

Region 3B Coalition Meeting

September 2, 2021

2:10 p.m. – 3:15 p.m.

Remote Zoom Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86921895126?pwd=dDdmSkRldklxQXN1RGp0MTE4REI0UT09>

Meeting ID: 869 2189 5126

Passcode: 916253

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TOWN CLERKS OFFICE
LYNNFIELD, MA

Attendees (Roll Call):

Voting Members: Shuang Shen (Chair, Reading), Tom Carbone (Andover), Felix Garcia (Lawrence), Kristin McRae (Lynnfield), Brian LaGrasse (North Andover), Donna Hovey (North Reading), Shelly Newhouse (Wilmington)

Non-Voting Members: JoAnne Petro (3B Coordinator), Elizabeth Robert (Region 3 HMCC Program Manager), Dan Witts (Region 3 Planning & Ops Coordinator), Felicia Balbi (OPEM/DPH Sr. Preparedness Planner), Jake Lamond (MRC Coordinator), Karen Contador (BME Strategies), Anna Weilgoetz (BME Strategies), Laura Vlasuk

Voting Members Not In Attendance: Methuen

Call to Order: 2:10 p.m. - Seven (7) communities were represented. Quorum was met and meeting was called to order.

Approval of meeting minutes from July 29, 2021 meeting

A motion was made to approve the meeting minutes from the July 29, 2021 meeting, motion Tom Carbone (Andover), second Felix Garcia (Lawrence), motion carries

Roll Call Vote: Tom Carbone-Andover (yes), Felix Garcia-Lawrence (yes), Kristin McRae-Lynnfield (yes), Brian LaGrasse-North Andover (yes), Shuang Shen-Reading (yes), Shelly Newhouse-Wilmington (yes), Donna Hovey-North Reading joined the meeting late.

MDPH Update:

Felicia Balbi

Felicia informed the group that there will be a "Welcome to Region 3 PHEP" introductory meeting on September 14, 2021 from 10:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. A WebEOC refresher training will take place on September 16, 2021 from 10:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

The next Welcome to PHEP will take place on October 12, 2021 from 10:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. and WebEOC training will be on October 14, 2021 from 9:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. A calendar invite will be sent after the September meetings.

Staffing Changes: Tavish McCloud was the WebEOC Administrator and he took a position in Vermont as a PHEP Coordinator. Hired a new EMS for Children's Coordinator, Ben Palmer, and he will be working with the EMS for Children's Program within OPEM.

It is unknown if there will be a WebEOC Statewide drill during Q1. Tavish was the one that coordinated these drills. Felicia reminded the group that WebEOC drills are activated by the HHAN. New Coalition

member information is passed onto Felicia and she works with the Health and Homeland Alerting System to have your information entered into the system. These alerts can take place via phone call, text message or email depending on your settings and will provide instructions. You will acknowledge acceptance of the message, take the instructions provided and go into WebEOC to update with the information provided. Participation information is provided to Felicia and she shares that information with the Coalition and it is documented in the workplan as well.

It was noted that OPEM responded to hurricane Henri in a hybrid manner. During the daytime staff were in Marlborough with the nights being remote. Minimal damage was reported during this event. Primarily power outages. DPH/OPEM will start transitioning from hybrid back into the office one day a week starting next Tuesday. Felicia will be in the office on Wednesday's.

Planner Update:

Karen Contador/Anna Weilgoetz

Karen reminded the group that the AAR Conference and AAR (After Action Report) is one of the Deliverables for this year. Need to focus on planning a date for the AAR Conference and collecting information from everyone to propose questions to be sent out to your respective community partners to help during the response process. Before the questions are sent to your community partners your team will be the one to sign off on the questions. For the first round of determining the date for the AAR Conference, BME was thinking February 2, 2022 from 12:30 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. Solicited a response from the group regarding any conflict with the date and time of this virtual conference. Each Coalition will be having their own Conference and a report will be written at the end of the conference summarizing the results. There will be an open question about how the Region as a whole might want to present the results of the Region as a whole. This step is not required by the State but the thought is that this will be useful for the Coalitions as a whole. Tom Carbone stated that it was the thought that it would be pulled together as Region 3 and then work its way up to LSAC who will Coordinate the Statewide stuff. Anna informed the group that the requirement from the State on this Deliverable is to have a report for each Coalition but do have the intention of making this Region wide. The same survey will be sent to all of the Coalitions to combine into one comprehensive survey. A link for the survey will be sent shortly. The report for this Deliverable will be due mid March. Still very much available to assist with EDS plans if needed.

Coordinator Update:

JoAnne Petro

During Planner/Coordinator the process for posting of agendas and meeting minutes was discussed. Currently reviewing the process to ensure that it is being done in a timely and accurate fashion. JoAnne will be reaching out to each community and/or Town Clerks to confirm information that is currently used for posting is correct.

Received information regarding attendance at the MHOA Conference. At this time only Day 1 of the conference has been approved which means only the night before the first day is an approved stay. When the requests are submitted, they will be submitted for the full conference, a two night stay and possibly the Friday night meal which is not included as part of the conference. Once the approval process is complete, communities will be informed about which expenses will be reimbursable and those that will not be. The current GSA rate for the hotel stay is \$134.00 and the hotel rate for the conference is \$145.00 Individuals attending the conference will be responsible for the difference in the cost and any applicable taxes if they are not waived. Tax and tip will be reimbursable on meals not covered by the conference not to exceed the GSA rate. JoAnne encouraged individuals attending the conference to book their hotel stay so they do not lose out on room availability as they can be cancelled according to the hotel cancellation policy. With Felix leaving the Coalition he has asked that another representative from Lawrence be allowed to attend the Conference in his place. Peter Blanchette has returned to Lawrence as the Building

Commissioner and has expressed an interest in attending the Conference. The original vote for attendance at the Conference was for five communities, not specific individuals. The feeling among the group is that as long as Peter continues to be a representative at the Coalition meetings and actively participate in the HMCC, they are in agreement with the request to attend the Conference.

JoAnne informed the group that there are staffing changes in Lawrence that are taking place. Felix Garcia informed the group that he has accepted a position in Action as a Public Health Inspector and will no longer be part of Region 3. Felix informed the group that he would be resigning as Vice Chair for the Coalition. His departure leaves the position of Vice Chair vacant. JoAnne asked the group if they would like to have a discussion regarding a replacement of the Vice Chair position. There was no one willing to fill the Vice Chair position at this time so it will be put on the agenda for the next meeting.

There was a discussion about resuming the practice WebEOC drills initiated by the Coordinator. The group was agreeable to resuming practice drills. JoAnne will reach out to Felicia to discuss further. If it becomes too invasive for communities on an already taxing schedule, it will be revisited at a later date.

HMCC Update:
Elizabeth Robert

Beth wanted to clarify that the first day of the MHOA Conference has been approved but on the second day there is content that has been approved, however, the second day only has six hours of content and in order to be approved for an overnight stay the night prior it needs to be at least seven hours. The HMCC had a meeting with OPEM and this became part of the discussion. At the moment, lodging the night before Day 1 has been approved. Day 2, at the moment, will not be able to be reimbursable at this time. OPEM stated that they were going to see if there was anything they could do to fit within the grant parameters. They will provide an update when they have an answer.

The HMCC will be hosting their Q1 Stakeholder meeting at the end of the month. It will be a virtual meeting. There will be a panel discussion on how to take the challenges faced during COVID and work them into daily operational improvements. Are there things that we have learned from COVID that can be helpful and utilized during a response to future emergencies.

The HMCC has updated their Travel and Purchasing policies and they will be forwarded to the Coordinators to be shared with their Coalitions. DPH allows for four budget modifications per year but the HMCC is going to change it to three, however, if it is determined that a fourth modification is needed for an emergency, it will be accommodated. The date for last budget modification due to the HMCC is May 15, 2022.

At the request of hospitals, the HMCC is hosting two meetings a week to discuss bed availability, COVID numbers and strategic items as well. They would like to work together to ensure that their policies align with one another in order to allow for consistency across the hospitals.

MRC Update:
Jake Lamond

Jake informed the group that volunteers are gearing up for whatever may be coming up. Looking forward to the virtual meeting at the end of the month and feels it will be extremely useful for the MRC. The MRC would like to diversify their MRC base especially in Lawrence and Methuen where they don't have many volunteers and have relatively few volunteers who are fluent in another language other than English. The MRC will be reaching out to the Greater Lawrence Exchange Club at their dinner meeting later this month. If anyone has any suggestions on other efforts that could be taken to diversify the MRC volunteer base, please reach out to Jake. Tom Carbone stated that the Town of Andover has been making

a push for equity and inclusivity and this plays right into what the Andover Health Agency is looking to do. The membership needs to reflect the communities that are being served and solicited input from all communities.

Karen Contador informed the group that BME Strategies works as an MRC Coordinator in another Region and once they start developing these ideas they would love to share them with the Coalition.

LSAC Update:

Donna Hovey

Donna Hovey informed the group that there have been no meetings since February of this year. She will continue to look into this to see what may be coming up. She received an email from Tom Carbone informing her that Jeff Stevens from Region 3C has left his position and has accepted a new job with the City of Leominster in Region 2 so he will not be representing the Region at all and will not be continuing as the LSAC Chair. Typically, the next meeting would be September 13th and he will be facilitating that meeting with the new Co-Chairs, Sue Rosa from Chelmsford and Ray Dick from Westford. Jeff will continue to support the Region in any way he can but he will not be officially on board.

Other Business:

Shuang Shen wanted to have a discussion to follow up on her email about the CDC's plan to begin offering a third dose of COVID vaccine to the public beginning the week of September 20, 2021. There are now flu shots available and she was wondering if there are any concerns about the interaction of two different vaccines. Tom Carbone stated that the group should consider doing a couple of Regional clinics for the third dose. Tom fully expects that Andover will take over the responsibility for their public safety as they did for the first and second round. To Tom's knowledge, the only third doses that are available at this time are for immune compromised individuals and he doesn't know when or if third doses will be available to others. He is not sure it is appropriate to be thinking about it at this time. Donna Hovey stated that you can get both vaccines at the same time but feels that preparation is important. Donna feels as though a Regional program would be labor intensive. Bob Bracey, North Reading Health Director, has already been working on booster clinic and flu clinic programs. It needs to be discussed and the sooner the better.

A motion was made to adjourn, motion Felix Garcia (Lawrence), second Shuang Shen (Reading), motion carries

Roll Call Vote: Tom Carbone-Andover (yes), Felix Garcia-Lawrence (yes), Shuang Shen-Reading (yes), Brian LaGrasse-North Andover (yes), Kristin McRae-Lynnfield (yes), Donna Hovey-North Reading (yes), Shelly Newhouse (Wilmington)

Adjourn: 3:15 p.m.

Next meeting scheduled for October 7, 2021