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**TOWN OF SOMERS
CIVIL PREPAREDNESS ADVISORY COUNCIL
MEETING MINUTES
Friday, September 2, 2011
7:30 a.m.
Fire Station**

Call to order: 7:30 a.m.

Members Present: Todd Rolland, Jim MacFeat, Paula LaFrance, Lisa Pellegrini, Frank Falcone, Dan Thayer, Pete DeBrino- guest: Kathy Devlin

Emergency Preparedness Post Hurricane Analysis

General comments:

- **Many things went well and were favorably received:**
 - Fire, police, DPW, schools, and CERT did a phenomenal job.
 - The safety needs for the Town were met, and in the aftermath the Town and Safety Preparedness group were dealing more with managing the inconveniences associated with the storm than activities associated with emergencies.
 - The initial post hurricane meeting brought necessary relief measures to the 63% of residents who were without power. This includes: water, showers, ice, plug-ins, and distribution of sign ups for reverse 911 to those who had not registered previously.
 - Cooperation between school and town extremely effective- opening of school on Tuesday and using a news release to parents and neighbors via the school helped to disseminate information to those who otherwise could not have a means with which to learn necessary information. Schools also provided communication headquarters for the town and became a part of the solution with shower facilities throughout the power loss.
 - Offering the residents access to dispose of debris for the length of the week and extending hours on Sunday were favorably received. When residents arrived at the transfer station they had the added surprise of no cost for Katrina related debris.
 - Communications in the post event managed by the Town Clerk on both the government and open websites, as well as communications by DPW and Selectman Lisa Pellegrini to the media- t.v., radio, and newspaper effectively reached more of the population.
 - Redeployment of employees from regular duties to communications and support roles , and use of volunteers from CERT helped the residents realize care was available.
- **What could have gone better:**
 - **The Town should apply a proactive vs. reactive response**

- **Communications:**
 - Pre-planning (suggest: taking time in prep meetings to have model communications ready to handle most emergency situations that would require tweaking- determine a vehicle to involve the community better in what they can expect and how they should prepare themselves. Make them know ahead of time what the dedicate response teams will do and what they must assume is left to prepare and manage during the emergency situation.
 - Vehicles (means/methods) of communication that are catalogued and prepared ahead of time would help speed up the process of informing the public in the event power loss prevents communications. In the most recent event, it became apparent that the only method available post Irene was cell phone technology. There was no real communication to all townspeople.
 - In the absence of the unified command, State Police self-dispatched
 - DPW, Fire, and police, and other members of the EOC were not all communicating together.
 - **A comprehensive approach to dealing with the community.** There was a heightened sense of entitlement and expectation that the Town had everything in control and could meet all their needs. It may be unrealistic but this expectation is reality because they believe they pay for this- it does not parallel what would be expected in the private sector or in the military- everyone is expected to assume responsibility for themselves and those around them.
- **The power company was difficult to work with and they were not prepared adequately to deal with the enormity of the effects.** Suggestions for improvement should be a topic for discussion with the governor and the municipalities.
- **Suggestions for continuous improvement:**
 - Open EOC-
 - “Prepare for the worst and hope for the best. It is better to call everyone needed because when you need to backfill you lose every time.”
 - “Not just disaster control”, the EOC must be prepared to do the entire job”
 - Act with unified command.
 - Review the list to whom communications are spread, and outside of Reverse 911, prepare a list of employees, workers, CERT volunteers, town officials, businesses, as well as places with large dwellings (e.g. Woodcrest Housing Authority).
 - Have a game plan prepared ahead of time, establish and communicate broadly and often- “in case of emergency”- what, where and how

residents can receive help from the town: (water, showers, plug ins, school cancellations, road closings, ice, beyond 911 and 211, establish a number they can call for general questions or concerns that will be a permanent way to reach someone- a number one the town can forward all calls to during an emergency with a live person to take down information and address concerns.)

- Align the Town and funding sources to meet the priorities realized as underfunded by the events of this storm. (Look at equipment, communications, etc.)
- Emergency preparedness meetings must be work meetings – discuss and catalog any and all “what if” scenarios, agree upon actions, practice and drill are necessary.
- Establish the command center- maybe Kibbe Fuller?
- Radios and antennae, broadband and narrowband frequency communications, enhancing reverse 911, and phone systems should be a part of many discussions.

Cataloging “What If scenarios” Preliminary list

- Heavy rains and floods
- Earthquakes
- Heavy snowfall
- Major fire
- Tornado
- Hurricane
- Explosion
- School invasion (e.g. Columbine)
- Chemical spills (highway, buildings, fields)

Adjournment: 8:40 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted

Kathleen Devlin,

Minutes are not official until accepted at a subsequent meeting.