

Santa Rosa County
Emergency Services Advisory Committee
April 15, 2009
2:15 p.m.

DRAFT MINUTES – NOT APPROVED

Members present:

Stephen Cozart
T.J. Doherty
Jason Kimbrell

Joe Diamond
Ryan Jenkins

Members absent:

Werner Panchenko

Staff present:

Brad Baker

Deb Grinde

Persons to Appear

Joy Tsubooka, Santa Rosa County, Public Information Officer

J. Tsubooka appeared at this meeting in response to a request by this committee in order to gain a better understanding of the ways she might help get information out to the public.

Emergency Services Information Dissemination

It is the committee's concern that the improvements that have been gained due to an increase in MSBU taxes have gone unnoticed by the citizens due to a lack of communication on the part of the county. Some of the improvements include a reduced number of 'no response' calls within the fire districts, better equipment and supplies, etc.

This committee is looking for ideas from J. Tsubooka and would like to know if there is something specific this committee could do to improve communications to the citizens of Santa Rosa County.

J. Tsubooka stated that releases are issued on a quarterly basis regarding both MSBU districts and Lifeguard services to all media throughout Santa Rosa County and Escambia County, including more than three hundred (300) radio stations, television stations, newspaper publications, websites and all employees.

J. Tsubooka pointed out that it is always better to be able to link the human factor to a story regarding the new apparatus. In addition, occasional human interest stories regarding the fire districts are also sent out, e.g. a deaf firefighter in the Munson VFD. We need to remember that numbers are not very interesting.

J. Kimbrell suggested that we should charge the fire chiefs with putting a story together for J. Tsubooka to publish on a monthly basis, whether it is logistics, operational issues, training, etc. We do not need to blanket her with too much data. J. Tsubooka stated that the data is fine as long as we can link it to a human factor that pulls someone into reading it. Most government services are not interesting or beneficial to the citizens unless they need the service or they are paying their tax bill.

T. J. Doherty questioned whether or not the information is posted in a general area. J. Tsubooka stated that it is posted on the news page website; however she could add it to the Emergency Services website.

T.J. Doherty stated that he does not think that dissemination of what the fire districts are doing is the responsible of the county. He believes that the fire departments should be responsible for disseminating the information, not the county. They can post the information on their individual websites.

J. Kimbrell said that ESAC should be a support structure for these agencies. Most of the firefighters are volunteers. We need to realize that the citizens would like better access to the information. We can only provide to the best of our ability. J. Tsubooka pointed out that some of the fire districts do not have the technical skills to update websites and that can be addressed.

S. Cozart advised that we have had some complaints to J. Tsubooka's question. She wondered if the problem is a large scale problem.

R. Collins, Pace, FL

Mr. Collins stated that the districts don't seem to realize that public support will come with education. It will help the commissioners in the long run when they pursue other appropriations.

J. Tsubooka stated again that we need to know the scope of the problem. We may need to do some research to determine if they might just not be attempting to look for the information that is already available to them. She pointed out that most citizens do not even care unless there is a problem. What kind of numbers are we referring to?

J. Kimbrell stated that maybe we should target only the group of people that seem to not get the information. We have to move forward; we should move toward providing for a special population within the community.

J. Tsubooka stated that we need to know whether or not they really care about the information. If there is an area that we need to target, maybe the fire chief in their district can come and make a presentation. First we need to determine if there is a real problem and define that problem.

T.J. Doherty does not think that disseminating the information will necessarily solve the problem. We may need to go back to the citizens who are complaining and tell them where the information can be located; they may not be searching for the information.

J. Tsubooka reiterated that the information is being put out there; this committee cannot make the citizens go to that information.

Discussion continued regarding methods of disseminating the information, targeting specific locations to post the information.

R. Collins, Pace, FL

Mr. Collins pointed out that the Faith Based database, RSVP, United Way, South Santa Rosa Interfaith Ministries, etc provides venues for distributing the information, PSA, etc

J. Tsubooka suggested that citizens can sign up to receive any publications that are issued. Groups would need to request to be included in the emails; they would not be added without permission.

T.J. Doherty suggested that she get with D. Hahn in regard to including entities involved in SAFER Santa Rosa.

J. Tsubooka thinks Santa Rosa County is doing a pretty good job for free!

S. Cozart summed it up by saying that we should identify the problem, determine a way to address the problem, and noted if there is anything that needs to be disseminated ESAC will contact J. Tsubooka.

J. Diamond commended J. Tsubooka's work during the recent train wreck incident.

Disaster Information Dissemination

S. Cozart requested that J. Tsubooka provide this committee with an overview of how information will be disseminated to the citizens of Santa Rosa County in the event of a disaster.

J. Tsubooka explained that there are many methods utilized to share information with Santa Rosa County citizens including:

- E-Breaking News
- EAS (Emergency Alert System from Mobile Weather Service)
- Reverse 9-1-1
- Digital Message Boards
- Media (fastest method of dissemination) – Television, Radio, Publications

Our citizens need to be proactive; they need to purchase a weather radio!

In the case of power outages, we have digital message boards and a plan to disseminate flyers with the aid of runners from points of distribution (PODs) set up throughout the county.

T.J. Doherty questioned whether the all-weather radios utilize the EAS system; J. Tsubooka stated that they will not use it for a Public Service Announcement (PSA); however, they will issue a safety warning depending on the impact of the event. J. Tsubooka assured T.J. Doherty that a plan is in place to distribute the flyers in the event of a disaster. He asked what the plan might be if the PODs are shut down. She advised him that the county will go out of its way to make sure that people are aware, but again, the citizens need to take personal responsibility for their safety. In the case of a full activation there are press conferences three times daily; there are radio broadcasts covering our area as representatives of the stations embed at the EOC in order to get the safety messages out to the public promptly.

T.J. Doherty asked if our preferred radio stations are listed in the Disaster Guide. J. Tsubooka responded that we do not have preferred stations; however, many stations call for hourly updates.

Discussion ensued regarding the activities that occur during activations of any level, which radio stations plan to embed, and the fact that any radio station is welcome to visit and/or stay at the EOC. There have been many changes made in the past two years regarding any procedure or policy regarding the dissemination of information to the citizens of Santa Rosa County.

J. Tsubooka reiterated that our residents need to make an effort to get the information as a personal responsibility.

T.J. Doherty questioned satellite television providers carrying the local stations on a national basis during previous incidents. J. Tsubooka explained how this occurred and that it is in the preliminary stages.

Discussion ensued regarding the advantages, benefits, and mechanics of local satellite broadcasting and the fact that the media provides a great source of information to the public. J. Tsubooka would like to improve the availability of photos to the public on the county website.

T.J. Doherty questioned whether the county website is backed up or mirrored somewhere else. It is believed that there are three back up servers. B. Baker stated that there is a server at the EOC. J. Tsubooka believes it is also accessible at the state level. That falls under the direction of our I.T. Department. J. Tsubooka stated that, in addition, the national press will be in the area to do an interview because it is a hot story. These are vital links for those people who evacuated out of state and are in need of information regarding their home and community.

T.J. Doherty stated that it was his understanding from state public service announcements that any mobile digital message boards would be mobilized by the state and under the operation of Emergency Management during an incident of any magnitude. J. Tsubooka has a meeting scheduled to talk to Lamar Advertising regarding the use of the large digital boards during any type of events in Santa Rosa County. T.J. Doherty asked whether J. Tsubooka approached any business regarding the use of their message boards during disasters. She stated that ESF18, Business and Industry would be responsible for following through on that type of activity. She will discuss this with Dan Hahn, Plans Chief, and perhaps SAFER Santa Rosa will help with that.

J. Tsubooka stated that the new 2009 Disaster Guides will be ready for distribution soon. It has loads of this type of information in it. She also shared the fact that she recently spent time in Madison County assisting with the flooding in that area. She determined at that time that Santa Rosa County is very organized and well structured in their ability to respond to emergency incidents.

Minutes for meeting held on January 21, 2009 approved as drafted with one exception. The last item listed under Public Forum, R. Collins, Pace, FL indicated that the next scheduled meeting would be held in the middle of hurricane season. Documentation corrected to indicate that the meeting scheduled after the April 15th meeting would be in the middle of hurricane season. Correction made prior to post. -dg

T.J. Doherty asked about the lack of timeliness in receiving the minutes prior to the start of this meeting. D. Grinde stated that they did not get out on time. He would like to propose that the minutes be approved by this committee and made available to the public sooner rather than later. He proposes that the minutes be completed and sent to the committee members within one week of the meeting; within the next week, upon approval by email, they should then be made available to the public on a website.

J. Kimbrell suggested that the minutes are only a small part of D. Grinde's job and we need to recognize that tax crunches lead to limited resources. He asked who would find it necessary to read them immediately if they were, in fact, completed in less time.

R. Collins suggested that D. Grinde might provide a timeline based on her routine job responsibilities. He stated that the remarks made at this meeting will not be made available to the public until, minimally, the middle of July. He suggested that the minutes for this meeting might be posted as "Draft Minutes Pending Review and Approval." T.J. Doherty stated that D. Grinde does have the time, because the fact of the matter is that she does complete them. The question is when they can be produced and sent out. He assumes they do not go to the County Commissioners until they have been approved.

S. Cozart was advised that the video is posted close to immediately after the meeting.

D. Grinde stated that her work is calendar driven. She does agree that the minutes should be completed right after the meeting and not right before the meeting, however, she would rather have more than one week to complete the minutes. R. Jenkins suggested the 1st day of the following month. He also stated that anyone can contact any of the committee members if they are in need of some specific information. S. Cozart stated that he has some concerns about the legality of approving through the email system. He believes that they should be labeled as "draft" minutes, but would need to determine whether this would be a violation of any part of the Sunshine Law.

R. Collins, Pace, FL

Mr. Collins pointed out that there would be no discussion-they would be approved or not approved.

A motion to approve the **minutes** for the meeting held January 21, 2009 was made by R. Jenkins, seconded and approved at this point.

T.J. Doherty asked who gets copies of the minutes. D. Grinde advised that, upon approval, the minutes are posted to the Web and a copy is sent to Board Support for their files. The minutes are available for the commissioners to view.

S. Cozart stated that he does not report to the Board after each meeting. He stated that if an issue is voted on that should be presented to the Board as a final

recommendation; he sends that to the Board in a letter format. He does not report to them after each meeting.

S. Cozart answered R. Jenkins questions regarding the function and duties of the ESAC Committee. He stated that this committee's mission is to provide a service to and advise the Board of County Commission on emergency service issues. They task this committee with specific matters that might require a study prior to making any determinations and we have taken on our own tasks that we think needs to be addressed in order to guide the emergency services within the county. He stated that whenever we reach a determination on any matter, we forward the information up the line and that is the most that we can do.

T.J. Doherty reiterated that it is important to get the minutes to the Board as quickly as we can. Motion made that the minutes be submitted to the committee by the 1st day of the following month and that we also explore some way to approve those minutes and disseminate them prior to the next meeting.

S. Cozart made a motion that the minutes be submitted by the first day of the month following the meeting. R. Jenkins seconded the motion and it was carried. Discussion ensued that the committee will need to explore a way to approve the minutes prior to the following meeting. We need to determine if approval can be accomplished by email, phone, or if any discussion is necessary prior to approval within the guidelines of the Sunshine Laws.

R. Jenkins stated he is only comfortable with publishing the minutes as a rough draft. He is not comfortable with approving the minutes utilizing email, phone or sidebar discussions of any kind because he is not familiar with all of the legalities of the Sunshine Law.

Motion made by R. Jenkins that the minutes are published to the Website as soon as they are available to the committee as a **rough draft – not approved**.

T.J. Doherty seconded the motion and it carried.

R. Collins, Pace, FL

Mr. Collins stated that this will allow the commissioner's more time to review the issues.

Reports and Statistics

Fire Dept Statistics

S. Cozart reviewed the reports for the month of January, February and March. He reviewed specifics of the missed calls and it was noted that all of the calls were missed by the Bagdad VFD. There were only a total of four (4) calls for the first quarter of the year. T.J. Doherty asked whether Lifeguard covered the calls and J. Kimbrell advised him that they were covered by Lifeguard as they were all medical calls.

B. Baker stated that there were no significant delays in response. Three calls came from the Post 8 area which is just outside the city of Milton and the fourth call came from Post 1. The Assistant Chief at Bagdad advised him that they have some new volunteers who require training; we should see an improvement soon. Firefighters did not respond from their workplace knowing that the

ambulance was enroute. T.J. Doherty noted that Bagdad was the only department that did not respond during the last quarter of 2008 also.

Lifeguard Response Statistics

J. Kimbrell reviewed their performance and stated that Lifeguard is not only meeting the contractual agreement but exceeding it. He also said that as a public utility model, Lifeguard's partnership with the communications center provides an ownership and that is the reason for such success. The combined call reliability for January was 95.24%. February was 94.82 %, and March was 93.13%. The call reliability in March did decrease; though the call load was at 1,286 and 350 – 400 transports more than usual, they still exceeded the requirement.

Lifeguard feels strongly that their success is based on the fact that they focus on the community.

J. Kimbrell answered T.J. Doherty's question by advising that they get paid on individual patient transport from the insurance company and not from the county. Lifeguard is zero subsidized by the county. They are maintaining financial stability by working on their billing practices, including the indigent and Medicaid patients.

Correspondence

None

Old Business

Disaster Issues

Disaster Information Dissemination

T.J. Doherty stated that J. Tsubooka brought out some possible problem areas. He hopes that B. Baker will coordinate with J. Tsubooka to make sure she is looking into some of those things. Overall he was impressed and believes it to be a tremendous change since Ivan. The county still has some things to improve on; he thinks that J. Tsubooka should get with SAFER and share some of her ideas with them. He believes that the information should be shared with all types of agencies, groups, etc within the county. He thinks that the county should highlight for the community those media outlets that embed with us during a disaster so that the citizens do not have to search for a channel. He suggests that the information should be included in the annual disaster guide. The radio station numbers should be listed in the guide and not the name of the station.

It was S. Cozart's impression that the media outlets do not decide whether they will embed until they determine the timing, the type, the size of disaster, etc.

T.J. Doherty believes that the county has more of a concern of favoring one media outlet over another one and suggests the county provide the citizens with a list of radio stations that will more than likely cover Santa Rosa County. S. Cozart stated that J. Tsubooka advised this committee that there are many media outlets that receive the information. It stands to reason that most of the stations will have the information. R. Collins, Pace, FL Mr. Collins stated that it

would be advantageous to get a list published prior to the 48 or 72 before an event. He also stated that the information should be disseminated on the websites, on flyers out to various organizations. B. Baker stated that there is a listing of the stations that broadcast the EAS messages in the disaster guide.

S. Cozart stated that we need to decide whether something should be done regarding this, and then determine whether it should be forwarded to the commissioners. It was determined that it is not necessary to pursue this any further.

Disaster Topics for Next Meeting

The next topic for discussion was going to be Communications Interoperability. S. Bracewell provided a handout regarding this subject for discussion during this meeting.

R. Jenkins made a motion that this subject be tabled until the next meeting. J. Kimbrell seconded the motion and it carried.

R. Jenkins also stated that the Santa Rosa County Communications Center is second to none.

S. Cozart stated that we need to determine what subject will be covered at the next meeting. T.J. Doherty would like to discuss the management and the utilization of volunteers within the county. J. Kimbrell stated that we should include the volunteer fire departments' hurricane preparedness plans while covering that subject. We need to review their outlines for response during a state of emergency. B. Baker said that T.J. Doherty is referring to a different group of volunteers than J. Kimbrell is referring to. B. Baker stated that the ESAC Committee is linked to the emergency services for the county that includes ambulance service and fire services. The fire departments will be actively reviewing their current plans prior to the season including such things as fuel plans. B. Baker suggested that he could bring in each ESF plan for each volunteer group. T.J. Doherty is more interested in how they are going to do the things they say they are going to do. B. Baker is responsible for making sure they are prepared to follow through with their plans. T.J. Doherty asked if the Emergency Management Division actually reviews each of the departments' plans. B. Baker said that they meet with them once a year about their plan. B. Baker makes sure that their plans are enacted prior to a hurricane. T.J. Doherty asked if each of their plans is independent of each others and can respond as they see fit. B. Baker said that they must respond through ESF4 including any requests for anything they might need. Request to ESF4 are for non-emergency requests only. The Citizen Information Center (CIC) personnel are trained to determine which calls are emergencies and those are forwarded to 9-1-1, and those calls that are non-emergencies are forwarded to the EOC. The 9-1-1 personnel can also transfer non-emergency calls to the EOC.

T.J. Doherty explained that the general topic of managing and utilizing the volunteers post disaster is different from that of the firefighters. He believes that B. Baker's point was whether or not that topic would fall under the purview of this committee. T.J. Doherty then asked whether or not ESAC can look at

emergencies and the services that are provided to respond to those emergencies as a part of the ESAC charter.

S. Cozart stated that some of the disaster planning may fall under the guidance of the ESAC. Our time is running short for this meeting and we may need to table this subject for the next meeting. S. Cozart believes that the ESAC can look into the use of the volunteer groups; he does not believe, however, that the ESAC can get into micromanaging the different groups of volunteers and making wide scale recommendations about them.

J. Kimbrell stated that it may be that some quality assurance measures are something that ESAC manages.

T.J. Doherty stated that his concern is that large groups of volunteers (such as church groups) come into the county to work; they must get registered when they come to work and he would like to know the plan for the following:

- Who will control where they go
- Who can use their services
- Prioritization of needs and who will prioritize those needs
- Is the Volunteer Reception Center (VRC) set up
- Are there people to man the VRC
- Have those people been trained

S. Cozart said that those types of details are outside the realm of what the ESAC Committee is assigned to do. He suggested that this be considered as one topic.

R. Collins, Pace, FL

Mr. Collins suggests that there are two separate topics. We can put the fire departments and the ambulance service together as one topic; but will need to consider all of the other groups of volunteers as another. The volunteers back up the EMS and fire departments. We should be concerned that the people who provide direction to these groups are trained and/or experienced to lead the volunteers. He believes that the ESAC Committee has a good understanding of the EMS and firefighter side, and that it is time to get a better understanding of the support volunteer groups, and that they should be treated as a whole.

Some discussion followed regarding tabling the issue until the next meeting, whether to group the topics together, and what responsibility the ESAC Committee has to that matter. S. Cozart will schedule it as one item for discussion, and if it needs to be broken down it will be addressed at that time.

T.J. Doherty questioned who at the Emergency Management Division would be responsible for the volunteers. B. Baker advised T.J. Doherty that S. Mewborn and D. Hahn would be responsible for ESF15, and that the volunteers fall under Logistics. R. Harris is no longer the Logistics Chief, S. Mewborn is helping in the Logistics area, and D. Hahn is very involved in the Citizen Corps.

T.J. Doherty would like a representative from ESF15 at the next meeting. B. Baker will invite someone to the next meeting.

MSBU Audits

It was suggested that this item be tabled until the next meeting. J. Kimbrell asked B. Baker if this wasn't an issue that the Executive Board would address. B. Baker stated that they take care of all with the exception of the Navarre Beach VFD. R. Collins, Pace, FL - Mr. Collins asked B. Baker if the Executive Group's minutes are recorded and/or made available to the public. B. Baker stated that they are available at the Emergency Management office. Mr. Collins requested that the minutes be posted to the website.

The motion to table the Audit review until the next meeting was seconded by T.J. Doherty and the motion carried.

T.J. Doherty noted that there was no opportunity to add any items or make any changes to the agenda as submitted. He would like to address the frequency of meetings as an item under Old Business. S. Cozart advised him that the subject is not on the agenda and that he could address the issue of Chairmanship under New Business.

New Business

ESAC Chairmanship

T.J. Doherty pointed out that the bylaws of this committee indicate that a chairman is determined on an annual basis. He wonders when that takes place. To S. Cozart's knowledge there have only been two chairmen, and he was elected after Chief Reble resigned. He stated that the committee is welcome to have an election at this time and that he was not aware that an election should be held on an annual basis. D. Grinde read from the ESAC by-laws... "The term of the Chairman and Vice Chairman shall be one year with eligibility for reappointment or reelection." J. Kimbrell suggested that, since it does not state when the election should be held, this committee should determine when the election should take place on an annual basis at an exact point in time, and make that part of the by-laws. J. Kimbrell made a motion to hold elections for Chairman and Vice Chairman at the next regularly scheduled meeting in 2009, and to make that the point of reelection. R. Jenkins seconded the motion and the motion was carried after it was determined that we had a quorum.

Public Forum

None

Noted:

T.J. Doherty objects to meeting on a quarterly basis due to the fact that this meeting and the last meeting lasted for two (2) full hours, the sensitivity of the information being discussed related to disasters and the hurricane season, and that the next meeting will not be held until after the start of hurricane season.

Meeting was adjourned at 4:15 p.m.

**Next meeting date and time will be:
Wednesday, July 15, 2009 at 2:00 p.m.**

Wednesday, July 15, 2009 at 2:00 PM
dg