

Richland County Emergency Management
Committee Meeting Minutes
October 13, 2020 at 11am

Attendance via Zoom: Kerry Severson; David Turk; Marty Brewer; Clinton Langreck; Darin Gudgeon.

Absent: Not applicable.

1. The meeting was called to order at 11:01am.
2. Notification was given and the 13 point amended agenda was posted. A motion was made by Brewer and seconded by Turk to approve the agenda. The agenda was approved.
3. Brewer made a motion to approve the last meetings minutes, seconded by Turk. Minutes were approved.
4. For Committee Chair, Severson was nominated by Turk and seconded by Brewer. Turk made a motion to close nominations and case a unanimous ballot for Severson, seconded by Brewer. Motion carried.
5. For Committee Vice Chair, Turk was nominated by Brewer and seconded by Severson. Severson made a motion to close nominations and case a unanimous ballot for Turk, seconded by Brewer. Motion carried.
6. The budget that had presented to the County Administrator was shared on the screen. There were few changes from the 2020 budget, including cost of insurance due to a change from family plan to single coverage. Overall there is a budget reduction. It was proposed that the Director's hours be increased from 35 hours per week to 40, which the budget supports. Brewer made a motion to increase the hours for the Director from 35 hours to 40 hours per week starting in 2021. Turk seconded the motion. It was recognized that this would have to be approved by the Personnel and Finance Committee, and the position description and handbook would need to be updated. Motion carried. The LEPC budget was reviewed. There is a decrease in the budget due to a decrease in grant funds. Turk made a motion to approve the 2021 LEPC budget as presented, seconded by Brewer. Motion carried.
7. The Hazard Mitigation Plan, it was recognized, was last updated and accepted on March 20, 2017. An update will be due by March 20, 2022. A grant may be available to assist with the costs of updated the plan. Previously, a consultant was hired. Gudgeon proposed this update to be done through a contract with JT Heinen Global Consulting. It is expected to be 16 months of work. The grant would cover 87.5% of the costs, and the County would be able to count in-kind services such as GIS maps, the director's time as well as committee and board members' time in the 12.5% match. The Grant would cover supplies and Heinen's time. The plan would need to be presented to this committee before 120 days of its due date, therefore prior to the end of 2021. The plan will identify hazards and determine mitigation strategies for the County and municipalities. Heinen has a background in industrial hygiene and chemistry, has been a Hazardous Materials planner for several years, contracting with the County since 2017. He is a consultant on storm water run-off and air dispersal monitoring with several certificates in Emergency Management. He is very familiar with the county and the hazards. Brewer made a motion to begin and apply for the Hazard Mitigation grant with anticipation for Heinen to

administer the grant, seconded by Turk. This would be an amended yearly contract. Motion carried.

8. The Plan of Work for 2020 was discussed. The Plan of Work is required through FEMA via the Stafford Act and runs from October 1 through September 30. The offsite plans for facilities with high quantities of hazardous materials were updated as part of the Plan of Work. There are also requirements for participation in four exercises or drills to receive the EPCRA and Emergency Management Performance grant funds. Due to challenges of 2020, the professional development requirements were unable to be met due to availability and response locally. Exercises are typically done in the first half of the POW year, looking at the exercise development and offsite plans. A workshop had been done for Incident Command in the schools, response plans were updated, and an exercise was developed for setting up Unified Command. Two table top exercises were done and work was completed with Health and Human Services for shelter plans. The State has also informed Gudgeon that the EOP annexes are now to be changed to fit the Emergency Response Framework as function-driven Emergency Support Functions (ESFs). Coordination between Gudgeon, Heinen, and ESF lead departments was established until coronavirus work began to impact the County. Gudgeon informed the committee that there had been more than 90 days of virtual EOC briefings and meetings. The department was still able to meet the requirements for exercises and outreach. A weather spotter class had been scheduled for the spring but was cancelled and held virtually by the National Weather Service out of La Crosse. Brewer stated that he understood and felt other Counties had likely run into similar problems in not meeting each requirement.
9. Gudgeon informed the Committee of the work being done to combat COVID-19 and its impacts on the community. At this time, there are 303 cases. March had two cases diagnosed for Richland County residents. In April, there were 10. In May, two more people were diagnosed. In June, only one additional person tested positive. July saw 12 new cases. In August, 25 new cases were diagnosed. The numbers began to increase dramatically in September, when 95 people tested positive in the month. By the time of this meeting, there have been 156 new cases in Richland County. Those in the Emergency Management office began monitoring the coronavirus spread on December 29, 2019, and the EOC was activated in February. The EOC has had regular meetings since March and is comprised of a group of 42 people representing Public Health, the Richland Hospital, Emergency Management, Skilled Nursing Facilities, EMS, Fire, Law Enforcement, schools, Industry and Business, and Government including a representative from Congressman Ron Kind's office. Public Health is Incident Command, with Emergency Management supporting and coordinating with partners and resources. In these EOC briefings, the Incident Action Plan is reviewed with operational updates provided from the difference sectors. From March 18th through June 2nd, the EOC had a briefing every weekday morning. In June, meetings were reduced to twice a week. In July, it was further reduced to once a week. Due to the rise in cases, the EOC began to meet twice weekly again starting in September.

In addition to EOC briefings, support has been provided through additional avenues as well. PPE has been made available through the State EOC to be distributed locally. This is coordinated through the EOC to facilities in need such as the Hospital, nursing homes, Public Health, and

many others. A Whole Community Recovery steering committee was also formed early on with subcommittees established to identify needs and address challenges. Free COVID-19 community testing was organized with the Wisconsin National Guard (WING) in July. Further testing has been organized by partnership between Public Health, the hospital, and EMS, with this weekly testing provided via drive through at the Richland County Fairgrounds. A grant program, Routes to Recovery, was made available to Richland County to assist in covering unbudgeted expenses related to COVID-19 response. The money has been received; documentation must be provided to show what the funds were spent on. Richland County was awarded \$292, 749.

10. With the Routes to Recovery funding available and need for assistance, County Administrator Langreck had approved the LTE hire of John Heinen for up to \$5,000 to support COVID-19 response. This employment has been provided through a contract with Southwest Workforce Development. Due to the continued need and the \$5,000 threshold being met, Gudgeon requested the Committee consider approving the continuation of contract. Gudgeon estimated that a total of \$6,500 would be adequate to cover the need and should be able to continue being covered through Routes to Recovery funding and FEMA reimbursement. Brewer made a motion to approve the contract with Southwest Workforce Development, seconded by Turk. Motion carried. This will need to be taken before Finance and Personnel as well as the County Board for final approval.
11. Severson informed the Committee that the Command Post was still in need of a permanent shelter. In recent years, it has sustained significant ice, water, and sun damage from sitting outside. The command post is a trailer used as a heated location to work out of for communications and coordination during events warranting such a need. At this time, there is an agreement for it to be stored at the Fairgrounds until such a structure can be built to house it. Previously, there had been discussions regarding a partnership with other emergency services in the county. The estimate to build a structure with no cement floor solely for the command post would be \$20,000. These funds are currently listed in the County's capital bond. At this time, it is unclear if the other emergency services are still interested in partnering with the County to increase the space and provide shelter for some of their large items like the Fire Department smoke house. Conversations regarding this need took place in 2018, so they would need to be approached again to confirm intentions. There was discussion as to whether there would be room on the land adjacent to the proposed Emergency Services facility land in the Industrial Park. Gudgeon stated that the Command Post was not brought into discussion with the new facility as the shell of the building is being donated to the Ambulance Service. All present were supportive of the conversation continuing in the next meeting.
12. The next meeting was tentatively set for December 4, 2020 at 11am to provide an update on COVID-19 response and continue discussion regarding the Command Post.
13. Turk made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Brewer. The meeting adjourned at 12:46pm.