

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

MINUTES

Minutes of Meeting April 7, 2022,

Meeting called to order by Jason Biermann, Chairman, 9:00 AM

In Attendance – Introduction of Attendees

Sharon Wallace requested state of quorum; Stephanie Haertling confirmed quorum had been achieved.

Approval of Minutes

Jason Biermann, Chair

Kirk Holmes made a motion to approve the February 3, 2022, minutes as submitted.

Fred Brink Seconded the Motion.

Without objection, minutes were approved unanimously as submitted.

Moment of Silence

William Gillespie requested a moment of silence is observed in honor of fallen officers, stating:

“I would like the council to take a moment of silence to express our condolences and sympathies to the Pierce County Sheriff’s Office, the Everett Police Department, the Edmonds Police Department, and the Washington National Guard for the loss of their officers these past several weeks.”

The Council observe a moment of silence.

Opening Comments

Director Robert Ezelle and General Daugherty

General Bret Daugherty thanked William Gillespie for the motion of a moment of silence, stating:

“[It is] so unfortunate when we lose those great people, and it always seems that we lose our truly best people. Dom was certainly in that category. So, I appreciate you having that moment of silence for Dom and the other officers.”

The general also thanked everyone who joined the meeting for their involvement in disaster response over the last “two incredibly difficult years.” He noted that we seem to be in a “golden period” between disasters now and emphasized that we all need to enjoy it while it lasts.

He spoke on the Ukraine/Russia conflict, mentioning the initial concern regarding Russian cyberattacks in retaliation for sanctions placed upon them by NATO. He noted that no credible attacks have taken place but did not rule out the possibility of a future attack. General Daugherty asked attendees to please work with their perspective OCIOs to ensure patches are up to date and we are sufficiently prepared in the event of a change to that status. He also stated that we should anticipate that with the influx of refugees pouring out of Ukraine, some of them will come our way. He reminded everyone that “war, by nature, is inherently unpredictable.”

The general talked about Cascadia Rising 2022, which is coming up but was scaled back significantly. He encouraged everyone to get as much out of the event as possible.

Director Robert Ezelle thanked General Daugherty for his comments and welcomed everyone to the April EMC meeting. Robert talked about the Major Disaster Declaration, approved by FEMA, for the winter storms from late December into January, thanking FEMA partners for the award, which brought much-needed assistance to the State of Washington.

The director discussed the following grants:

- Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG) - Should release the NOFO this week or next.
- Homeland Security Portfolio- NOFO around May 13
- Homeland Security Grants- Applications due by June 13
- Cyber Security Grant- NOFO in the Summer

Director Ezelle mentioned continuing work on the COVID-19 After Action Report (AAR), stating that the task force has met twice and is working through the start of the process and that it will be narrowing its focus to the eight items specified in the proviso.

Jason Biermann introduced Willie Nunn, recently confirmed as the Region 10 regional administrator, stating that Willie has been with FEMA for about 15 years. He's been around FEMA in the different directorates and served for 26 years in the Air Force. He served as a Federal Coordinating Officer managing disasters in all four states in Region X and several other FEMA regions.

Regional Issues Impacting Washington

Willie Nunn, Regional Administrator, FEMA Region X

Willie Nunn said a few words about himself. He mentioned he is 39 days on the job and is excited to be here to support Washington and the rest of the other three states in the region. Willie spoke about the Validate as You Go (VAYGO) and concurrent project documentation validation. FEMA is conducting a strategic pause beginning October 1, 2022 and will conduct listening sessions with all states and get their feedback.

Open Public Forum

Jason Biermann, Chair

Open to questions or discussion –

Kirk Holmes spoke about ESF 1 and 3 partners having conversations about evacuation planning across the state. He mentioned some great learning opportunities from places in California, Oregon, and other locations, including the southeast. Kirk thinks they want to be able to create some data that helps support training, including operation and maintenance staff. If anybody is interested in learning more about those conversations, there will be a deeper dive. Public works partners are interested in having a data-driven framework, so they can make good decisions and have a good training platform.

Jason Biermann gave a “shout-out” to the FEMA FIT team, supported by the regional catastrophic preparedness grant program, which hugely impacted the Puget Sound region.

They are currently working on three projects. Snohomish County oversees 2019, King County, 2020, and Pierce County, 2021 projects. All that work is focused on community points of distribution and ensuring that we can get lifesaving and life-sustaining food, water, and emergency medications to the folks most in need within our region.

CNA interviewed Jodie Ferguson of Pierce County and Jason Biermann as part of a podcast. The podcast gives a more in-depth look at why we're doing things the way we are, what we hope to achieve, and utilizing the private sector and leveraging them and a lot of the data-driven work.

Much work continues around the state even as we've gone through COVID. Many partners are involved in that, including the Department of Transportation, public works departments, fire, EMS, law enforcement, and the Emergency Management community. We are grateful for the support from FEMA through that RCGP program, which has been fantastic at bringing eight counties around the Puget Sound region together to focus on planning through the years.

Meet-a-Member

Fred Brink introduced himself. Mayor Pro-tem of West Richland- Represents the Association of Washington cities, a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization, for the benefit of Washington's 281 cities and towns. His alternate is Phil Lemley, also a council member of the town of West Richland. Fred has been at the EMC for about two years, joining

just before the pandemic. His work history includes six years as a naval surface warfare officer. After graduating from college, he left the Navy and spent 25 years as a special agent with the FBI, specializing in crisis management and terrorism. He retired from the FBI as a special agent in charge and then went to PNNL, the Pacific Northwest National Lab as a program manager and their national Security Directorate. Fred retired from PNNL about three years ago. His reason for joining the EMC is to use his expertise to assist in fulfilling its mission.

Nathan Weed presented a slideshow and introduced himself. Originally from Wyoming ended up going into EMS out of high school. He went to college at the University of Wyoming. He received a degree in forensic anthropology, which pulled him a bit more towards the mortuary affairs side of disaster response leading into this line of work. Through college, Nate worked in some interesting places like Yellowstone Park and New Orleans, and other places in between. Nathan went to New Orleans to get a master's in public health. He had some opportunities to attend a couple of different leadership schools and has been working on Type 3 IMTs since 2005. In terms of response experience, Nate has quite a bit of public health response experience and works with federal HHS and IMT. In terms of public health, Nathan worked at the local, regional, state, and federal levels throughout his career. He has served as the acting deputy secretary for emergency preparedness resilience and response for a little over a year in a 60-person office at the Department of Health, whose vision is to figure out the best ways to save lives and improve community resilience during disasters affecting human health. Nathan spoke about DOH and introduced Andrew Rose as the assistant secretary for emergency response.

Current and Recurring Emergency Management Issues

COVID-19

- DOH Update - Nathan Weed, DOH
 - There has been a notable decrease in COVID numbers across the state. According to the graph displayed, the State of Washington is in a low trough. The agency is cautiously optimistic.
 - We see COVID-19 admissions plateauing at a declined level on the hospital side. Hospitals still have healthcare staffing issues, but a decline COVID patients needing ventilators. We are still seeing sustained high occupancy, especially in regional healthcare centers, which tend to be the ones that take the brunt of the surge.
 - The state is currently safely in the moderate risk zone.
 - Forty-seven hospitals currently reporting ICU and Acute Care bed occupancy of greater than 90%, but we see the number slowly decline when we look at it by week.
 - Fifteen hospitals report a surge in bed occupancy more significant than 100%, which is tricky because the hospitals are smaller, making it easier to fill past capacity.
 - Paying close attention to Blood products, which are in short supply. Encouraging people to donate blood.
 - Jason Bierman asked Nathan if he could compare hospital capacity now to pre-covid; Nathan explained that due to reporting, comparing the two would not be an easy way to compare the two. Jason then asked about the EMS system, noting that they have the same issues of being stretched thin due to staffing shortages. Nathan confirmed the reports to be accurate.

Cyber and Infrastructure Security - Robert Ezelle, EMD Director

- Robert briefly discussed cybersecurity, touching on the Russia/Ukraine crisis, noting WA EMD's proactive approach led to important lessons and insights which could be built upon, though nothing of significance had occurred.
- The Infrastructure Resilience Subcommittee, which members of the EMC Team facilitated, consisted of representatives from major critical infrastructure groups. It was always a challenge to keep ongoing membership participation, possibly due to the timing, and the group partnered with federal initiatives that were taking place under DHS and disbanded. Over time the state has placed a growing emphasis on the importance of infrastructure. We want to discuss whether the time has come to reconstitute that

subcommittee. While it may be too early to decide, Robert would like to open it up to members of the EMC to make comments or discuss anything that he may have left out. Robert will reach out to Alicia King, the EMD Cyber Critical infrastructure Manager, and ask her to reach out to state agency partners to flesh out the issues in more detail, then come back in a future meeting to brief on those issues and recommend a path forward. Robert asked for any questions or comments from the committee.

- **Chandra Fox** stated that there seems to be a natural nexus with the state's adoption of the community lifelines construct and thinks that is a way forward. How do we take these two efforts and, if not integrate them, make sure they move together in a coordinated manner?
- **Robert Ezelle** agreed that Chandra had a valid point but noted that there would need to be a crosswalk between the ESFs, and the Community Lifelines, which can get complicated.

Work Session: SAC Meeting

Jason Biermann, Chair

SAC Meeting Dates – 2022

The Senior Advisory committee committed to meeting more frequently than just the once a year. We had been meeting as the SAC so we have a couple of things that we wanted to bring to the council.

- Ensuring everyone knows that for the remainder of this year, the actual SAC meeting dates are today, August 4, and December 8.

Review THIRA/SPR results- Rob Sabarese, EMD

Robert Sabarese presented slides that discussed:

- Trend analysis between 2019 and 2021 data for the URC and the SPR,
- Year-by-year comparison data shows an aggregated net loss,
- And differences and gaps in capability targets, cyber security, physical protective measures, and risk management for protection programs.

Rob mentioned that we need to take a bit of a deeper dive into how we understand our critical infrastructure public down to Critical Infrastructure facilities. For more information, please see the slides [here](#) or contact [Rob Sabarese](#).

Jason Biermann expressed his appreciation of the work Jason and Rob have put in to report this information to the members of the EMC and encouraged members to help support the information gathering efforts of Rob's team by reaching out to their local representatives.

FY23 SHSP funding allocation and project selection process update- Kathryn Zetzer, EMD

Kathryn Zetzer shared PowerPoint slides with an update on the State Homeland Security Grant Program (SHSP).

Kathryn is currently going through an information-gathering process and broke it into two groups: Community Engagements through Regional Listening Sessions and Best Practices and Due Diligence through Benchmarking and FEMA's Intent. In December, the team kicked off a joint meeting between Homeland Security Coordinators and Washington State Emergency Managers and has held regional meetings to continue conversations about challenges and situational awareness of significant changes to SHSP while utilizing the best practices and due diligence approach. Kathryn is benchmarking, calling other State Administrative Agencies (SAAs) across the nation to see how they manage SHSP/UASI funding and what process, policies, and processes they're using. What successes challenges they are also having.

Kathryn stated she has been in constant communication with FEMA to make sure that the changes we're making align with the direction that SHSP is going. As of right now, Kathryn has met with or scheduled seven regional listening sessions, with only two more to be scheduled.

A future state for SHSP might look like a more agile model that focuses on and centers around Washington state needs instead of focusing on and centering on FEMA's regulations and restrictions. After sharing that future state proposal, we will walk into another set of regional impact assessment listening sessions to talk about the

unintended consequences of some of the decisions we've made or some of the impacts that might be happening for each region.

Kathryn put together a notional timeline, which was included with these minutes. We are in the update now, in April. The next step will be a joint HLS coordinator and EM meeting in May to kick off the following steps, hopefully with a complete wrap-up in September to give us some time to prepare for the next cycle of SHSP.

- **Jason Biermann** asked if the living document that Kathryn mentioned would be the THIRA/SPR document or if it would be separate. Kathryn responded that she is not comfortable talking tactics, that it should be a discussion in the group, but that she doesn't envision creating more work.
- **Arel Solie** mentioned that Kathryn initially talked about SHSP and UASI, but then at the end, the last slide seemed to focus only on SHSP. Is this only for the SHSP side?
 - Kathryn responded, yes, it's only for SHSP, but we are finding that some SAAs combine the SHSP and UASI process. So, just speaking about SHSP, we are learning about UASI. But we are only making suggesting changes in learning information for SHSP.
 - Arel followed up, stating that Kathryn focused on terrorism and asked whether SHSP included all hazards.
 - Katherine answered that the purpose of SHSP is primarily for terrorism prevention protection. It can have an all-hazard benefit, but the purpose itself is not for an all-hazards investment.

For more information, please contact [Kathryn Zetzer](#).

Work Session: Annual Report

Jason Biermann, Chair

Review working draft

Jason opened the floor for discussion before going into the document. Due to the constraints that COVID placed on everyone, this will encapsulate both years 2020 and 2022, which was a decision that we made at a previous meeting. Hearing none, Jason briefly discussed the recommendations in each section with the group.

- Use of Incident Management Teams (IMTs)
 - **Robert Ezelle** suggested making the recommendations more specific and actionable. Chandra will follow up.
 - Since these touch on fire mobilization, Jason asked for comments from anyone with WSP or the fire community.
 - **Arel Solie** asked about the involvement of the IMT Coalition. Chandra responded that this draft was sent out to them but can be resent once the additional language is updated. Chief John Batiste requested that also be sent to Chad Cross, interim State Fire Marshall.
- Public/Private Partnerships
 - Earlier feedback was to be more specific.
 - **General Bret Daugherty** recommended that PPE and things critical to the nation's health and national security be manufactured in the USA to alleviate the need to compete on the open market.
- All Risk Mobilization
 - No Comments
- Hazard Mitigation
 - **Casey Hanell** wanted to highlight the recommendation to increase funding for school seismic safety.
 - In the next legislative session, we're looking at putting forward a request to create the capacity to fund 100% of local match for impoverished communities. This way, they can engage in mitigation activities because, right now, the match can be a barrier to participation in our various mitigation grant programs. **Robert Ezelle** recommends more specificity for this issue as well. Craft language to the effect of, "To construct a resilient lifeline, for movement of the emergency supplies and

services East-West and North-South," to tie it to a survivable lifeline, so we've got structures that are not going to fall when the bigger earthquake hits.

- **Kirk Holmes** mentioned wanting to see the recommendation touch on flooding, a costly event in Washington State. Kirk would like to establish guidelines and encourage the use of Funding for flood risk reduction efforts and highways and bridges, etcetera. Jason asked Kirk to send over any language he had in mind to Sharon Wallace or himself.
- **Robert Ezelle** stated that he had a conversation with the governor and Willie Nunn. As a state, we will have to look at flooding along the Nooksack and try to develop a long-term solution because it also impacts British Columbia. We have a joint agreement with BC, but we are not living up to our side of the bargain to mitigate the flood risk on that river.
We are starting to get some traction on another portion of our legislative agenda that we've been trying to advance for years, creating a state Individual Assistance Program. There is funding to study how that program could look.
- **Quyen Thai** discussed seismic retrofitting, stating that it is one of the things the Washington Association of Building Officials (WABO) is trying to get legislators to understand the need. We often don't get earthquakes, so people tend to forget that we have many buildings in Tacoma constructed from unreinforced masonry, which poses a life/safety hazard. One of the challenges to moving forward is the cost. We are trying to create legislation that would support some of these communities' efforts to pay for retrofitting. There is a recommendation for school retrofits, but perhaps the recommendation should include other structures to help property owners of unreinforced masonry buildings.
 - **Jason Biermann** agreed that it makes sense to add language that would include unreinforced masonry buildings, especially in the downtown areas, and asked Quyen to send more information to him or Sharon Wallace.
 - **Kirk Holmes** stated there'd been talk about work-around retrofitting and schools. He suggested that the conversation around seismic retrofitting to some of our roadway and highway bridges might be an opportunity to add a sentence or two around a similar grant program already created for schools or highway bridges. He said he would be happy to add a sentence if Jason and the team think it would be valuable.
- **Jason Bierman** asked John Himmel (DOT) for any feedback he may have.
 - **John Himmel** mentioned that the state funding is there, but retrofits are only half the equation. He suggested taking the conversation offline but said that while DOT plans to retrofit existing structures, they are not doing anything below the surface. One of the goals is to change the way new bridges are built, building them to a higher standard in the first place. Jason asked if the issue was worth highlighting. John agreed, stating that anything we can do because it comes down to funding. Building a structure to higher standards costs more. It isn't a standard rate; it depends on the structure. It is approximately 10 to 20% more to build to a higher standard than life safety, which we traditionally build.
- Next Steps – Sharon Wallace
 - We'll work over the next couple of weeks to get these other updates, incorporate them and send them out for review.
 - Expect a final product at the June meeting.
 - Submit to the governor's office by the end of June.

Legislative Update

Robert Ezelle, EMD Director

We had a very successful legislative session; the military department advanced two bills:

- A corrective language bill, which affects secondary education for guard members,
- Corrected the statutes that pertain to 911 since we've moved from "enhanced 911" to "next generation." It took out "enhanced" to reference just "911." Several technical corrections also passed.

- Bill 5555, which APCO/NENA ran to classify the 911 call receivers as first responders, also passed.

We have spoken with many legislators throughout the session as we advocated for the various pieces of the governor's budget. We saw some things come out of the budget that was not necessarily part of the governor's original budget submission. November storms may have created an impact and an awareness for several legislators of the lack of tools needed to meet the needs of people when disasters impact them. Various things that that we ask for and saw:

- The disaster response account's total funding is usually easily supported, but it's something we must ask for every year.
- The Legislature picked up half of the local cost-share for mitigation projects, lowering the bar of entry for local communities into mitigation.
- We requested three FTEs. The governor's budget supported 2; one for access and functional needs planning, the other for tribal liaison.

Some other things that we saw which were not part of our asks:

- The Legislature awarded \$5M to the governor for a disaster response account that he would have separate from the DRE but would be able to help the individuals and communities impacted by disasters. We burned through almost all of that right away on the November floods and so the Legislature put \$10M into that account.
- We continue to plead the case for an individual assistance program in the state. Although it's in statute. It's never been funded and there's no rulemaking authority so essentially. It's nothing more than a placeholder that with no real ability to create a program so the Legislature appropriated \$300k for us to create a study on what an individual assistance program would look like, so we would be working that in conjunction with the Department of Commerce and DSHS. Currently working on an RFP to get that started.
- We indicated that the pandemic AAR was underfunded, so they've fully funded the original fiscal note going into the last legislative session.
- Senator Sefzik from the Whatcom County area had requested about \$85M from the Legislature to meet disaster recovery needs in Whatcom County, which did not pass.
- We were surprised that there was a line item in the budget for \$7.5M to EMD to assist disaster survivors for the entire biennium. There were no strings attached to that, so we're going to have to build the guidelines for how that funding will be. We now have the capability of going back and helping some of the folks impacted by the November and January storms. However, it will also carry us through the coming fire season and whatever will hit us this winter.
- There is an additional \$200k that came to us specifically to contract for Ruckelshaus Foundation to do a study of crisis decision-making as it transpired during the pandemic response.
- There was also some funding for a local match for the cyber grant when that materialized.
- A bill went forward looking for assistance to local communities for heating and cooling shelters that did not pass.

Closing Remarks

General Daugherty Thanked everybody for being in the meeting today. This meeting was informative—some good discussions. We're excited about the potential to get that individual assistance bill through the Legislature. It's always so frustrating to see people in really a bad spot, needing some assistance and not being able to help. We're going to keep pushing, and we're going to be successful, but we couldn't be successful without everybody on this call today. So, thanks a lot for all your support, and let's keep working together.

Jim Baumgart (GOV) thanked everyone for attending and the work on recrafting the annual report. Jim mentioned that Robert is spot on about it helping to educate and inform the Legislature, and we have seen that they are listening. They are interested. We are at the threshold of some decisions they will make and some opportunities we have. So very excited about the future on this one.

Robert Ezelle Thanked all for the partnership. We will be coming back to you as we continue to advance the legislative agenda looking for your support, your input, and things that we could be doing to help the state of Washington. Truly appreciate it and look forward to the continued partnership.

Jason Biermann Thanked those who have been authoring the revised annual report and thanked TAG for his time.

Adjournment

Jason Biermann, Chair

Meeting Adjourned at 11AM

Attendees

EMC Members and Alternates

Position	Name	Council Position (RCW 38.52.040)	7-Apr
1	Fred Brink	Primary Association of WA Business	x
Pos 1 Alt	Philip Lemley	Alternate Association of WA Business	
2	Stephanie Wright	WA State Association of Counties	
Pos 2 Alt	Gene Strong	WA State Association of Counties	
3	Chief Scott Engle	WA Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs	
Pos 3 Alt	Chief Peter Fisher	WA Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs	
4	Chief John Batiste	Washington State Patrol	x
Pos 4 Alt	Arel Solie	Washington State Patrol	x
5	Robert Ezelle	EMD Director	x
Pos 5 Alt	Adam Wasserman	EMD Acting Deputy Director	x
6	Jim Pendowski	Dept of Ecology	
Pos 6 Alt	VACANT	Dept of Ecology	
7	Chief Chad Cross (as of 11.2021)	WA State Fire Marshal's Office	x
Pos 7 Alt	Melissa Gannie	WA State Fire Marshal's Office	
8	Chief Michael Harris	WA Association of Fire Chiefs	x
Pos 8 Alt	Chief Brian Schaeffer	WA Association of Fire Chiefs	
9	Hilary Franz	Department of Natural Resources	
Pos 9 Alt	Casey Hanell	Department of Natural Resources	x
10	Chandra Fox	Washington State EMD Association	x
Pos 10 Alt	Kyle Bustad	Washington State EMD Association	x
11	JoAnn Boggs	Local Emergency Managers Directors	
Pos 11 Alt	Jason Biermann	Local Emergency Managers Directors	x

12	Bill Gillespie	St of WA Search & Rescue Volunteer Advisory Group	x
Pos 12 Alt	John O'Rourke	St of WA Search & Rescue Volunteer Advisory Group	
13	Nate Weed	Department of Health	x
Pos 13 Alt	Ron Weaver	Department of Health	
14	Doug Powell	Washington Association of Building Officials	
Pos 14 Alt	Quyen Thai	Washington Association of Building Officials	x
15	Greg Welch	Private Industry	x
Pos 15 Alt	Gary Chandler	Private Industry	
16	John Himmel	Washington State Department of Transportation	x
Pos 16 Alt	VACANT	Washington State Department of Transportation	
17	Kirk Holmes	American Public Works Association	x
Pos 17 Alt	Jennifer Bailey	American Public Works Association	
18	Martin Mueller	Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction	
Pos 18 Alt	Mike Donlin	Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction	
Pos 19	Nick Henderson	Coroner/ME	
Pos 19 ALT	Dr. Nichole Yarid	ME/Coroner	x
			18