



WISCONSIN LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

DISASTER PREPAREDNESS PLANNING

Room 417 North, State Capitol
Madison, Wisconsin

October 11, 2006
10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

[The following is a summary of the October 11, 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, Curtis Haugen, Kathy Munsey, Leonard Orlando, Robert Ritger, and Diana Tatili.

COMMITTEE MEMBER EXCUSED: Public Member Pete Eide.

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

APPEARANCES: John Rostosky, Director of Preparedness and Response, Midwest Service Area, American Red Cross; Cullen Peltier, Director, Brown County Emergency Management; Edwin Ruckriegel, Fire Marshal and Emergency Planning Coordinator, City of Madison; Johnny Smith, Administrator, Wisconsin Emergency Management (WEM); Tom Anderson, Emergency Management Coordinator, Department of Health and Family Services (DHFS); JoAnn Wipperfurth, Pre-Emergency Planning LLC, Poynette; David Bloom, Wisconsin State Fire Chiefs Association, Madison; and Sabrina Fox, Wisconsin Dental Association, Madison.

Approval of the Minutes of the September 13, 2006 Meeting

Representative Kerkman moved, seconded by Mr. Bazan, to approve the minutes of the September 13, 2006 meeting. The motion carried on a voice vote.

Invited Speakers

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

- ***John Rostosky, Director of Preparedness and Response, Midwest Service Area, American Red Cross***

Mr. Rostosky gave a PowerPoint presentation, entitled *American Red Cross Role in Disaster Response*, in which he described the mission of the American Red Cross (ARC) as providing relief to victims of disasters and helping people prevent, prepare for, and respond to emergencies. He explained the ARC's administrative structure, which consists of the national office in Washington, D.C., eight regional service areas, including the midwest service area headquartered in Des Moines, Iowa, to which Wisconsin belongs, and 804 local chapters nationwide. Later, he noted that Wisconsin has 16 local ARC chapters and that ARC services are available in all 72 counties.

Mr. Rostosky said that Congress chartered the ARC in 1905, which formalized its authority to provide disaster services. This authority was reaffirmed in the 1988 Stafford Act, which created the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and provided that nothing in the Act limits or affects the responsibilities of the ARC under the 1905 charter.

He explained that the preparedness and response units in the eight regional service areas are responsible for ensuring the effectiveness of the initial response to a disaster and, where needed, deploying resources from other chapters or notifying the Disaster Operations Center at ARC national headquarters in the case of a major disaster. He discussed the system through which ARC paid and volunteer staff are deployed to disasters, and items such as meals, emergency response vehicles, and communications equipment are delivered. He noted that the focus of disaster relief is meeting peoples' immediate needs and may include referrals to other services and the provision of materials and financial assistance. All assistance is based on verified need and provided free of charge.

Mr. Rostosky stressed the need for ongoing discussions among the ARC and state and local governments to clarify the respective roles of each entity in disaster relief operations. He noted that clarification is achieved by such means as state laws, local ordinances, and formal and informal negotiated agreements. He concluded by discussing ARC's interaction and partnering with other agencies; issues relating to sheltering, particularly for special needs populations, and providing assistance to shelters of other agencies; and preparedness education, including the need for family ready-to-go disaster kits.

Mr. Rostosky then responded to questions from committee members. Concerning sheltering of people with special needs, he said that ARC chapters may enter into a letter of agreement to support a non-ARC shelter, so long as the shelter is open to everyone. He added that most special needs

populations are well defined, including those in medical nursing and hospital settings, where facility accreditation requirements include disaster planning. Regarding what state and local laws impede ARC disaster response, he noted that gaining access to disaster areas is sometimes a problem, but that ARC works closely with the local emergency operations center (EOC) to gain information and access. He noted that the ARC works well with all levels of government, in part because roles and responsibilities are determined in advance of an incident. Regarding whether emergency unemployment compensation payments would be available in the event of business closures, Mr. Rostosky said that when there is a presidential disaster declaration, FEMA could fund state unemployment payments, with ARC facilitating distribution of those payments.

- ***Cullen Peltier, Director, Brown County Emergency Management***

Mr. Peltier made a PowerPoint presentation entitled *County Emergency Preparedness Planning*. He noted that there are many local emergency management plans, which are reviewed frequently and revised as needed. They include the county emergency operations plan (EOP), a functional plan which sets forth various functions and actors in an emergency and who performs each function. In addition, agencies have standard operating procedures for carrying out their responsibilities under the EOP. There are also Emergency Planning Community Right to Know or "EPCRA" plans relating to hazardous materials. There are plans for exercising the various plans and evaluating how an exercise went and needed areas of improvement. There are family disaster plans, about which his agency has developed a brochure, and there are continuity of operations and continuity of government plans. He noted that his agency received a grant to develop plans for continuity of operations. Plans include delineation of essential functions, lines of succession, alternative locations to conduct business, and alternative means of notifying the public of open meetings.

Next, Mr. Peltier discussed the four phases of emergency management: preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation, noting that all phases require interaction with the private sector and nongovernmental organizations. He said that Michigan State University has developed a critical incident protocol to help communities establish public/private partnerships in a series of three meetings. Regarding areas needing improvement, Mr. Peltier said that an interoperability of communications plan must be developed to determine, among other things, who communicates on which frequencies. He noted the problem of just-in-time inventory and the need to enter into agreements with vendors to obtain supplies and equipment more quickly. He noted the need for more trained volunteers to assist special needs populations. He concluded by saying that recent legislative action creating a disaster relief fund and a mutual aid box alarm system (MABAS) will be helpful.

Asked for his top legislative recommendation, Mr. Peltier suggested legislation to clarify the authority of emergency management officials to order and enforce evacuations, curfews, and other similar actions. Regarding the technology needed for interoperability of communications, Mr. Peltier explained that different agencies currently operate on different frequencies and that, for the short term, patching equipment is available from WEM. He noted that a state interoperability committee is recommending linking communications systems, but that it is expensive to accomplish.

Regarding liability and credentialing issues relating to the citizen corps, Mr. Peltier said that ch. 166, Stats., covers liability of volunteers when activated through emergency management. He said that the National Incident Management System provides for standardized badges for volunteers.

- ***Edwin Ruckriegel, Fire Marshal and Emergency Planning Coordinator, City of Madison***

Mr. Ruckriegel noted the City of Madison has had its own emergency management system since August 2004 and formerly was linked to Dane County's system. He noted that Madison has an EOC and a continuity of operations plan that addresses such issues as line of succession, resources for continued governmental functions, and data and records management. The line of succession is prescribed by city ordinance. He noted that Wisconsin's home rule statutes give municipalities authority and prevent others from taking it away. He cited the need to coordinate all systems and share resources with neighboring communities. He said there is a planning group working with Dane County Emergency Management on the evacuation of special needs populations. Regarding notice of meetings during an emergency, he said that any public posting, even on a light pole, would suffice, and that meetings may be held in any public building.

In response to a question about evacuation plans, Mr. Ruckriegel said that the current plan looks at regional resources, shelter capacities, and transportation systems. Professor Bier noted the importance of looking at the impact on the Madison area of a Milwaukee or Chicago evacuation. Regarding plans for continuity of operations, Mr. Ruckriegel said that city managers had to be convinced that it was a good idea. Regarding cooperation between the city and county in disasters, particularly coordination of message, Mr. Ruckriegel explained that Madison would send a liaison to the Dane County EOC and vice versa. He also noted that WEM has responders that will facilitate communications.

Review Responses of the DHFS and WEM to Requests for Information

Johnnie Smith, WEM Administrator, and **Tom Anderson**, Emergency Management Coordinator, DHFS, answered questions about two documents distributed to follow up to questions raised at the September 13, 2006 meeting. One document, dated August 2006, pertains to the 2-1-1 system, the other is entitled *Legislative Committee Review, Response to Questions, Wisconsin Emergency Management*, dated October 5, 2006. Regarding the 2-1-1 system, the speakers indicated that their respective agencies did not request funds for the system in their 2007-09 state budget request. Regarding the issue of mass evacuation, Mr. Smith noted that all counties have evacuation plans that include planned destinations of evacuees. He said he will be attending a meeting at the FEMA regional office in Chicago on November 9 concerning mass evacuation and agreed to report back to the committee at the November meeting.

Representative Hines said he would like information on plans for the evacuation and care of dairy and other animal herds. Mr. Anderson noted that there are federal veterinary disaster funds, but that they might not be available in the first 72 hours of a disaster.

Chair Ballweg asked Mr. Alexander about mass evacuation planning in Milwaukee. He explained that Milwaukee has taken part in planning for southeast Wisconsin and that mass evacuation routes out of the area and major assembly points have been identified. He said that the identification of and assistance to special needs populations is an outstanding issue. Mr. Anderson noted that there will be a meeting on this issue on December 13, 2006.

Regarding WEM regions, Mr. Smith said that the regional directors are key to WEM activities throughout the state and that they participate in planning sessions with local officials and the private

sector. He said that the regional directors have a lot of work to do, with only one half time position, in addition to the director, in each regional office.

Regarding communication if regular means are unavailable, Mr. Smith said that there are many warning mechanisms, which he believes reach about 70% of the population at a time. He added that another communications system for first responders is at the protocol development stage.

Mr. Ritger commented that public employees must be reimbursed for participation in exercises, which creates a burden on local governments, and asked if there is any funding available for that purpose. Mr. Smith said he did not believe so, but said he would pursue the issue with the Office of Justice Assistance (OJA).

Public Hearing

- ***JoAnn Wipperfurth, Pre-Emergency Planning LLC, Poynette***

Ms. Wipperfurth said she is a former WEM exercise officer who now owns a pre-emergency planning company that provides exercise development as well as training on such issues as the incident command system and the EOC operations. She said the company conducts about 40 exercises a year with local, state, and private sector clients. She expressed concern about the effect on her business of the recommendations on p. 7 of the WEM/DHFS follow-up document to designate WEM “as the clearinghouse for all state and local exercises--grant funded or unfunded” and “as a single source for identifying exercise facilitators to develop, conduct, evaluate and document state exercises.”

Senator Robson asked Ms. Wipperfurth for a recommendation concerning the committee’s charge to examine public and private sector cooperation. Ms. Wipperfurth said that counties should have less lengthy and complicated forms for reporting to WEM following an exercise.

- ***David Bloom, Wisconsin State Fire Chiefs Association, Madison***

Mr. Bloom said that Wisconsin recently enacted a law permitting use of MABAS for fire and emergency medical services (EMS) and that administrative rules for the system should be promulgated by December 2006. He noted that Illinois has employed the system for at least 30 years and that MABAS has been particularly well-received in southeast Wisconsin where, to date, nine counties have become MABAS divisions. He explained that each fire or EMS department within a MABAS division creates box alarm cards for various types of incidents, specifying the number of each type of fire truck, for example, that they will provide to a requesting jurisdiction. The incident commander in a jurisdiction whose resources are depleted during an emergency can readily call for MABAS backup and know which vehicles will be provided. He said that liability coverage is provided by the agency supplying the aid so that the requesting agency is not overly burdened. He said that agencies not participating in MABAS may nonetheless have similar mutual aid agreements.

Responding to a question regarding heavy rescue teams, Mr. Bloom noted that the teams are under WEM auspices and receive training at Fort McCoy. Chair Ballweg asked Mr. Smith to provide information on those teams at the November committee meeting. She asked whether the MABAS legislation should be expanded in the future to cover police services. She asked how to ensure that there

is not overuse of MABAS. Mr. Bloom responded that during MABAS training, incident commanders are taught that they do not have to accept all of the equipment called for on the MABAS card.

- ***Sabrina Fox, Wisconsin Dental Association, Madison***

Ms. Fox noted that dentists can be a valuable resource during emergencies, because they are trained in areas such as airway management. Representative Hines noted that the model public health act includes dentists, as well as veterinarians. Mr. Eggebrecht commented that perhaps the Wisconsin Dental Association should encourage dentists to register as volunteers. In response to a question, Ms. Fox said that dentists are able to administer vaccinations and sedation and apply splints.

Plans for Future Meetings

Ms. Shannon discussed the agenda for the November 16 meeting, which includes presentations by the OJA, the Legislative Audit Bureau, the Senate and Assembly Chief Clerks, and the Wisconsin Grocers Association. In addition, she noted that Mr. Sweet will discuss liability issues. Representative Hines asked that the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection be invited to discuss plans for the evacuation of farm animals and the protection of the agricultural food supply before it gets to the grocers. Ms. Shannon noted that at today's meeting, Mr. Smith agreed to brief the committee on the establishment and training of heavy rescue teams as well as the upcoming meeting in Chicago on mass evacuation.

Mr. Haugen said that during a pandemic, businesses would close and many people would go on unemployment compensation. He suggested that the committee consider the need for legislation to seek federal funds to pay for those benefits and proposed that the Department of Workforce Development be invited to address the committee on this issue.

Dr. Carlson asked whether templates exist or could be developed for standardization of efforts. Chair Ballweg asked Mr. Smith to address this issue at the next meeting. Ms. Munsey noted that the Department of Commerce has held several summits on issues relating to business operations in emergency situations and suggested that the agency be asked to report to the committee on those efforts. Mr. Alexander noted that OJA has an interoperability specialist who could be asked to come with Mr. Steingraber to the November meeting.

The next meeting of the Special Committee will be held on ***Thursday, November 16, 2006, at 10:00 a.m., in the Legislative Council Large Conference Room, One East Main Street, Suite 401, Madison.***

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 3:00 p.m.

PS:wu