

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

MINUTES

Minutes of Meeting February 3, 2022

Meeting called to order by Robert Ezelle, Director EMD, 9:00 AM

In Attendance – Introduction of Attendees

A list of virtual primary and alternate member and interested party attendees is at the end of these minutes as the meeting was conducted via Microsoft Teams.

Approval of Minutes

Jason Biermann, Chair

Fred Brink moved to approve the December 2, 2021; meeting minutes as presented. **Chandra Fox** Seconded.

- Voted to approve as none are opposed.

Opening Comments

General Daugherty, WMD and Robert Ezelle, EMD Director

General Daugherty: Welcome – There is some good news to share as Covid-19 cases appear to be dropping in Western WA and there is improvement in Eastern WA -and that is good news for all of Washington. With the mounting tensions in Europe, you are encouraged to review your cyber security plans. Thank you for your participation in this council and the great work done in your communities.

Robert Ezelle: I echo the General's comments, and there is other good news to share regarding major disaster results. The IA and PA for the recent flooding in November are approved. We continue to process the damages for the January storms. Adam Wasserman and Ruckelshaus Center Foundation are working on the AAR on Covid-19; we expect an update after **February 24, 2022**. EMD has also reposted the Deputy Director position to broaden the pool of candidates.

Jason Bierman: Jim Baumgart from the Governor's office will update the council to rejoin the call later.

Regional Issues Impacting Washington

Vince Maykovich, Acting Regional Administrator, FEMA Region X

Vince Maykovich: Thank you to all the partners of FEMA as it supports several disasters here and abroad. There is support for those impacted communities through IA, and the PA was just approved. FEMA recently published the Strategic Plan with the administrator's goals for the agency for the next five years.

- Instill equity as a foundation of emergency management -with local and state counterparts.
- Lead the whole community in climate resilience -gaining momentum related to mitigation and opportunities in the BRIC program.
- Promote and sustain a ready FEMA and a prepared nation.

Public Forum

Jason Biermann, Chair

No questions or comments submitted for the Public Forum.

Meet-a-Member

Jason Biermann, Chair

Casey Hanell: As a geologist with the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), within Emergency Management, he has several support responses in the geological survey involved in tsunami, landslide, seismic safety and others. With an emphasis on seismic safety, as a co-chair on that committee, a recent accomplishment for 2021 is on Phase 2 of the report regarding school seismic safety, which DNR partnered with the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), which led to legislation and potential school retro fitting funding to withstand a significant magnitude earthquake event. He is looking forward to in-person meetings in the future.

Chief Batiste: Has been a member since 2005 when appointed as chief of the Washington State Patrol. As a statewide law enforcement agency, it responds to emergencies and disasters, uses ground and aviation transport assets, and assist with law enforcement matters in general - whatever is needed to assist the public. He has had the great pleasure of working with a host of past and present members of the EMC.

Next Meet-a-member:

- Fred Brink: Association of Washington Cities
- Nate Weed: Department of Health

Mike Harris: As the outgoing vice-chair, a word of thanks for the opportunities to serve. He does miss the in-person meetings and those relationships but plans to continue as a member of the EMC representing the Washington State Fire Chiefs.

Vice-Chair Election

Kirk Holmes and JoAnn Boggs

Jason Biermann asked twice for nominations from the floor.

Hearing/seeing none the move is to close the nominations.

Candidates:

- JoAnn Boggs- Representing Local EM Directors
- Kirk Holms- Representing Member-At-Large (WSDOT)

Bill Gillespie requested a roll-call vote.

Vice-Chair Roll Call Vote

Each member of the council was called upon, and subsequently cast their vote.

Roll Call Vote Results:

12-JoAnn Boggs

2- Kirk Holmes

Current and Recurring Emergency Management Issues

Nate Weed, DOH

- Admissions and hospitalizations have begun to decrease from previous weeks. However, this has followed a very high capacity in the regional hospitals already experiencing staffing and capacity issues. Pediatric Covid-19 hospitalizations have increased slightly.
- Out of 106 hospitals in WA, 65 have reported greater than 90% occupancy for ICU – or acute care. Overall, 16 report a surge of over 90% using alternate spaces.
- **Reference point:** The “No Notice” emergency event planning factor is to have 60 beds available at any point and, we are close to that availability at nearing 50 beds. Previously it was 20-30 beds during this pandemic.
- The trends show that the hospitalizations tested positive for Covid but did not go to the hospital for Covid. This slide indicates that the current high point is higher than any point in the pandemic.
- The pediatric slide shows a steep increase that isn’t on the decline; hospitalizations are not due to Covid but tested positive. The good news is that pediatric care capacity is stable.
- The trend of hospitalized adults is higher than 7800 per day and creates tight capacity. The slide shows that the use of beds is not going down even though Covid is going down. It isn’t the only driver in the intense health care surge. We can control Covid spreading, as that disease has some public health interventions. However, others take decades to control, like strokes, heart disease, or cancer.
- Another contributing factor to bed capacity is patients staying occupying beds past the point that they need to be in the hospital. Usually, hospitals discharge patients to other facilities or homes, but people cannot find alternate care settings, creating capacity challenges.

- Some reasons for this boarding problem relate to staffing challenges, coverage for care as DSHS referrals for Medicaid are rapidly increasing, medical or behavioral background hurdles, and complexities to safely make guardianship decisions. There are problems facing those that don't qualify for traditional programs.
- DOH – ACI staffing, national guard, and the long-term care task force with DSHS will address additional staffing needs and raise awareness. It is a multi-agency effort.
- **The blood supply:** This requires special attention as there are national shortages and challenges here in our state. The call is to please donate and increase public messaging: "If you are eligible to donate, please do so."

Questions:

Greg Welch: Regarding slide four, where the Omicron variant is mild, why are the hospitals at over 50% from August? How many admitted and test positive of those who went to the hospital with Covid?

Omicron is highly infectious, and many people are contracting it. It is a milder disease, but people still end up in the hospital. Bed space is a significant factor to overcome whether Covid is putting that pressure on or not. Covid is adding a burden to the healthcare system; we need to control the disease and create capacity. Bed capacity is a finite line, and it is always exasperated by an infectious disease, as seen in the long-term care facilities. These facilities would typically be the next step after hospitalization moving patients into these areas of care.

Greg asked for any indicators for mandates or changes here in WA to drop the mask mandate on the horizon. Nate responded that it is hard to say where we are and in general. There is a need to reassess how to protect from disease and if there are benefits to any restrictions as we seek answers to these types of questions.

Work SAC Meeting Frequency

Jason Biermann, Chair

When convened as the Senior Advisory Committee (SAC), the EMC is a way to add the whole of community into preparedness efforts. It is essential to bring together the different grant streams and disciplines into one conversation – the recommendation being that the EMC convenes more than once per year as the SAC. Do we assemble more frequently as the SAC? Are there any questions about the responsibilities to the role of the SAC?

JoAnn Boggs: Any thoughts on the frequency to the SAC meeting? JoAnn feels more feedback would be helpful.

Chandra Fox supported meeting more frequently as it is part of the SAC's purpose as to how to engage whole community to these grants and the changes in guidelines to utilize these funds fully and effectively – the SAC should be looking at that.

Jason Biermann added that historically, there had been a heavy reliance on homeland security grants and it's getting to be a challenge as guidelines change and the implications. There is a need to help inform jurisdictions how these challenges could impact them.

Chandra suggested that it would be helpful to meet at least twice a year or quarterly. When the Notice of Funding Opportunities (NOFOs) come out, the SAC should be involved in those conversations - NOFO grant awards and guidance.

Jason asked General Daugherty or Robert Ezelle for input on the SAC and meetings.

Robert encourages the need for a purpose, function, and outcome for the meetings -as the SAC looks to build overall state capabilities. Looking over the agenda to meet with the lens of effective use of federal resources to build core capabilities and to close gaps, he is all for meeting more frequently.

Jason questions if a vote needs to take place as to the SAC frequency according to the Charter.

Sharon Wallace reviewed the Charter; the language supports the Chair calling meetings as deemed appropriate.

Jason asks the council if there would be a negative impact on serving the EMC if the SAC were to meet more frequently. Not seeing or hearing anyone, we can agree to meet more often than once per year.

Readahead material went out for the Annual Report. The outline covers 2020 and 2021 – while it will note Covid it is not an After-Action Report (AAR) but use of the incident management teams, wildfires and wildfire season, and a report to the Governor as to hazard mitigation. This report is an opportunity for feedback, questions, or concerns about the content or outline?

Casey Hannel asked about Kevin and Alysha as part of that earthquake team. Would it be advisable to add school seismic safety, and would it be helpful to reach out to Kevin Zerbe directly? Sharon Wallace will forward Kevin's contact info to Casey. Jason would like to recommend Forest Resilience at the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to reach out to the wildfire and hazard mitigation.

Jason Bierman asked if there are any other comments or questions regarding the content submitted in the rough draft.

Quyen Thai asked if the EMC was part of the Revised Code Washington (RCW) creation 19.27.560 regarding Wild Land Urban Interface for Wildfires. Melissa Gannie addresses that the Community Risk Reduction Coalition, through the state fire marshal's office and partners, has been in discussion with the building officials for any changes, if adopted, would need to go through the fire marshal's office and building code. DNR has mapping impacts the fire chiefs and marshals. To everyone in this group- we welcome the help for these jurisdictions and homeowners.

Nancy Bickford addressed finding the sponsored bills and their initiation.

Jason went back to discussing the Annual Report. April is the goal for the design presentation and helps to have the final report for the vote in June.

Kirk Holmes addressed the council as to whether there is an "ask" from the council in the report? Are we asking for budget dollars to support the recommendations? Kirk presented that the jurisdictions can't navigate through the funding because they don't have the support, and how can he help this process?

Jason answers that recommendations and funding are needed to close those gaps.

Robert Ezelle advised that this is a vehicle for the entire EM community to make their voice heard. One of our goals is for cost-share on mitigation and the storm act as an investment fund for local mitigation, Individual Assistance (IA), and Public Assistance (PA) programs at the state level. The EMC can get behind and determine the structural changes the group could be doing with significant momentum-building legislative programs.

Legislative Update**Nancy Bickford, MIL**

Currently, the session runs eighteen days from start to finish in committees and rules; with that said- no bill is ever easy to pass. Opportunity happened February 1, 2022, when Robert and TAG met with the Community and Economic Development Committee and answered questions regarding emergency management's rules and responsibilities. You can find the Q&A on TV-W for anyone to review. <https://tvw.org> Executive cabinet agencies cannot advocate for anything not in the Governor's Budget, but we can answer questions. We are reviewing the appliance grant for the \$1M in the budget. The committee also asked about the Pandemic AAR and resourcing.

House Bills #1620, Representative Leavitt, for the Extreme Weather Event grant program focuses on socially vulnerable communities without resources to do heating and cooling centers. It is bipartisan and is in Rules at this time.

House Bill #1703, which amends 29 chapters of the statute modernizing the statewide 911 communications, has successfully passed through two committees and is now in Rules. It was voted unanimously out of Appropriations.

The bills on Governor's powers had 15 bills from last year, but only introduced two bills this year which are moving. Representative Corry's House Bill #1772 is the stronger of the two that set sixty-day limits on nearly

everything. The other bill which changed violating orders from gross misdemeanor to a civil infraction, missed the policy cut-off.

Senate bill #5909, sponsored by Senator Randall, passed out of the policy committee. This bill does a few things of note as it requires the legislature to extend a proclamation past ninety days, and when they are not in session, it is the Four Corners Rule. Section 3, 4, 5 of unanticipated receipts of funds- like federal dollars received unexpectedly, these funds over 5 ML will go through a process that creates a committee.

House Bill #1957 creates a disaster recovery assistance program in the Department of Commerce. It is in the Rules committee. The focus is on businesses with an annual gross receipt of \$5M, or less, to help with natural disaster damage.

Senator Frockt on Senate Bill #5933 emphasized earthquake preparedness regarding the seismic area. The bill would establish a grant program for schools and set bonding authority goals process for five Biennium at \$100M for retrofitting preparedness and safety.

In the 911 community, Senate Bill #5555, the Public Safety Telecommunicators that create the certification program, is doing well. It moved, by unanimous vote, out of Appropriations to Rules. Another 911 bill to note is House Bill #1827, which Representative Sutherland amended to create a community reinvestment account in Commerce to allow 911 to be a recipient.

Senate Bill #5803 deals with wildfires and utilities to make mitigation plans. Senator Sefzik, of the 42nd district, sponsored Senate Bill #5937 for flood recovery assistance allocate \$85M to that area. It has not had a hearing and won't proceed. The legislature is aware that new members need education on emergency management, and the role isn't completely understood.

Questions: **Kurt** – Are those bills available for tracking to share?

Nancy will send this on to Sharon to provide. TVW in the archive. [Home - TVW](#).

Closing

General Daugherty, MIL and Director Robert Ezelle, EMD

The General reminded the council to be aware of the cyber realm with tensions in Europe, response plans for emergencies, and needed contacts to reach. This year has been another challenging environment, but he must believe we are nearing an end to the pandemic. -Keep the faith. Thank you for your excellent work and partnership. Robert agrees with the General's remarks and wishes everyone the best.

Adjournment

Jason Biermann, Chair

Jason thanked Nate Weed, that we might be closing in on the pandemic. The decision to meet more frequently as the SAC will move forward. The Annual Report seems to be on the right track and the authors and editors are covering the right topics to represent the concerns of this council. Congratulations to the new vice-chair, JoAnn Boggs and a thank you to Mike Harris for his leadership these years as the former vice-chair.

We are adjourned. – 10:42AM

Attendance:

1	X	Fred Brink	ALT	X	Philip Lemley
2		Stephanie Wright	ALT		Gene Strong
3		Chief Scott Engle	ALT		Chief Peter Fisher
4	X	Chief John Batiste	ALT	X	Arel Solie

5	X	Robert Ezelle	ALT	X	Adam Wasserman
6	X	Jim Pendowski	ALT		VACANT
7	X	Chief Chad Cross	ALT	X	Melissa Gannie
8	X	Chief Michael Harris	ALT		Chief Brian Schaeffer
9		Hilary Franz	ALT	X	Casey Hanell
10	X	Chandra Fox	ALT	X	Kyle Bustad
11	X	JoAnn Boggs	ALT	X	Jason Biermann
12	X	Bill Gillespie	ALT		John O'Rourke
13	X	Nate Weed	Alt	X	Ron Weaver
14		Doug Powell	ALT	X	Quyen Thai
15	X	Greg Welch	ALT		Gary Chandler
16	X	John Himmel	ALT		VACANT
17	X	Kirk Holmes	ALT	X	Jennifer Bailey
18	X	Martin Mueller	ALT		Mike Donlin
19		Nick Henderson	ALT	X	Dr. Nichole Yarid

EMC Non-Members Attendance 2/3/2022

Sandi Duffey	Zoie Choate EMD
Nancy Bickford MIL	Sierra Wardell EMD
Vincent Maykovich FEMA Region X	John Hollingsworth EMD
Sandy Eccker Thurston County EM	Mark Douglas EMD
Jason Reinfeld Chelan County EM	Stephanie Haertling EMD
Rich Magnussen Chelan County EM	Stacey McClain EMD
Diana Owens Chelan County EM	Regan Bush EMD
Kimberly Conner DSHS/WASILC	Gail Cram EMD
Angie Lane DNR	Joshua Castillo EMD
Amy Gillespie	Courtney Bemus EMD
Melissa Van Gorkom	Troy Newman EMD

Alysha Kaplan	Sharon Wallace EMD
Abram Barker	Tammy Lee EMD
Joshua Castillo MIL	
Bret Daugherty MIL	
Chelan County EM	
DOH Slides Slide 1	Slide 2