

CIVIL PREPAREDNESS ALL HAZARDS COMMITTEE

MINUTES

September 20, 2012

PRESENT: Anthony Schirillo, Chairman; Linda Barlow, Sikorsky Aircraft; Anthony Dynderski, Sikorsky Fire Dept.; Steven Woods, American Red Cross; Paul Plouffe, Service Master; Michael Abramowitz, ARES; Mark Renna, Cray Valley USA LLC; Andrea Boisservain, Stratford Health Dept.; Maureen Whelan, Stratford Health Dept.; Dawn Severine, Stratford Health Dept.; Brian Lampart, Stratford Fire Marshal; David Wright, Town of Stratford

CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Schirillo called the meeting to order at 9:06 am. The minutes of the meeting conducted June 21, 2012 were approved unanimously.

Director Schirillo reported there is currently a Citizen Emergency Response Team (CERT) of eight people. There are others who have expressed an interest in being trained. CERT classes cannot be held with less than fifteen people. Director Schirillo wants to work on building the CERT team. Our CERT members and town employees who are shelter managers were able to participate in the statewide exercise at the end of July. They went to a regional shelter in Stamford. They were able to see how the Red Cross interacted with the larger community and were able to run through best practices. This exercise and running the shelter during hurricane Irene have provided good training. The CERT team will be utilized in the shelter, the EOC and will assist other CERT teams when needed.

The EOC has been changed from the old conference style to the Federal and State standard of emergency and support function style. This is easier because ours is not a command center; it is a support center for the ICS system. The technology is being upgraded and will be more flexible and usable. The web EOC was tested during hurricane Irene. We were one of the few towns that had a functional exercise with UI.

Andrea Boisservain reported that the State Health Dept. through the local health departments would be doing a full-scale exercise the week of Sept 11, 2013. They will be contacting their partners in the mass dispensing area for this exercise, CERT, etc. It will be an event of escalation testing local jurisdiction, regional and state response over a period of a week. Director Schirillo said that these exercise take time to plan and that a year is a reasonable amount of time.

Steven Woods reported on the Red Cross "Safe and Well Program" This program used to be called "Disaster Welfare Inquiry". The Red Cross would set up a team and families that were separated during a disaster, could call their local Red Cross anywhere in the country and the Red Cross would attempt to find a missing family member through the Red Cross network of chapters and services. Today's technology makes this type of service no longer necessary. After hurricane Katrina, the Red Cross developed a web-based family unification program call "Safe and Well". It is accessible through redcross.org. The Red Cross encourages everyone being evacuated from a disaster area to first use their own networking capabilities and social media to let their family know they are safe and well. As an alternative, people can log onto the Red Cross website and register themselves as being safe and well. Laptops are then located in shelters and service areas where families can check on loved ones. Also, people who are

looking for a family member who was evacuated from a disaster area, can go on the “Safe and Well” website and search for that person on line. They will need the person’s name and a secondary piece of information such as phone number or street address.

The Red Cross still does individual searches for high-risk individuals. They will send a team to search for a direct relative with either health or mental health issues on limited case-by-case bases. The Safe and Well volunteers search websites, hospitals, shelters etc. for the individuals.

Mike Abramowitz reported that spreadsheets and lists of names could be sent over the ham radio system. During the statewide exercise, ham radio operators were located in Stamford, Bridgeport and Stratford. They used a technique called the Narrow Band Emergency Messaging System and software that supported it. Spreadsheets were sent from Stamford and received in Bridgeport and Stratford. The importance of this is that if cell phones and computers are not available, information can be sent through the ham radio system.

All towns in state and out are connected through the Narrow Band Messaging System. During storm Irene ham operators were used at the Bunnell shelter. Ham operators are a fail-safe system and are used when all other systems of communications fail. A demonstration will be held at the December meeting.

The meeting went into recess at 9:34 am

The meeting came out of recess and adjourned at 9:50 a.m.

Laurie Goodsell, secretary