



HAMILTON COUNTY
LOCAL EMERGENCY PLANNING COMMITTEE

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MINUTES

LEPC Meeting Minutes, March 12, 2008

A meeting of the Hamilton County Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) was held March 12, 2008 at Wally's Restaurant, 6521 Ringgold Rd., East Ridge, TN. The following constitutes the minutes of that meeting.

Those in attendance were:

Bruce Garner, CFD; Chairman	Mark Starrett, Chattanooga Gas Co.
David Darnell, BASF, Vice Chair	Robert McCain, Chattanooga Gas
John Piotter, Guardian Group, Vice/Chair	Chris McCormack, SRT Safety
Garish Patel, ALCO Chemical, V/Chair	Brad Parr, Chatter Chemicals
Bill Tittle, Ham. Co. Emer. Mgnt. Vice/Chair	Steve Lamb, SRT Safety
Wayne Stuntz, Secretary/Treasurer	Jimmie Hibbard, TNSG
Caroline Williams, LWV	Terry Parks, Memorial Health Sys.
John Leach, HEPACO	Dusty Rominger, Grace Chemical
John Moorshead, DPC Enterprises	C.R. Goodner, RACES
Robby Brewer, UNIVAR	Anthony Phillips, Lamberti
Mike Flynn, East Ridge Fire Rescue	Mike Akins, First Response, Inc.
Tim Arnold, USCG AUX	David Hoffman, First Response, Inc.
Mack Moore, CFD	Terri Whitt, CARTA
Leslie Freeman, CARTA	Tommy Arthur, NuFoam
Scott Danner, Marion Environmental	Richard Twitchell, Self
Indu Thaker, Ham. Co. Eng.	John Bennett, JIT Terminal
Ray Burden, UT Extension	
Charles Reynolds, Safety & Health Compliance	
Sabrina Novak, CHCHD	

Introductory Remarks: Chairman Garner began by welcoming all in attendance and asked for personal introductions.

Chairman Garner commented on the excellent turnout for the meeting and then asked if there was anyone in attendance who wished to join the LEPC.

- Mr. Charles Reynolds with Safety & Health Compliance asked to become a member. Motion made by Mr. Dusty Rominger, seconded by Mr. David Darnell. Motion carried.

Old Business:

Approval of Minutes for Last Meeting

Chairman Garner asked for a motion to approve January 9, 2008 meeting minutes. Motion made by Ms. Caroline Williams, seconded by Mr. John Piotter. No further discussion. Motion carried.

Financial Report

Chairman Garner asked for the LEPC Financial report. Secretary Wayne Stuntz read the Financial Report.

Follow-up on Audit Recommendations

Chairman Garner asked the Secretary to give an update on the suggested recommendations made by the County Auditor's office following the latest audit for the LEPC. Mr. Stuntz said one recommendation was that the LEPC invest in a program called Quick Books. Mr. Stuntz said he was happy to report that he uses that program to manage LEPC finances. Mr. Stuntz also that the LEPC now has a 9-month "risk free" CD with Bank of America with an annual percentage yield of 2.75% and that at the end of the 9 months—the CD will automatically roll over to another 9-month "risk free" account. Mr. Stuntz said that he would monitor that account.

Follow up on Electronic Submission of Tier II Reports

Chairman Garner said that a goal of the LEPC is to have member companies submit their Tier II reports electronically using a program called Tier2Submit. Bruce said that we are seeing some real success in the number of submissions. Bruce said that the Fire Department for the first time as started receiving Tier2Submit reports—and so far has received 37 reports. Bruce said that we hope to build on this every year with the main intent on electronic Tier II submission, at least from the Fire Departments perspective; the data is then useable for emergency response agencies.

Chairman Garner brought up the plus side of Tier2Submit and that is that as companies use it year after year—it is much easier to import the previous years data into the current report year and make only changes as needed—therefore benefiting the reporting facility.

New Business:

Overview of Chattanooga-Hamilton County Rescue

Chairman Garner introduced our first guest speaker, Chief Chuck Hall, with Chattanooga-Hamilton County Rescue. Chief Hall, we learned, was a former LEPC Executive Committee member. Chief Hall began by giving a brief history of Chattanooga-Hamilton County Rescue—which he said began in 1937 (celebrating 70 years of service to this community) and has the distinction of being the second Rescue Service in the Nation—Chief Hall said the first rescue service started in Virginia. Chief Hall said in the beginning, it was Rescue Service that responded to all Hazmat calls, as it was the only service with expertise to respond to such calls.

Chief Hall said that the Rescue Service is an all-volunteer, non-paid service, with responsibility to provide continuous training (i.e. CERT, etc.), re-hab service, extrication, and breathing-air (tank) refill service for firefighters when needed. Chief Hall said that his personnel are also qualified in Cave/Cliff Technical Rescue. Chief Hall went on to name some of the community services his organization sponsors to raise funds for the Rescue Squad.

Chairman Garner added that Rescue often backs-up/assists the CFD on vehicle extrication on wrecks throughout the city when CFD extrication units are overtaxed. Bruce also added that Rescue responds to fire scenes with their re-hab vehicle, providing hot drinks, snacks, etc., for weary firefighters, in all kinds of weather.

Upcoming Plant Visits by Chattanooga Fire Department

Chairman Garner introduced our next guest speaker— Mack Moore, the new Tactical Services Chief for the CFD who replaced Chief Chuck Nichols. Chief Moore began by offering his own praise to Rescue. He said that being on the receiving end of their services, in the wee hours of the morning, has been a lifesaver to not only himself, but to those he worked with.

Chief Moore gave a brief history of his service with the CFD—since 1987. Chief Moore said the Tactical Services Division is responsible for: Emergency Medical Services; Medical First Responder program (personnel who respond to assist EMS with certain types of medical problems); Hazardous Material response; confined space, trench and excavation and structural collapse response.

Chief Moore said his division is also responsible for response readiness of the CFD Hazardous Materials team and the Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) team, which services a ten (10) county area under District 3, Homeland Security—including Hamilton County.

Chief Moore said the department is getting ready to update their pre-incident planning information—which entails going to community chemical facilities and doing a site visit. Chief Moore said that by gathering pertinent information about a facility—it would allow Incident Commanders to have current information to manage an incident and enhance response capabilities. Chief Moore said their future (secure) database would contain pictures of critical areas/processes that would allow the CFD to know what they could expect to encounter—before entering a particular area. Chief Moore said that the fire department is very much aware of the confidentiality of certain information (i.e. trade secrets, hazardous storage, fire suppression system, etc.) and will strive to protect that information through a secure database.

Chief Moore said another important aspect of the CFD's emergency preparedness is the LEPC exercise. He said that as a major player in the exercise, the main objective of the exercise is to create a real-world scenario, to test not only CFD responders, but also the Public Notification System—which Chief Moore said would be addressed by Chairman Garner. An excellent question and answer period ensued.

Preview of LEPC Exercise in April

Chairman Garner reminded those present that the date of the LEPC exercise is April 29 with a

kick-off time of about 10:00 a.m. The Chairman passed around a map of the exercise-affected area for all to see. Bruce extended an invitation to LEPC members to observe the exercise. Bruce said that the scenario (a haz-mat incident) would take place at the back of the Fire Training Center. Bruce said that the exercise would also test public notification—an area closely associated with the role of the LEPC, that of emergency planning. Bruce cited, as an example, the catastrophic emergency in Graniteville, SC involving a railcar incident with chlorine. He asked, “How quickly will we respond, not only with the haz-mat team, but notification to the general public that would be endangered by a vapor cloud, carried by the wind, that could kill them?” Bruce said that this is a perfect opportunity for the LEPC to lead the way and be responsible for public notification—clarifying, Bruce said that shortly after an incident of this nature is realized, an Incident Commander would quickly realize that lives are in danger. Bruce then went through a scenario that would test of the public notification system (Reverse 911) that would notify a population within a mile and a half radius with approximately 1300 people (based on phone lines).

Chairman Garner gave a brief description of the Reverse 911 system—a notification system that calls landlines, and does not affect cell phones. Bruce said it has been in place with the County for about a year and the County tests it monthly for staff personnel—but, said this will be the first time it will be tested for real—actively calling households with a non-threatening message. He added that this system could track the number of calls that went out, those who received the message and then get some feedback as to how effective it really is.

Bruce said that Reverse 911 would be used based on the advice from Incident Command—that is, if Incident Command said to advise the people to shelter-in-place, or to evacuate—that would be part of the message. Bruce said that part of the message will ask the recipient to (1) confirm that they received this message by pressing **1** on their phone, and (2) if they have questions about the exercise, to press **2** on their phone. Bruce said that if a recipient of the message presses **2**, they will be transferred to a phone bank operated by and staffed by Health Department volunteers—which will act as a “fail-safe” measure to assure the caller that it is only an exercise put on by the LEPC and to answer any question they may have.

Bruce said if possible, a short questionnaire would be developed to ask questions about the kind of message they received. He said the questionnaire would ask questions about, (1) the kind of message they received, (2). Was it clear, (3) By what means did they hear the message (i.e. by Reverse 911 or local radio or TV).

Bruce said the other area to be tested would be the Emergency Alert System (EAS). He said that when a message needs to get out to the general public, a call would be made to the lead radio station (US 101FM—WUSY). US 101FM would record the message for broadcast over the EAS system, which includes other radio and TV stations. He said that even though the EAS system is tested monthly, he wanted to make it more realistic by testing it from the point where the exercise starts, to notification of the 911 Dispatcher, and from there, how quickly message preparation takes and broadcasting to the general public using Reverse 911 and the EAS system.

Chairman Garner said the part that LEPC members can do; following partial activation of the EOC is to monitor local Radio/TV stations (Channels 3, 9 and 12 and primary radio stations) to track by logging exactly when the messages went out from these stations. Bruce said he considers this an important exercise—and it’s exactly what the LEPC should be doing. He said,

we are trying to make this organization something that will be effective in terms of collecting electronic submission of Tier II forms so they go straight to responders, but equally important to that is that the LEPC is going to be a partner in this to work out a better system to notify the public if we have a catastrophic accident involving chemical releases. He said that as good as Reverse 911 is—it's actually dated as it uses only landlines and not mobile phones as the trend is to replace landlines with cell phones. He said another method he is beginning to look at to notify the public is through text messaging. Bruce said that NYC is already doing this system of notification to the generally public—called "Notify NYC". Bruce said that this could be very effective for this area—and is something we are looking into.

A question was asked about the cost of using the Reverse 911 system. Chairman Garner said there is a monthly allocation that the County has for their testing, but added that the LEPC would possibly exceed the normal amount. Bruce said that he thought this would be an excellent use of LEPC funds to test public notification. Bruce said that Sgt Carney with Hamilton County would calculate the cost to implement the system for this exercise.

A few questions were asked about the exercise scenario and Chief Moore and Chairman Garner addressed those questions.

2008 Training Classes for LEPC Members

Chairman Garner passed out a survey during the meeting to find out who was interested in the various incentive classes offered to LEPC members (i.e. Fire Extinguisher, HAZWOPER Refresher, Basic Life Support for Healthcare Providers, Heartsaver (CPR) and Family First Aid). Bruce also said that he would e-mail the survey to members as well.

Other Business

- There were no discussions in this area.

Date and Location of Next Meeting

- Next meeting is scheduled for May 14, 2008, 10:30 a.m. at Wally's Restaurant, 6521 Ringgold Rd, East Ridge, Tennessee.

Adjournment