

Bennington County REMC Meeting

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, May 14, 2024 6 PM – 7:30 PM



Location

Bennington Fire Department
130 River Street, Bennington, VT

In-person attendees: Paul Doucette, Todd Lawrence, Sheila Lawrence, Stewart Johnson, Robert Briggs, Nick Zaiac, Camillo Grande, Jamie Paustian, Vince Thompson, Kate Bryan, Jeannie Jenkins, Benjamin Doucette, Linda Schmidt, Paul Dansereau, Dee Myrvang, Wayne Tift, Gordon Black, Scott Murphy, Dara Zink

Virtual Attendees: Jonathan Bigelow, Taiga Christie

Agenda:

- Dara Zink welcomed everyone, and group introductions took place
- Paul Dansereau gave a presentation on considerations/requirements for emergency shelters:
 - Introduction of myself and my full time employment at the Town of Bennington Building Inspector/Fire Marshal/Deputy Health Officer.
 - The Town of Bennington additional Building Inspector/Fire Marshal/Health Officer/Code Enforcement is Bridget Gallant
 - The State of Vermont Division of Fire Safety has Cooperative Municipal Agreements with 10 municipalities across the State which delegate Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ) for most all occupancies to the trained Municipal Inspectors. The Town of Bennington is one of the 10 Towns.
 - The remainder of the Towns in Bennington County the AHJ for Fire & Life Safety in public buildings is the State of Vermont Division of Fire Safety Rutland Regional Office. Specifically Matt Jakubowski. Contact number for the Rutland Regional Office is (802) 786-5867.
 - Matt Jakubowski was unable to attend tonight's meeting, however I conferred with him to discuss Fire & Life Safety Considerations/Requirements for Emergency Shelters.
 - As Towns identify potential Emergency Shelters it is strongly recommended to contact the Fire Marshal (ie Matt) early in the process to conduct preliminary review of the potential shelter.
 - Per the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1 Fire Code and NFPA 101 Life Safety Code there are varying requirements for Fire & Life Safety based upon the occupancies, uses, and building construction types.
 - Generally speaking the most restrictive Fire & Life Safety Requirements are for occupancies and uses involving large assemblies, schools, and residential locations.
 - Often Emergency Shelters are a completely different use and occupancy classification than the current use/occupancy classification. As example an elementary school (Education occupancy) versus a portion of the school used as an Emergency Shelter (ie Dormitory occupancy).
 - Specific Considerations/Requirements reviewed by a Fire Marshal include:

- What is the current building construction type, occupancy classifications, and uses?
- Determine the occupant load of the facility for its use as an emergency shelter. This will most likely vary from the current occupant load due to a change in occupancy classification. The available square footage of building space to be used for the Emergency Shelter is used to determine the occupant load.
- The number of Exits, Egress Routes, and Travel Distances to the exits are reviewed to ensure there is the required amounts and exiting capacity to meet the occupant load.
- Existing Building Fire & Life Safety Features are reviewed – Fire Alarms Systems, Sprinkler Systems, Emergency Lights
- Anticipated/Planned duration for use as an Emergency Shelter is considered. The longer the duration then additional and/or improving existing Fire & Life Safety Features may be considered.
- Emergency Shelter Staffing and Staff Training in the event of emergencies is reviewed. A formal Fire Watch Procedures may be required.
- Carbon Monoxide and Smoke Alarm (or automatic Fire Alarm System) are required. If an automatic Sprinkler System and Fire Alarm System is present, then most likely Carbon Monoxide Alarms/Detection is not present. Temporary plug in Carbon Monoxide Alarms may be used.
- Higher Hazard Areas such as furnace rooms, mechanical rooms, fuel storage etc are identified and it is verified there is required 1 hour fire separation between these areas and the Emergency Shelter sleeping areas.
- Overall, every sheltering location may vary. Reach out to the Fire Marshal early to begin discussion and identify specific requirements for each proposed location.
- Contact Information:
 - State of Vermont Division of Fire Safety Rutland Regional Office (802) 786-5867
 - Division Fire Safety Web Page: <https://firesafety.vermont.gov/>
 - Rutland Regional Office Fire Marshal covering Bennington County Towns (with exception of Bennington) Matt Jakubowski
Matthew.Jakubowski@vermont.gov
- **Updates:**
 - Taiga - Vermont Emergency Management updates:
 - LEMPs were due May 1st. Please submit ASAP
 - Binary Blizzard Exercise is happening!
 - Tabletop will happen this fall: [Binary Blizzard Statewide Hybrid Tabletop Exercise | Vermont Emergency Management](#)
 - Full scale exercise will happen in the fall of 2025
 - 2024 Vermont Emergency Preparedness Conference
 - September 10-11 @ Lake Morey Resort
 - Taiga will be sending out emails to verify those on VT-Alert and WebEOC for each town. EMDs should verify whether anyone needs to be removed from these accounts. Look for these by the end of the week.
 - Dara – Update from Bennington County Regional Commission

- Reminder to sign up for training emails here: [Email Lists | Vermont Emergency Management](#)
- To take many of the classes, you will need to have access to the LMS: [Learning Management System | Vermont Emergency Management](#). Let Draa know if you need help setting up an account.
- Continuity of Operations Training (IS-1301) will hopefully be happening in July. *I misspoke and I believe I said August in the meeting* Look for more information as we confirm dates.
- Vermont Alert Manager Training reminder
- G0191 – ICS/EOC Interface Training is happening in Manchester on 8/13 from 8am – 4 pm at the Martha Canfield Library
- Brattleboro is also holding an HSEEP Training in November for those interested.
- I am always taking requests for trainings and speakers for the REMC meetings. Please let me know!
 - Dee Myrvang for the Medical Reserve Corp
 - WinDart- to be rescheduled
 - Vermont 211 Presentation
 - CARE Program
- **General Comments:**
 - Kate Bryan brought up the topic of [CARE \(Citizens Assistance Registry for Emergencies\) | Enhanced 911 Board \(vermont.gov\)](#) for our vulnerable populations
 - Dee Myrvang reminded the group about the Medical Reserve Corp and its availability for assistance with sheltering if needed
 - Contact Info: Diana.Myrvang@Vermont.gov Cell: 802-343-8693
- Next REMC Meeting: Tuesday, August 13th at 6:00 pm – Location – Arlington Memorial High School
 - Please refer to the REMC webpage at [Regional Emergency Management Committee - BCRC \(bcrvt.org\)](#) for updates