

Shutesbury Emergency Management Team (EMT) Virtual Meeting Minutes

Wednesday May 15, 2024

Members Present: Emergency Management Director (EMD) Leonard Czerwonka, Select Board (SB) Co-Chairs Melissa Makepeace-O’Neil and Rita Farrell and Select Board Member Eric Stocker, Board of Health (BOH) Member Garrett Simonsen, Emergency Operations Center Ham Radio Operator (EOCHRO) Aaron Addison, Highway Superintendent Steve Sullivan, Lake Wyola Dam Keeper Howard Kinder, Town Administrator (TA) Rebecca Torres, Team Secretary Leslie Bracebridge, recording.

Guests: None.

EMD Czerwonka opened the meeting at 6:34 PM. The Team decided to resume regular meetings every other month.

1. **Introductions:** Each person stated their name and affiliation to Shutesbury’s government.
2. The **minutes of the September 20, 2021 meeting** were reviewed, and approved with Farrell abstaining for having not been present at the September 20, 2021 meeting.
3. **FFY 2024 EMPG (Emergency Management Preparedness Grant):** A thermal imager was procured with the federal EMPG of \$2527 provided. The town covered the remaining \$25. Now each truck has a thermal imager. EMD Czerwonka will distribute the list of items eligible for purchase with the next FFY 2025 grant round. More information will be gathered concerning a regional grant of \$25,000 per town for cyber-security. These funds may be useful to supplement municipal cyber-security already in place. Rita reported that the Town Clerk is monitoring a state cyber-security task force for leads to possible assistance also.
4. **Dam Action Plan updates:** The Team reviewed various years’ versions of Lake Wyola Dam Emergency Action Plans, which were last updated for 2019. There is a Word version of the 2019 plan on the EMD’s computer that EMD Czerwonka will use to make the necessary updates before the plan is redistributed to current town officials.
 - **TA Torres:** Dam Engineer and Consultant Morris Root has retired. Shutesbury is now using the Engineering Consultant firm GZA (Founders: Don Goldberg and Bill Ziono). The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) Office of Dam Safety (William Salomaa Director) by statute and regulations require 100% updates to the dam Emergency Action Plans annually. In Morris Root’s final work and notes there are references for updates to the Emergency Action Plan.
 - **EMD Czerwonka:** Seeks volunteer assistance with making updates to the plan.
 - **TA Torres summarized:** If the dam overtops, EMD Czerwonka immediately notifies the Leverett and Montague Emergency Management Departments. They in turn notify their citizens according to their emergency action plans. Forms will be sent to those towns for contact updates. Becky will contact “Matt” to recalculate the new box style culvert flow factor.
5. **Reports of Boards and Committees:**
 - **EMD Czerwonka reported:**
 - a. Leverett is conducting a study to regionalize the Fire Departments of Leverett, Shutesbury, New Salem and Wendell. SB Co-Chair Farrell inquired if Shutesbury had been asked if we are interested in regional fire services. EMD Czerwonka responded that the study was initiated by Leverett’s Fire Chief Brian Cook, based on a Collin Center for Public Management Study done a few years back.
 - b. Shutesbury’s Fire Department member Andrew Reagan created a software program that produces reports on Fire Department call activity. SB Co-Chair Makepeace-O’Neil offered to send a link to the site for EMT Members.
 - **SB Co-Chair Farrell:** Requested updates on emergency management actions during recent storms and a summary of general procedures in place for various emergencies that may arise.
 - EMD Czerwonka: The Highway Department monitors roads for such things as plowing and tree falls, Fire Department and Police Departments respond to 911 calls.

- Highway Superintendent Sullivan: Highway, Police and Fire keep in touch with town radios.
 - EMD Czerwonka: Residents are less likely to experience power outages due to the new infrastructure put into place, allowing power to run in either direction, with switches every ¼ mile.
 - SB Member Stocker: How do Select Board members receive information? T.A Torres: The Select Board is up-dated for major emergencies, such as the 2008 ice storm, with in-person daily morning briefing meetings, involving all municipal emergency services department members, outside utilities, and during the ice storm, the National Guard.
 - SB Co-Chair Makepeace-O’Neil: Noted that the previous EMD would send out National Weather Service severe weather warnings via Code Red alerts. She asked, “Should that practice be continued?”
 - BOH Member Simonsen suggested reminding citizens to sign-up independently for direct utility reports. Makepeace-O’Neil responded that while that is a good option for most residents, there are still wifi “dead-zones” in Shutesbury.
 - SB Co-Chair Farrell suggests review of older Code Red announcements, including those concerning warming, power and water stations, and having some sample messages ready to edit and release in the event of an emergency.
 - Highway Superintendent Sullivan: National Grid is currently focusing their efforts on Baker, West Pelham, Pelham Hill, Leonard and Lakeview Roads to remove tree limbs hanging over wires.
 - SB Co-Chair Makepeace-O’Neil: Recollected an effective “table-top exercise” was held at the Franklin regional level, just before COVID. She suggested that a local table-top exercise could be conducted at Shutesbury’s Emergency Operations Center (EOC) at the Shutesbury Fire Department, 42 Leverett RD.
 - Emergency Operations Center Ham Radio Operator (EOCHRO) Addison: Offered to teach a ham radio class to EMT Members and also to the public at large, in order to equip people with an alternate method of communications. He would offer the course for free, there is no cost to take the license test, the actual Federal Communications Commission (FCC) license costs \$35 and a decent radio costs \$25. In the event of current communication methods failures EOCHRO Addison would come to the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and set up his ham radio broadcasting equipment. People would be able to hear what is happening on their ham radios.
 - EOCHRO Addison suggested that September is “Emergency Preparedness” month. Shutesbury could replicate Leyden’s “Ready-Fest.” to advertise the course, and promote other citizen emergency preparedness actions.
6. **Business not reasonably anticipated 48 hours prior to the meeting:** None.
 7. **Next Meeting Date:** Wednesday, July 10, 2024 at 6:30 PM at the Fire Station, 42 Leverett RD.
 8. **Vote to adjourn at:** 7:45 PM. Makepeace-O’Neil -aye, Farrell – aye, Stocker -aye, Addison – aye, Simonson – aye, Sullivan – aye, Kinder – aye, Bracebridge – aye, Torres – aye, Czerwonka -aye.

Respectfully submitted, as approved on July 10, 2024,

Leslie Bracebridge, Secretary

List of Documents used at the Meeting:

1. Emergency Management Team Meeting agenda for May 15, 2024.
2. Draft minutes of the September 20, 2021 meeting.