Mutual Aid tables and information and transforming it into geographically enabled data. She went through several levels of information beginning with members (i.e. – Highway, Building Inspectors or Water & Wastewater), and then various levels of information that could be accessed from there from equipment to contact information. She indicated the information could be accessed either through a series of drop-down menus options or through the development of a Google-style zoomable search. She indicated the GRANIT system was up and running throughout the December 2008 ice storm, but if the NHPWMA Program needed 24/7 access to the database, that would need to be discussed. One-time cost for developing this system could be a few thousand dollars for a low-level technology approach to up to \$10,000 for a high-end system. There would also be ongoing fees for the maintenance & updating of the system which would have to be determined.
- Members expressed concern for the lack of computer capability for many of the Public Works Departments and Road Agents. However, there was general agreement that a higher level of information such as this belongs in the State EOC during emergency and disaster operations. It was suggested the basic level of geographically enabled data be put on a disk for local members use, as it would be easier to search than current Excel data files.
- It was agreed t Fay Rubin would develop a more formal proposal and cost estimate for various potential GRANIT system offerings for the NHPWMA Program, and would submit that for consideration by the Board at it's next meeting. Fay left the meeting at 9:30 AM.

Election of Officers

- Cote stepped down from the chair and turned the meeting over to Kathryn Meyers for the purpose of conducting an election of officers.
- Terrell joined the meeting via speakerphone at 9:35 AM.
- Cote nominated Jim Terrell to serve as Chairman. Seconded by Grasset. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the nomination passed unanimously.

- Cote nominated Charles Smart to serve as Treasurer. Seconded by Grasset. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the nomination passed unanimously.
- Cote nominated Bill Herman to serve as Secretary. Seconded by Grasset. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.
- Cote nominated Kurt Grasset to serve as Vice Chairman. Second by Terrell. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion carried unanimously.
- Cote resumed the chair

Previous Meeting Minutes

- Herman moved to accept the minutes of March 16, 2009 meeting as printed. Seconded by Grasset. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion carried unanimously.
- Terrell left the meeting at 9:40 AM.

Local Government Center Conference

- All agreed the NHPWMA Program should take the opportunity to organize a presentation for one of the training sessions at the Local Government Center Conference in November. Cote recommended a panel discussion be put together to promote emergency management & response. Potential participants include McKenna, Danielson, Terrell, Cote and Grasset.
- All agreed the NHPWMA Program could share a trade show booth at the Local Government Center Conference with the UNH Technology Transfer Center as was done in 2008. McKenna noted she had a NH WARN map from the EPA that could be displayed as part of the booth.
- Grasset left the meeting at 9:45 AM.

Review of Activation

- There has been no program activation since last meeting that anyone was aware of.
- Danielson reported the Vermont WARN has developed its emergency response system by dividing the state in half with north and south territories. He indicated the NHPWMA Program had previously discussed dividing responsibilities by NHDOT Districts, and wondered if we wanted to look at the Vermont model. Cote felt strongly the State EOC would be the best clearinghouse to help coordinate the potential response during emergency & disaster situations, and that “requesting / receiving” towns need to have the help of the nearest community possible for a response for assistance. He indicated Director Pope has not responded to the NHPWMA letter seeking inclusion at the EOC. It was agreed Terrell should follow-up on the letter with a phone call to Director Pope.

Municipality Membership

- Danielson reported the NHPWMA Program has 109 Public Works members (inclusive of Building Inspectors). With the addition of water and wastewater operations to the NHPWMA Program, the total number of municipal memberships is now at 143.

Training/Outreach

- Cote reported Grasset and Terrell would represent the NHPWMA Program at the planned Public Works Summit on July 22nd. From discussion, various points or issues the NHPWMA Program would like raised at the Public Works Summit include:
 - The importance for municipalities to be members of the NHPWMA Program and the need for current member municipalities to talk with their neighboring municipalities.
 - The need for a united position from the Public Works community on the NHPWMA Program becoming a participant at the State EOC for greater recognition of public works as first responders.
 - Interest in the proposed quarterly meetings with NHDOT and NHDES Commissioners and the local public works community as requested by the Governor.
 - Development of an integrated equipment database regardless of whether NHPWMA membership is for public works, building inspector, water or waste waster.
 - Need for integrated communications for the water, wastewater and public works communities similar to police and fire. Look at potential federal funding.
 - Develop consensus as to the level of NIMS training required for public works managers and employees.
- Discussion on ICS/NIMS training was tabled due to Verville's absence from meeting.
- Discussion on reproduction of mutual aid DVDs was tabled due to Verville's absence.
- Cote requested Terrell contact Dick Verville to determine level of interest in the NHPWMA Program.
- McKenna noted the EPA is offering to do another tabletop training exercise this year similar to one done in Manchester last August. She thought it would have to be held by the end of September, and the EPA would pay the costs for the program. It was felt a tabletop exercise for our integrated program (public works, water, wastewater and building inspectors) would be a very good idea. Potential locations of Southern New Hampshire University in Manchester or Nashua, Newington Town Hall, Bedford Public Library and the NH Local Government Center in Concord were mentioned.

NHPWMA Program Agreement

- McKenna and Sarah Pillsbury reported on their efforts to have the Attorney General's Office review the current NHPWMA governing agreement to help determine a way to allow public water utilities to become a member of the NHPWMA Program. The Attorney General's Office has expressed some concern with NHPWMA organizational areas. NHDES Assistant Commissioner Michael Walls is willing to work to ensure the Legislature provides strengthening of the NHPWMA Program in state statute. Herman indicated he would request Legal Counsel from the Local Government Center be in contact with McKenna and Pillsbury on this issue as they were involved in the original drafting of the agreement previously approved by the Attorney General's Office.

Resource Binder Update

- McKenna reported she has funds enough to prepare a total of 100 NHPWMA Program Resource binders, which could be distributed appropriately through the Local Government Center, UNH Technology Transfer Center, and the NHLGC Conference.

NHPWMA Operational Plan

- Danielson reported the Governor and Council approved the contract for the development of an operational plan. He indicated it was the intent to have a final draft document ready to go before the winter season.

Listserv

- Myers reported there were 136 members on the listserv for municipal members. Its purpose is for BOD and members to communicate amongst each other in a fast/easy/free method via email. She advised the address for the general listserv includes the word “members”, while the listserv for just the NHPWMA Board members does not.

Pagers

- Myers researched options for ER communication other than the pagers we currently have. She reported for \$9.99 per month through RingCentral, the NHPWMA Program could have an 800-number that rings out to up to five phone or pager outlets. These extensions can be cell phones or numbers that folks already have, eliminating the need to carry an additional pager. The \$9.99 per month cost compares to the \$39 per month fee we currently pay for the pagers. All present agreed we should sign up for a one-year trial effort with Ring Central until the Professional Plan and see if it meets all of our needs. This decision is to be formally ratified at the next meeting of the NHPWMA Board.
- Herman suggested before publishing the additional 100 resource binders, we should secure the new “800” number we will have from RingCentral for the program activation and include it where appropriate in the Resource Binder.

Additional Action

- Smart reported that as part of a Portsmouth Regional Emergency Management group, a number of them secured their Ham Radio licenses for an added level of communications. He reported that during the December 2008 ice storm, all forms of communications, including cell phones, went down. For a while, ham radios were their best means of communications.

Next Board Meeting

- The incoming chairman, James Terrell, will schedule the next board meeting.

The BOD Adjourned at 10:55 AM.