



Meeting Minutes Bennington County REMC Meeting Tuesday, January 17, 2023 5-6PM

Attendees

Dee Myrvang (VT DOH), Mary Rogers (North Bennington Trustees), Taiga Christie (VEM), Allison Strohl (BCRC), Art Groux (Bennington Rescue Squad), Mark Norris (Bennington Rescue Squad), Ron Zimmermann (SVMC)

REMC Position Volunteers

Allison and Taiga talked about the REMC meeting quorum and how it might change but needs to go through legislature. We will continue operating informally in the time being. It is recognized that the quorum requirements aren't working and is a problem for most REMCs (not just in our region).

Presentation: Binary Blizzard State-wide Exercise

Taiga talked about Binary Blizzard coming up in 2024, and how communities and organizations can be involved.

- Every three years the state holds a full-scale, state-wide exercise.
- Steps of the VEM full-scale exercise:
 - Planning workshop
 - Drill of notifications and communications
 - Table top exercise
 - Functional exercise
 - Full scale exercise
 - After action report
- Very thorough observations and reports about the exercises are a priority.
- There needs to be a plan developed and then the plan is tested. Can also exercise an already established plan.
- The state is exercising the power outage plan, cyber security plan, and mobile distribution point plan (for supply and medication distributions).
- Towns and organizations can participate by planning a workshop and developing a plan, or exercising an already developed plan.
 - Taiga and Dee are both available to help with exercises, Dee as an evaluator.
 - For an exercise, the state will bring in evaluators and people to run the exercise.
 - Can also do a multi-town tabletop that would benefit several towns.
- At least, the goal is that each town participates by opening their EOC during the state-wide exercise, but there are many ways a town can participate beyond that.

- Binary Blizzard will be focused on the southern part of the state – this is a great opportunity for the region to participate.
- Between now and October 2024, those who would like to participate should take this opportunity to write plans that can be exercised during Binary Blizzard.
- Dee mentioned that emergency plans would be good to exercise, and that warming shelters can be opened for neighboring communities and can be exercised as well.
 - Long term power outages would affect many Vermonters and would cause a need for warming shelters.
- Taiga mentioned that a town activated their vulnerable populations plan during the last storm and that could be another option.
- Taiga also mentioned that the state can help facilitate the review of putting a plan into action.
- Taiga said that the state EOC is happy to be used by local communities during their exercises, if the town level plan requires calling a watch officer or using the EOC for resources. The state would be happy to participate.
- Bill Levine said that Stamford would like to work with Readsboro. Allison said she would reach out for a contact from Alyssa Sabetto at WRC.
- Bill mentioned that a concern of theirs is about feeding people and getting food on site at a shelter. Dee mentioned that the MRC volunteers could possibly assist. Dee said they could call the Watch Officer requesting volunteers. Then VEM could activate the MRC volunteers that could help with the shelter opening and food within 24-48 hours.
- Bill said they also thought about stocking FEMA MRE's that have a shelf life of 5-10 years.
- Final thoughts from Taiga: Planning exercises do take time, so please reach out to start the conversation and to get a plan going.

Adjourned

Meeting ended at 6PM.