

Policy Committee Meeting
January 16, 2015
9:00 – 11:00 AM
TVFR Command and Business Operations
Center
11945 SW 70th, Tigard, OR



RDPO

Regional Disaster Preparedness Organization

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Meeting Minutes

Policy Committee Members Present:

1. Tony Hyde, Commissioner, Columbia County and Chair of the RDPO Policy Committee
2. Catherine Arnold, Councilor, City of Beaverton
3. Brian Cooper, Councilor, City of Fairview
4. Don Chaney, Councilor, City of Camas
5. Karylenn Echols, Councilor, City of Gresham
6. Larry Goff, Operations Chief, City of Lake Oswego Fire Department (proxy)
7. Vince Granato, Chief Operating Officer, Port of Portland
8. Kathryn Harrington, Councilor, Metro
9. John Ludlow, Commissioner/Chair, Clackamas County
10. Harry Saporta, Safety and Security Executive, TriMet (proxy)
11. Dick Schouten, Commissioner, Washington County
12. Loretta Smith, Commissioner, Multnomah County
13. Jeanne E. Stewart, Councilor, Clark County

Steering Committee Members Present:

1. Nancy Bush, Clackamas County Representative
2. Dave Houghton, Multnomah County Representative
3. Scott Johnson, Clark County Representative
4. Carmen Merlo, City of Portland Representative
5. Scott Porter, Washington County Representative
6. Kathryn Richer, Health System Representative

Other RDPO and Guests:

1. Denise Barrett, RDPO Manager
2. Todd Felix, Emergency Manager, City of Gresham (and Chair, RDPO Emergency Management Work Group/REMTEC)
3. Anna Pendergrass, Clark Regional Emergency Services Agency (CRESA)
4. Gary Chenault, Chief of Staff, District #2, Multnomah County
5. Axel Swanson, Policy Analyst, Clark County
6. Daniel Nibouar, Disaster Debris Planner, Metro

1. Welcome, Introductions and Agenda Review – Tony Hyde, Chair

Chair Hyde opened the meeting at 9:03 am and asked for self-introductions. He followed with a brief review of the meeting agenda and shared his thoughts on the importance of this body for regional disaster preparedness.

2. Administrative Matters – Chair Hyde

Chair Hyde asked the members if they would approve the September 26, 2014, Policy Committee meeting minutes. Commissioner Schouten motioned for the minutes to be approved as written. Commissioner Ludlow seconded the motion. Members present approved the motion unanimously.

3. Disaster Declarations 101 – Scott Porter, Director, Washington County Emergency Management Cooperative and Washington County Representative to the RDPO Steering Committee

Chair Hyde introduced the topic by recalling some of the key challenges during the Vernonia floods (1996 and 2007) when officials did not know how to declare a disaster. He emphasized the critical importance of local officials understanding the disaster declaration processes to capitalize on opportunities for federal reimbursement (e.g., public assistance).

- a. Scott commenced his presentation with a pertinent quote from Michael Bloomberg on emergency declarations: “If a hurricane strikes, we can blame the President for not being there; we can blame Congress and FEMA; we can blame the state governments; but in the end, it’s the mayors and the local city governments that have to be prepared for emergencies and be prepared to act.”
- b. Scott noted that we have to remember that all emergencies are local. We are here when it starts and when everyone leaves, so we must be prepared.
- c. Scott reminded the Policy Committee of the request they made at the September 26, 2014, meeting to learn about disaster declarations and post-disaster public assistance. He said the Steering Committee guided him to focus on the former topic in the interest of time.
- d. Note: the full presentation can be found on the RDPO website at the following link: <http://www.portlandoregon.gov/rdpo/article/515895>
- e. Select Highlights and Discussions:
 - i. Scott said that sometimes local governments declare an emergency but do not ask for state or federal assistance, opting instead to use their own resources. There are some emergency situations, he said, where a local government could suspend normal procurement procedures (e.g., to bypass three quotes) or invoke other emergency procedures to solve an evolving emergency situation. He cited an

incident in Washington County – rural road sliding down a hill – where the county board declared an emergency and suspended the normal procurement rules.

- ii. He emphasized that the time to ask the state for help is when local resources are expended. Scott mentioned the importance of specifying the effective period (i.e., identifying the period of your declaration). Costs borne outside the period may not be eligible for reimbursement.
- iii. Tony Hyde said you could declare for two weeks, and then update.
- iv. Oregon is a lot more specific about local emergency declaration requirements than Washington State, Scott explained. In Oregon, must have an emergency ordinance or resolution. Should spell out who can declare, succession of authority, and what measures can be imposed.
- v. Scott noted calling for evacuation as an example of authorizing protective measures. Chair Ludlow added that a local government could place a restriction on public gatherings, as in the case of a pandemic. Could close schools, public venues, etc. Scott said that you can do this under the state public health law and local ordinance.
- vi. On the subject of mandatory evacuation, Chair Hyde explained how the city of Vernonia handled evacuation during the 1996 Vernonia flood. Sent out the police at 4:00 a.m. Local residents did not know the flood was imminent or were in denial. Chair Hyde emphasized that declaring a mandatory evacuation in the case of an emerging disaster such as a flood is critical to reduce risk of losing local people and placing emergency responders in life threatening situations.
- vii. Scott emphasized that local government, not the state, must declare mandatory evacuations and other measures for the public to follow (e.g., curfew). Processes in OR and WA are the same: city declares then goes to the county and county should broker assistance in the county before going to the state. As for mutual aid, if county cannot acquire sufficient resources, then it goes to the state.
- viii. Scott cited one exception to the process for local declarations: federal agriculture people on the ground working with local farmers. They are in the best position to assess drought, wet, hard freeze, and disease emergencies. The Farm Service Agency would go to the County Board requesting that an emergency be declared. That has happened three times in Washington County: freeze, excessive rain, and drought. Furthermore, a federal level emergency may be needed.
- ix. Scott mentioned that in the case of authority related to state emergency declarations, ORS 401 and RCW 43.06 identify broad authority of governors to declare an emergency/disaster. He said that there are other specific statutes in Oregon covering public health, conflagration fire, severe drought, and energy

shortage. He was unable to find codes in the Revised Code of Washington (RCW) on these or other types of emergencies/disasters.

- x. Chair Ludlow asked about measures to restrict activities, specifically the concept of “social distancing.” Scott said we saw a little of this during H1N1. The flu was not as deadly as people feared. Some meetings were cancelled. More hand sanitizer was available.
- xi. Chair Ludlow said: “This is where separation of church and state comes into play – a delicate dance on imposing social distancing on houses of worship.”
- xii. Scott explained a bit about the Conflagration Act, which makes local fire-fighting resources available to help protect structures. The State Fire Marshal is in charge of the fire mobilization plan and structural fire protection assistance.
- xiii. Scott explained what happens in an energy emergency and the Oregon petroleum contingency plan is activated. Could have the industry divert some of its resources (up to 15%) to meet the needs of local and state governments. Oregon’s emergency plan only covers shortages and needs to account for the reality of catastrophic events, such as earthquakes.
- xiv. State public health authority heavily involved with the governor’s office. State does not declare an agriculture emergency. State forwards a letter to the feds to ask them to declare an agriculture emergency. Only example of where the state sends the request to the feds to declare. At the federal level, there are Presidential and Secretarial declarations.
- xv. A Presidential Major Disaster declaration brings federal resources and FEMA and other federal agency financial assistance to support citizens and local governments.
- xvi. A Presidential Emergency declaration brings federal assets but not financial assistance (includes people and equipment); 75-25 match; other splits; depends on the wherewithal of the community.
- xvii. Emergency vs Major Declaration: latter can go up to 18 months.
- xviii. Secretary of Transportation can declare an emergency for federal aid highways, which are mostly state and county roads; arterials and up.
- xix. Small Business Administration (SBA) declarations can assist businesses with economic losses: snow event in 2008; lasted a week; impacted a lot of businesses whose doors were closed. Did not lose their products; did not get the business economic disaster loans.

- xx. The Presidential declaration process can be immediate or deliberative: sometimes the President declares based on the merits of what is seen in the news media (e.g., Loma Prieta and Northridge earthquakes).
- xxi. Emergency management offices coordinate the Initial Damage Assessment (IDA) process: goal is 24-72 hours. Notes damages and financial loss estimates. Comprehensive countywide IDA assists FEMA Region 10 in deciding whether to recommend a disaster declaration. The IDA leads to a Preliminary Damage Assessment (PDA): FEMA sends people in to review the merits of the IDA; can take weeks or months.
- xxii. Focus on reimbursement for the extraordinary. Took six months for the federal declaration to be issued for Washington County following the 1995 wind storm (from the day of local declaration). County and state need to meet per capita thresholds. Politics can factor into those.
- xxiii. Snow event in February 2014: central and lower Willamette Valley sustained extraordinary damages. The state and Lane County could not initially get to the threshold. State asked all counties around the state to report their costs and damages. After beating the bushes, the state was then able to reach its per capita threshold and get the disaster declaration for the state and those counties that met their thresholds.
- xxiv. Damage reporting (i.e., the IDA) is done county-by-county. Makes it a problem for the regional governments to assess their damages. Regional governments may want to have a conversation with the state for a better model of reporting.
- xxv. FEMA Public Assistance (PA) Program: 75-25 cost share is the basis for eligible cost recovery, meaning the locality pays 25% match. What about the state kicking in the 25% match? Counties with significant damage to facilities but cannot meet the match. For example, Tillamook County could not meet the match for the 2014 wind storm. Appealed to FEMA. Other states have a program to assist with the match.
- xxvi. Chair Hyde explained that the RDPO's predecessor, the Regional Emergency Management Group (REMG), attempted in partnership with the Oregon Association of Counties to establish a fund to help local governments meet Public Assistance Program match requirements. There is only \$1 in the fund there. It was important to establish this avenue but we still need to find funding to put there.
- xxvii. Chair Hyde spoke on the subject of disqualifications: FEMA's job is to reduce the bill as much as possible. The level of specificity is important. Volunteer hours: track it all, document it all. Can be used towards the 25% match.
- xxviii. Councilor Kathryn Harrington thanked Chair Hyde and Scott Porter for bringing this topic forward and stated that we still need to have a regional debris management

plan and agreements for solid waste. Chair Hyde said that the 2007 Vernonia flood generated \$1 million dollar debris cost; 25% match for Vernonia was not easy.

- xxix. Chair Hyde also emphasized that hazard mitigation plans needs to be pre-approved before the disaster. Scott verified that all counties and cities with populations over 50,000 have hazard mitigation plans in place, though many of these jurisdictions are currently updating them due to the new data on a potential Cascadia Subduction Zone earthquake.
- xxx. Commissioner Stewart: is there a comprehensive flow chart for declarations. Scott said that the State of Oregon has a guide. Commissioner Stewart said that she would be interested in what Washington has. [Note: post-meeting, the staff delegation from Clark County said they would assist her in obtaining this information.]
- xxxi. Chair Hyde said that waste collection and disposal is really important to plan well prior to a disaster.
- xxxii. With no other questions at hand, Chair Hyde thanked Scott for his excellent presentation.

4. RDPO Organizational and Financial Update – Denise Barrett, RDPO Manager

Denise updated the Committee on the status of the signing of the RDPO Intergovernmental Agreement, anticipated organizational changes due this spring and funding of the RDPO work plan.

- a. As of January 15, 2015 the following jurisdictions had signed the IGA:
 - i. Counties: Clackamas, Columbia, Multnomah, and Washington in Oregon and Clark in Washington
 - ii. Cities: Portland, Gresham, and Vancouver
 - iii. Regional Governments: Metro and the Port of Portland
 - iv. Special Districts: Scappoose and Clatskanie Rural Fire Districts
- b. Denise said TriMet, the final Core Group members for this fiscal year, is expected to sign the IGA later this month, which will then put the IGA in effect. This spring several other jurisdictions are anticipated to sign the agreement. The intention is to formally transition to working under the IGA over the coming months, including revising current committee SOPs and meetings to accurately reflect representatives that have signed the IGA and others as per composition guidelines in the document. New voting methods will also begin by the next Policy Committee meeting.
- c. Denise shared a report on the status of UASI FY2014 projects and an RDPO Funding Outlook document. The funding outlook document reflects current and potential future funding sources, including Department of Homeland Security grants (UASI and SHSP) and local contributions. She explained that PBEM is working to get IGAs in place with counties and

other key jurisdictions to enable UASI FY2014 projects to begin this spring. PBEM Finance will invoice the Core Group and other jurisdictions that have made pledges as soon as the IGA becomes effective.

- d. Among those projects that will get off the ground this spring are a set of six the Policy Committee had approved in the annual work plan/budget: Regional MACS Development (Phase II), Regional Disaster Debris Management, Oregon TITAN Fusion Center, RDPO Technical Support (i.e., staffing) for Regional Planning, Regional Preparedness Messaging, and Development of Regional Public Health and Medical Preparedness Program.
- e. Denise explained the RDPO has shifted the region to a longer term program development process in which work groups and task forces design projects months in advance of funding decisions. Our goal is to become more and more strategic and thoughtful about regional investments and to not rush the decision-making process for allocating grant and local funding.
- f. Finally, Denise noted that UASI FY2015 funding was still not decided. The FY2015 Appropriations Bill for the Department of Homeland Security is being held up in Congress primarily over the debate on immigration.

5. The RDPO's 2014 Achievements and Priorities for the Year Ahead – Carmen Merlo, Steering Committee Chair and Denise Barrett RDPO Manager

- a. With a reduced amount of time available, Denise and Carmen gave a rapid presentation on the RDPO's 2014 achievements and priorities for the year ahead. Presentation slides are available on the RDPO website at the following link:
<http://www.portlandoregon.gov/rdpo/article/515890>
- b. Denise shared that the overall goal is to build a strong and impactful regional organization. She said that when the Portland Urban Area was not awarded a UASI FY2013 grant, the RDPO experienced one of its first great challenges and opportunities. On the challenge side was the slowdown of implementing projects that build and maintain regional capabilities and the loss of all regional staff, with the exception of the RDPO Manager. She said the IGA became a rallying point for the region to pull together to own the organization and ensure a base of funding shared by a core group of jurisdictions that could ensure the operational and administrative costs were covered regardless of grant funds.
- c. Denise then gave a brief overview of select achievements of the last couple of years, covering several projects under collaborative regional planning and organization, interoperable communications and information sharing, regional incident response and recovery, and community and citizen preparedness.
- d. Carmen Merlo gave an overview of the year ahead, emphasizing the following important objectives and projects:

- i. Build the Regional Multi-Agency Coordination (RMAC) System infrastructure to implement the RMACS ConOps Plan (i.e., the MAC Group and MAC Support Organization); test the plan and the structures through a TTX in 2015 and live play during the Cascadia Rising 2016 exercise (June 2016). Also, achieve agreement on regional resource ordering protocols with OEM and the Oregon Health Authority.
- ii. Enhance EOC preparedness and achieve greater efficiencies around the region with the development of a shared EOC training program; develop a regional shared/stranded workers agreement for staffing EOCs during disasters.
- iii. Enhance the Region's situation assessment capabilities by establishing regional governance to advance policy development, strategic direction setting, and sustainability of WebEOC in the region.
- iv. Move the Region forward with clear value added outcomes in regional disaster debris management planning, especially now that Metro has hired a debris management planner and is set to assume a larger leadership role.
- v. Design and implement a regional fuel contingency planning process that helps the region strategize on how to minimize post-disaster interruptions in fuel availability. Potential new partners: wholesale and retail fuel suppliers; potential advocacy opportunities (e.g., fuel supplier back-up power).
- vi. Strengthen the Oregon TITAN Fusion Center (i.e., useful intelligence data- and information-sharing) by funding one analyst; increase communication between the RDPO and TITAN Fusion Center, which is coordinating the annual data call for the Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs) Risk Profile Ranking (an important step in securing future UASI grant funding).
- vii. Financially and technically support change/consolidation of the regional public health and health system preparedness organizations/programs to maximize efficiencies and gain greater strategic focus in a declining funding environment.
- viii. Implement an access and functional needs planning compliance assessment to identify gaps in emergency operations plans around the region (especially the five counties and city of Portland) and training needs. Goal is to improve emergency/disaster response and recovery performance in this area and reduce risk (reference: costly lawsuits for New York City and Los Angeles for non-compliance).
- ix. Assess and begin to support preparedness of long-term care facilities: develop multiple new partner engagements and foster networking. Opportunities to set a baseline for planning and training needs, improve response capabilities, and reduce post-disaster risk for highly vulnerable populations.

- x. Design and launch a Regional Preparedness Messaging project to build consistency in preparedness messaging around the region and contribute in a new language to increase community resilience-building efforts. Potential for regional brand; youth and multi-cultural engagement
- e. Questions:
 - i. Commissioner Schouten asked what is most needed in terms of strengthening the Oregon TITAN Fusion Center and bettering our MSA risk profile ranking. Carmen said that, in part, we need the OTF Center to move from being law enforcement-centric to taking an all hazards, multi-discipline approach to information gathering and sharing. Also, they need to better coordinate the annual data call on critical infrastructure and key resources. Scott Johnson, CRESA and Clark County Representative to the Steering Committee, mentioned that on the Washington side they have two very active fusion center liaisons who coordinate with the whole community (i.e., take a unified fusion center approach in information-sharing).

6. Good of the Order – Chair Hyde

- a. Chair Ludlow expressed interest in knowing how the Army Reserve and National Guard, under the control of the Governor, could mobilize for a 72-hour deployment to handle the initial phase of a Cascadia earthquake event (CSZ EQ). Chair Hyde said that the National Guard is not under the Governor, but rather the Adjutant General (the TAG). [Further clarifications on Department of Defense capabilities for initial response to a CSZ EQ will emerge during the planning of the 2016 Cascadia Rising Exercise and be shared with the Policy Committee.]
- b. Harry Saporta of TriMet said he will send an email to the RDPO Manager once TriMet selects a Policy Committee representative.
- c. Kathryn Harrington, Metro’s Representative, made a request to have the RDPO Manager send her a link to the FY2015 Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Bill that is stalled in Congress. She also shared that she would like to make sure that while the IGA has been the central document to formalize the RDPO, we need to communicate in ways that demonstrate the value we place on private and non-profit sector partners.
- d. Next Meeting: Denise Barrett said that the next meeting will be scheduled sometime in the April – May period. She will circulate a Doodle Poll to help secure a date.

7. Adjournment – Chair Hyde adjourned the meeting at 11:11 am.