Full Commission Meeting  
June 28, 2011  
Halifax Elementary School, West Halifax, VT

Commissioners Present: Maggie Bartenhagen, Elaine Beckwith, Heath Boyer, Melinda Bussino, Jack Cunningham, John Kristensen, Emily Kunreuther, Alan LaCombe, Alice Maes, Reg Maynard, Ed Rice, Lew Sorenson, Eric Stevens, Roger Turner, Piet van Loon

Citizen Interest Commissioners Present:

Guests Present: Sheriff Keith Clark, Nicholas Bartenhagen – Halifax, Pete McDonald – Windham Volunteer Fire Co.

Staff Present: Chris Campany, Dinah Reed, Ashley Collins

Introductions: There was a quorum of 14 towns present.

Convened: 7:37pm

Administrative Items & Reports:

Secretary’s Report: On a motion made by Jack Cunningham, seconded by Reg Maynard the minutes from the May meeting were approved.

Executive Board Report: On a motion made by Heath Boyer, seconded by Jack Cunningham the Executive Board draft minutes from the June meeting were accepted.

Financial Report: On a motion made by Reg Maynard, seconded by Lew Sorenson the finance report was approved.

Certified Emergency Response Team (CERT): Sheriff Keith Clark was present to discuss the purpose and importance of the Certified Emergency Response Team (CERT). CERT is a volunteer program made up of private citizens who complete training and courses to acquire basic skills they will need to respond to their communities in the event of an emergency, when first responders are not readily available. The volunteers complete a 16-20 hour initial training course that covers: basic first aid, fire suppression, building searches, outlying area searches, traffic control, animal care, and more. They also participate in trainings once a month, and a larger training session once every quarter. CERT members are also trained to assist with preplanned events such as: local parades, county fairs, and other community events that use volunteers to manage public safety. The CERT Program is a free service to all
Windham region towns. One of the principal difficulties they are currently facing is they are not being utilized. This could result in the loss of volunteers. Sheriff Clark is looking for more ways to raise community awareness about the CERT team, including among our region’s first responders, and how it can be used. There was some discussion about how the CERT team gets called to an emergency. Vermont Emergency Management (VEM) requires Fire Chiefs to submit a contact sheet for all those who will be notified in the event of specific emergencies. VEM would initialize contact with CERT members to respond to an emergency if the local Fire Chief has CERT Team members listed on the first alarm notification list. It was suggested that CERT members try to participate in more trainings with their local Fire Departments to get to know who they might be working alongside in the event that they get called in for emergency assistance. The CERT Team is looking for volunteers aged 16 years and older. Among the suggestions offered as to where to look for more volunteers were: high schools, the career centers, non-active fire fighters who still want to be involved but at a less intense level and presentations in communities about what the CERT team does.

**Emergency Planning Tools:** WRC Assistant Planner, Dinah Reed was present to discuss local emergency planning tools, and the important role of local governments – especially selectboards. Vermont Statute (Title 20) states that all towns must participate in emergency planning. Since she came on staff in September 2010, Dinah has met with at least 20 towns in the Windham region regarding pre-hazard mitigation plans, and has worked with them to update their plans and shepherd those plans through the FEMA review process. Dinah reviewed three tools to help with the planning process:

1) **Basic Emergency Operations Plan (BEOP):** Formerly known as the Rapid Response Plan, the BEOP:
   - Assigns responsibility to organizations and individuals for carrying out specific actions at projected times and places in an emergency that exceeds the capability or routine responsibility of any one agency, e.g., the fire department.
   - Sets forth lines of authority and organizational relationships, and shows how all actions will be coordinated.
   - Describes how people and property will be protected in emergencies and disasters.
   - Identifies personnel, equipment, facilities, supplies, and other resources available—within the jurisdiction or by agreement with other jurisdictions—for use during response and recovery operations.
   - Identifies steps to address mitigation concerns during response and recovery activities.
   - The form also contains information regarding schools, elderly care, daycare facilities, animal care, as well as geographical locations that are more susceptible to hazards.

The BEOP needs to be updated annually, whether changes made or not, and approved by the selectboard. We will ask towns for their updated BEOPs in May, after any changes resulting from Town Meeting have been settled. We will then submit the BEOP to Vermont Emergency Management (VEM) on behalf of the town. We do this to ensure the BEOP gets to where it needs to go, and to help both the Towns and the States with their BEOP record keeping.
2) **All Hazard Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plan:** The purpose of the All Hazard Mitigation Plan is for each town to identify what the hazards are, where the hazards are most severe, and identify local actions that can be taken to reduce the severity of the hazard. It is less expensive to prevent disasters than to repeatedly repair damage after disasters have struck. The core focus of the All Hazard Mitigation Plan is hazard mitigation strategies and measures that can alter the hazard by eliminating or reducing the frequency of occurrence, averting the hazard by redirecting the impact by means of a structure or land treatment, adapt to the hazard by modifying structures or standards, or avoid the hazard by stopping or limiting development, and could include projects such as:

- Flood-proofing structures
- Tying down propane/fuel tanks in flood-prone areas
- Elevating furnaces and water heaters
- Identifying and modifying high traffic incident locations and routes
- Ensuring adequate water supply
- Elevating structures or utilities above flood levels
- Identifying and upgrading undersized culverts
- Proactive land use planning for floodplains and other flood-prone areas
- Proper road maintenance and construction
- Ensuring critical facilities are safely located
- Establish and enforce appropriate building codes
- Public information

The All Hazard Mitigation Plan plan does not commit the town to the execution of all of the mitigation strategies it identifies, but rather serves as guidance for hazard mitigation priorities and opportunities. Public involvement in the development of the plan is a requirement. Once the plan is conditionally approved by FEMA it must be adopted by the town selectboard.

3) **National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP):** Nearly 20,000 communities across the United States and its territories participate in the FEMA-administered NFIP. The three components of the NFIP program are:

1) Flood hazard mapping.
2) Floodplain management; and
3) Flood insurance.

By adopting and enforcing floodplain management ordinances, communities can reduce future flood damage. In exchange, the NFIP makes Federally-backed flood insurance available to homeowners, renters, and business owners in these communities. Community participation in the NFIP is voluntary. Flood insurance is designed to provide an alternative to disaster assistance to reduce the escalating costs of repairing damage to buildings and their contents caused by floods. In addition to providing flood insurance and reducing flood damages through floodplain management regulations, the NFIP identifies and maps the Nation's floodplains. Mapping flood hazards creates broad-based awareness of the flood hazards and provides the data needed for floodplain management.
management programs and to actuarially rate new construction for flood insurance. Twenty-three of the Windham Region’s 27 towns participate in the NFIP.

Executive Director’s Report & Other Business:
1) Chris announced that Readsboro Commissioner John Whitman, and Rockingham Commissioner Fred Bullock, will resign from their respective positions on the Executive Board at the end of this term in September. He asked the commissioners to consider possible nominations for these available positions on the Board, which also entail chairing of a WRC committee.
2) Chris announced the Executive Board decision not to hold a Full Commission meeting in July as no critical business was anticipated. The next meeting will be the annual business meeting in August, which will be held at the Newbrook Fire Station. He stressed the importance of having a quorum at this meeting as such will be necessary to approve the FY 2012 Work Program and Budget, elect officers and citizen interest commissioners, and approve town plans.
3) Chris announced that he had been elected to serve as the Chair of the Connecticut River Watershed Advisory Commission and President of the Connecticut River Joint Commissions (CRJC).

Reg Maynard moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Ed Rice.
Meeting adjourned at 8:56pm

Respectfully submitted,
Ashley Collins