

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT USERS BOARD MEETING

October 13th, 9:00 am

Pennington County Administration Building | Dispatch 911 Conference Room – First Floor

Board members in attendance: Jason Culberson, Rapid City Fire Department; Andrew Becker, Rapid City Police Department (alternate); Lloyd LaCroix, Pennington County Commission (alternate); Travis Lasseter, Pennington County Commission; Jodi Mack, South Dakota National Guard; Brian Mueller, Pennington County Sheriff's Office; Gary Sortland, Pennington County Fire Service Board; Greg Strommen, Rapid City Council.

Others in attendance: Dustin Willett, Emergency Manager; Brooke Love, Staff Assistant.

- I. MEETING CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 9:08 am by J Culberson, Rapid City Fire Department.
- II. PUBLIC COMMENTS: Nothing was brought forth.
APPROVE AGENDA: *Motion to approve October 13, 2023, agenda by G Sortland, B Mueller second. Motion carried.*
- III. APPROVE MINUTES: *Motion to approve July 14, 2023, minutes by T Lasseter, G Sortland second. Motion carried.*
- IV. Confirm Board Members and Alternates: No change.
- V. OLD BUSINESS
 - a. CERT Training: Willett reported that the goal is to have the public prepared so wherever they may be, they will be able to react in a safe and effective manner. Local places of worship have expressed interest in having the CERT training come to their facilities and train their parishioners. He wants to stay true to the original vision of training the community which is going out into the community to locations where a group of at least 15-20 members can be trained effectively. He concluded, 100s of people are trained in the CERT program. Additionally, he reported that the safety sessions class is currently being held in the EOC for a group of access and functional needs students from RCSD. The curriculum was modified to fit the needs of the audience. It has been a well-received class.
 - b. Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plan (PDM): Willett reported that PDM is a labor-intensive process. The current plan expires September 2024. It is contracted with a FEMA grant with the Black Hills Council leading the planning process. It will be the first ever digital pre-disaster plan in SD delivered in a GIS platform. He has already met with Andy from GIS. Willette reported that this will be a 5-year plan, and by putting it into a digital format, it will make subsequent revisions easier and quicker. In addition, having it online and interactive in a digital format will allow for easier updating to keep the content current, and allow for entities to submit content in real-time. It was asked, is the contract with Black Hills Council about? Willett responded, Kaylee organizes the meetings and is spear-heading the check off list.

- i. Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP): Willett reported that this 10-year plan is typically required by Bureau of Land Management and managed out of the Fire office; however, it would be a more productive plan to loop CWPP and PDM together since they have the same people and plan --combining the two just makes more sense. He stated that the wildland urban interface is a concern for Rapid City and SD. There are limited definitions, so they are working with Chip and Eric to get on the same page by working to define through GIS wildlife interface and adopting Colorado's front range work. It was asked, when it is done how will the information (plan) get to land level people? Willett replied that the information will be provided through a link online for anyone to access and explore the product (GIS). This is about mitigation, and the hope that making it online will make it more accessible to the responders and public. Making it digital will make it more accessible. He stated that an approved FEMA plan is integral for obtaining FEMA funding, and that this plan must be in place to receive FEMA funding. It was asked, will the public have access to this? Willett stated that there are two versions, redacted and un-redacted. It would be the redacted version that would be available to the public. It was asked, could it be delivered in a way that is easy to read, like a quick access guide? Willett answered that the process would entail taking a 400-page PDF document and turning it into a map of Pennington County-Rapid City, with a list of hazards that the public could click on to obtain information. It would allow users explore categories within a map, with the idea that putting information with pictures would make it easier to access and digest.
- c. Duty Officer: Willett reported that he is currently working on the project, which is hanging on one piece, the approved policy on how we warn the public. The question is, what is the Rapid City-Pennington County alert and warning protocol alert process? Willett and White are putting the policy down on paper to provide continuity and use for training purposes. Some of the challenges are as follows, the 90-character initial message, where you start and how do you communicate your message to the public in 90-characters? What technology is right? The whole duty officer program hinges on having this policy done. When completed, the policy will have to go before the EMUB board and elected officers on both the City and County side with everyone needing to agree. It was asked, does EM look at current disasters (ie. the recent Maui fires) and what went right and/or wrong? Willett responded with yes, we learn from other people's responses, look at any errors and how things happened in the system. He stated that EM does alert warnings well; however, the warning system policy needs to be in written form because more than two people need to be trained on how to put out these warnings. He stated that numerous mistakes happen with warning systems because they tend to be too bureaucratic. The power of IPAWS is the ability to send out a public message and hitting everyone (public) in 5 minutes. The information needs to get out quickly, otherwise there is a breakdown and too

much time passes to warn people effectively. He concluded that there needs to be trust between EM and elected officials so that EM can act quickly.

- d. Continuity Planning: Willett reported that this is an ongoing project. He has met with the state representative. The state purchased a software suite that will be accessible to us; however, there may be limitations. So, he has also met with the vendor to gain information, because we may need to purchase the software for all-inclusive access.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

- a. LE Specific ICS Class – Scope & Scale: Willett reported that online FEMA classes are available; however, they are not the right answer for most folks. He is currently working on a scaled-down version. When completed, he would be happy to do short, targeted presentations on NIMS and ICS and what we use in Pennington County. This would be for law enforcement officials, stakeholders, Fire, etc. A board member stated, if we have a long-planned emergency, law enforcement knows the chain of command; however, if other entities show up to the emergency it can sometimes be hard to obtain the chain of command during the active event. He would like to see all the entities know all the information and participate in integration training to cut down on any frustrations that may come up on an active scene. This would help on scene responders know the process, increase communication, and allow them access to what they need to respond to the emergency. Willett commented that it would be productive to get operation personnel together and decide on a process.
- b. 511 Road Closures: Willett referenced last winter's storm and its effect on the population of Pierre. He stated that what is on the table is still pending; however, DOT has given counties the ability to enter and communicate travel risks to the public. This process would have two parts; how would EM implement and how would the process work? Currently, when DOT closes interstate, Google maps will state that the interstate is closed and typically reroute travelers to the same destination. The goal would be to give counties the ability to enter data into 511 with the capability to scrape data from the system with the hopes that navigation systems would then not send everyone to the same place. It was asked, what is the current process? Willett reported that we currently make our county closure decisions based on road conditions, asking the question, is it safe for employees and public to be on the road to get to work and home? It was suggested, what about splitting Pennington County into two geographic areas, boxing out Rapid City? If Pennington County put out "no travel" advisories, we could label geographic areas, then communicate with Rapid City about what "no travel" advisories we put out for Pennington County. Willett stated that this would be a question to ask the city, would they be ok with carving out a principality?

VII. OTHER

- a. Willett reported that Troy Blevins, EM Specialist, is a terrific addition to the team.

- b. Willett reported that the Commission has approved the purchase of a new vehicle for the EM Director. Willett ordered a 2024 Dodge Durango special service vehicle with an estimated delivery date of February 2024.
- c. Willett reported that the employee message notification test on 10-12-23 for county employees, which included the county closure process, went well. He stated that it was a good level set test to get everyone on the system. Alexa White, Deputy Director, visited with the city regarding the Everbridge system; it is a versatile system that issues emergency warnings and employee notifications.
- d. Summer study: Willett reported that EM was not well represented. He believes that their recommendation for EM is problematic. He does not feel that regionalizing EM and making everyone a state employee is a good idea, rather a poor solution for the State of SD.
- e. Camp Rapid: Willett reported that there is an agreement currently being penned that would allow EM to use a 10x10 room in Camp Rapid's conference center for EM supply storage. In the case of an emergency, supplies could be quickly utilized by simply moving them into the conference center.

VIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION per SDCL 1-25-2(6):

IX. ADJOURNMENT: *Motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:55am by Sortland, Mueller second. Moton carried.*