

Richland County Emergency Management
Committee Meeting Minutes
April 23, 2021 at 9am

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

Absent: Not applicable.

1. The meeting was called to order at 9:01am.
2. Notification was given and the 8 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. Gudgeon overviewed the contract with JT Heinen Global Consulting and the work John Heinen has been contracted to do. Gudgeon stated that a contract has been in place for several years, however the most recent resolution had been specifically for October 2019 through September 2020. Gudgeon had thought the resolution had been written for a two-year contract but had not checked and did not catch that the contract had lapsed. The contract had been budgeted for in the 2021 budget but the contract itself had not been taken before the County Board for approval so payment is being withheld until such a contract is in place. The proposed contract would follow the Plan of Work cycle of October to September and has been redrafted for two-years, which would span the current projects' timeline. Projects in this contract include updating the 14 off-site plans for hazardous chemicals, developing exercises, providing technical guidance in hazardous materials responses, and administrative assistance in updating the County's Basic Emergency Response Plan and annexes to be in-line with current State and Federal guidance. Gudgeon pointed out that the total contract cost is double what the previous contract quoted as this is a two-year contract rather than a single year; the annual cost would be the same as the previous contract. Brewer made a motion to approve the newly-revised contract and send it to the County Board for consideration, seconded by Turk. In discussion, Gudgeon pointed out this would impact the 2022 budget, despite it not yet being approved. He indicated that there is no anticipation of a change to the funding source which this contract is paid through as it is State funding and is unlikely to change. Turk stated that other multi-year contracts have been signed by the County so did not believe this to be an issue. It was pointed out that, should a need arise, there is a termination clause within the contract. Motion carried. Gudgeon will send it on to Corp Counsel to prepare a resolution for the County Board.
5. Gudgeon informed the Committee that a squad car was being retired from the Sheriff's Department and had been offered to other County departments. He stated that at this time, he does not have emergency lights or siren nor a mobile radio in his private vehicle. Recently, he was called to respond to an accident scene involving a semi-trailer load of propane tanks. Rather than delaying response to retrieve the Emergency Management vehicle at the courthouse, he went directly to the scene. He informed the Committee that it is a liability to have a private vehicle on scene in such a response but time was of the essence. It was recognized that the Sheriff's Department also uses the Emergency Management truck. The squad vehicle currently

being offered is not considered worth taking on as it has a lot of mechanical work required to make it viable for daily use. Brewer asked how often Gudgeon responds from home in his private vehicle. Gudgeon stated that whenever feasible, he will delay response to a scene and go to the courthouse to pick up the truck. Otherwise, he frequently will assess the need to take the truck home based upon forecasted conditions. If there is threat of flooding or severe weather, he typically will take the truck home. In the past, however, he has had people demand he justify use of the truck. The Committee recognized that numerous other departments have take-home vehicles when the expectation is reasonable the employee may need to respond from home. It was also recognized that the truck would become expensive to maintain if used for daily driving. Upon inquiry, Gudgeon stated that he rarely turns in mileage for reimbursement for trainings or meetings. However, he typically will take the truck to out-of-county trainings. Turk recognized that the current squad vehicle available would not suit the needs, but having a vehicle other than the truck available for the Director's use would cover liability for work-related travel. Brewer agreed that, while not opposed to this concept, the current vehicle available would not fill this need. In discussion regarding other neighboring counties, it was understood that Iowa County had purchased a truck specifically for Emergency Management, used as a take-home response vehicle. Others, such as Vernon County, have a truck, often second-hand. Some Emergency Management personnel are deputies for their respective Sheriff's Department so they utilize a squad car. Sauk County has an agreement with the Emergency Management Director to use a second-hand squad car for take-home which he pays \$1/day to allow for day-to-day use. Gudgeon stated that he had test-driven the vehicle currently available and would not recommend any department to take it on. He had asked for it to be on the agenda to determine the Committee's thoughts in the case that another would become available. The Committee conveyed their support of the Director using the truck routinely based on his discretion until such time as another viable take-home vehicle option would become available. Gudgeon will discuss the matter with the Chief Deputy.

6. In an update on the COVID-19 response, Gudgeon stated that work is still underway with a partnership with Public Health and the Richland Hospital on vaccination clinics. At this time, 41% of County residents are fully vaccinated. Free community testing continues to be held Mondays; this is expected to conclude at the end of May unless need arises. There is continued active coordination, however, Gudgeon expects that the EOC briefings will likely also conclude at the end of May unless the situation changes. The EOC is still active and would still be in response-mode regardless of regular EOC briefings; it would simply be considered a Level 3 activation rather than Level 4. Gudgeon stated that WebEOC, which has been used throughout the response for regular information-sharing and situational awareness, will be useful in other responses such as in flooding, where multiple areas are being impacted. Gudgeon noted that this has been the longest the EOC has been operational in the history of the County.
7. The next meeting was tentatively set for August 2021 to provide an update on COVID-19 response, potentially approve the County Basic Emergency Response Plan to go to the County Board. It was recognized that an earlier meeting may be needed to discuss 2022 budget.
8. Turk made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Severson. The meeting adjourned at 9:45am.