



## WISCONSIN LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

### DISASTER PREPAREDNESS PLANNING

Legislative Council Conference Room  
Madison, Wisconsin

September 13, 2006

10:00 a.m. - 3:15 p.m.

[The following is a summary of the September 13, 2006 meeting of the Special Committee on Disaster Preparedness Planning. The file copy of this summary has appended to it a copy of each document prepared for or submitted to the committee during the meeting. A digital recording of the meeting is available on our Web site at <http://www.legis.state.wi.us/lc>.]

#### Call to Order and Roll Call

Chair Ballweg called the meeting to order. The roll was called and it was determined that a quorum was present.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Rep. Joan Ballweg, Chair; Reps. Chuck Benedict, Doc Hines, and Samantha Kerkman; Sen. Judy Robson; and Public Members Dan Alexander, Bill Bazan, Vicki Bier, Robert Carlson, William Dowling, Kurt Eggebrecht, Pete Eide, Curtis Haugen, Kathy Munsey, Leonard Orlando, Robert Ritger, and Diana Tatili.

COUNCIL STAFF PRESENT: Dick Sweet and Pam Shannon, Senior Staff Attorneys.

APPEARANCES: Terry C. Anderson, Director, Legislative Council; Johnnie Smith, Administrator, Division of Emergency Management, Wisconsin Department of Military Affairs; Patrick Cooper, Acting Administrator, Division of Management and Technology, Department of Health and Family Services (DHFS); and Tom Anderson, Dennis Tomczyk, and Oren Hammes, DHFS; David Duecker, President and Board Chair, Southeast Wisconsin Homeland Security Partnership; and Mike Shoys, Vice President, Wisconsin Manufacturers and Commerce (WMC).

## Opening Remarks

**Terry C. Anderson**, Director of the Legislative Council, welcomed the committee and introduced the Legislative Council staff members assigned to work with the committee. He discussed rules for voting and described the process of reimbursement of expenses. He noted that the committee's meetings will be recorded and available on the Internet.

## Introduction of Committee Members

Chair Ballweg welcomed all members to the committee and thanked them for agreeing to serve. Committee members then introduced themselves.

## Invited Speakers

[Note: PowerPoint presentations and other documents referred to by the speakers are posted on the committee's Internet site.]

- ***Johnnie Smith, Administrator, Division of Emergency Management, Wisconsin Department of Military Affairs***

Mr. Smith described the organization of the Department of Military Affairs and Wisconsin Emergency Management (WEM), including WEM's Bureau of Response and Recovery and Bureau of Planning and Preparedness. He provided information about WEM regional offices; hazardous materials regional response teams; the role of WEM, local government, and the federal government in disasters; and the Governor's Homeland Security Council, which is chaired by Major General Al Wilkening, Adjutant General, Department of Military Affairs.

Mr. Smith also discussed the Mutual Aid Box Alarm System (MABAS), which is a mutual aid mechanism for fire, rescue, and emergency medical services (EMS) to use in multi-jurisdictional or multi-agency responses. He also discussed the issue of interoperability of communications equipment and use of Diggers Hotline and how that could have affected the recent explosion in Ellison Bay.

- ***Patrick Cooper, Acting Administrator, Division of Management and Technology, DHFS; and Tom Anderson, Dennis Tomczyk, and Oren Hammes, DHFS***

Mr. Cooper began by noting that each of the DHFS's seven institutions has developed and tested an emergency "all-hazards" plan. He added that, like all state agencies, in response to an executive order, DHFS has developed a continuity of operations plan. He discussed the challenge of coordinating the planning response efforts of all the levels of government and agencies that need to work together, including working with private sector service providers. He noted the DHFS Web site on preparedness information, which is at <http://dhfs.wisconsin.gov/preparedness/index.htm>. He also mentioned increased funding for preparedness after September 11, 2001 and the anthrax attacks that followed, but noted that this has declined since then.

Mr. Anderson noted that in 2005, the Division of Public Health worked with Wisconsin's local health departments, tribal health centers, regional consortia, and associated organizations to complete

the Wisconsin Public Health Emergency Plan. He stated that the purpose of this plan is to enable providers and agencies to meet local, regional, and state needs in a collaborative and organized manner in the event of bioterrorism, other infectious disease outbreaks, and other public health threats and outbreaks. He added that DHFS maintains a 24-7 emergency telephone hotline to receive notifications of public health and human service emergencies.

Mr. Tomczyk said that in January 2006, a group was convened to address planning and response issues of health care facilities, including evacuation of hospitals, nursing homes, and special care facilities. A template policy for hospital evacuation and shelter-in-place was developed and later adapted to other nonhospital health care facilities. Mr. Tomczyk also discussed the issue of surges during disasters, both on the inpatient and outpatient side. He added that the Public Health Council has an Emergency Preparedness Committee that has identified a number of issues that need special attention, including sustainability of preparedness, pandemic flu, preparedness measures, interoperable communications, special populations, home rule, behavioral health, funding for tribes, preparedness of physician offices, public awareness, and EMS.

Mr. Hammes noted that the Division of Disability and Elder Services in DHFS operates several state institutions, and has within it the bureaus that deal with persons with disabilities, as well as licensing nursing homes, hospices, and other facilities. He discussed the issues of behavioral health and disaster human services planning. He added that in December 2004, DHFS distributed to counties and tribes its first comprehensive Emergency Human Services Plan, which was developed with input from a broad-based advisory committee.

- ***David Duecker, President and Board Chair, Southeast Wisconsin Homeland Security Partnership***

Mr. Duecker stated that the Partnership is a section 501c (3) nonprofit corporation that was established to address homeland security challenges and major disasters. He described the objectives of the Partnership as follows: (1) facilitate preparedness plan development; (2) support regional government users; (3) build on natural strengths; (4) preserve organizational identity; (5) commit to efficiency of effort; (6) proactively broker information; (7) foster a truly integrated interoperating region; and (8) realistic assessment of available resources and capabilities. He went on to describe several major initiatives of the Partnership, including a corporate emergency access system, a crisis resource center, information and intelligence sharing, business mentorship, regional training and exercises, and connecting with other regional networks.

- ***Mike Shoys, Vice President, WMC***

Mr. Shoys noted that the Wisconsin Council of Safety, which is the Wisconsin chapter of the National Safety Council, is the largest safety organization in Wisconsin. It trains over 30,000 Wisconsin workers each year in a wide range of safety issues. He cited several examples of private sector assistance during disasters, including use of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) during the response to Hurricane Katrina. He also stated that WMC believes that dissemination of information is the single most important issue for businesses. He stated that during planning meetings with DHFS, WMC suggested that WMC might be an important link between the public and private sectors, since it has over 5,500 corporate members, 50 trade associations, and 100 local chambers of commerce. However, he stated that private sector entities are concerned that they could be held liable for damages due to errors

or omissions in information communicated. He noted that the federal government has established Information Sharing and Analysis Centers (ISACs) to allow critical sectors to share information with their constituents, and that immunity has been granted if mistakes are made in those communications. He noted some of the risks associated with pandemics, including human resources issues, personal hygiene issues, minimizing financial loss, keeping customers, and minimizing exposure to lawsuits.

### **Discussion of Committee Assignment**

Mr. Sweet noted that in discussions he and Ms. Shannon have had with Chair Ballweg and her staff, plans were made to bring in speakers at the next two meetings, including the Office of Justice Assistance, the Red Cross, the Chief Clerks of the two houses of the Legislature to discuss legislative continuity, and the Legislative Audit Bureau to discuss an audit involving best practices in the area of disaster preparedness.

Committee members mentioned other issues on which they would like further discussion, including: (1) the availability and transportation of food during a disaster; (2) animal diseases; (3) interoperability of communications technology; (4) evacuation planning, including evacuation of persons with disabilities; (5) employee rights during disasters; (6) coordination of various disaster planning exercises; (7) communication of public announcements during times when regular communication modes are unavailable; and (8) mutual aid.

Chair Ballweg asked staff to prepare information and provide a presentation at the November meeting regarding liability issues during disasters.

### **Plans for Future Meetings**

The next meeting of the Special Committee will be held on *Wednesday, October 11, 2006, at 10:00 a.m., in Room 417 North, State Capitol, Madison*. The afternoon portion of that meeting will be a public hearing. Subsequent meetings have been scheduled for Thursday, November 16 and Wednesday, December 13, both at 10:00 a.m.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 3:15 p.m.

RNS:wu