

EAST BETHEL CITY COUNCIL WORK MEETING

April 3, 2013

The East Bethel City Council met on April 3, 2013 at 6:00 PM for a special meeting at City Hall.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Bob DeRoche Ron Koller Richard Lawrence
 Heidi Moegerle Tom Ronning

ALSO PRESENT: Jack Davis, City Administrator
 Mark DuCharme, Fire Chief/Emergency Management Officer

Call to Order **The April 3, 2013 City Council special meeting was called to order by Mayor Lawrence at 6:00 PM.**

Adopt Agenda **Moegerle made a motion to adopt the April 3, 2013 City Council work meeting agenda. Lawrence seconded; all in favor, motion carries.**

Emergency Davis explained that Fire Chief Mark DuCharme will present the City's Emergency
Management Management Plan to Council for review and comment. Additional meetings may be required
Plan for completion of the review prior to submission to Council for adoption.
Presentation

Chief DuCharme explained that this document, the Emergency Management Plan, is never done. It will always have to be updated. Imagine we will have several meetings to refine this and when we have a plan together, we will have an exercise to see how it works. For instance, included in the plan is a City organizational chart that has to be updated. As we move forward, this is a creation of one, if there are things we need to change, then we need to do it. This is far from a final edit, but it gives us a good working basis." DeRoche, "Is there a reason we don't have a backup generator at City Hall?" Chief DuCharme, "That deals with also the designation of the emergency operation center. My recommendation in the plan is Fire Station #1 on Viking Boulevard. The reason why is that facility does have a backup emergency generator. However, the computers and phone lines at the fire station are tied into the computer network here. So if the electricity is out and then the network is down, you won't have phones or access to city servers."

DeRoche, "What is the accessibility to FM radios?" DeRoche, "At the fire station we have analog phone line and we have the generator. We could run network TV for example and charge cell phones. That is why at this point I think it would be good to designate the fire station, until we can get a generator for City Hall." DeRoche, "Is there any kind of backup shortwave radio?" Chief DuCharme, "Part of the plan calls for Ham radios and we need to each out to them more. We also need to be able to identify them." DeRoche, "Is there anyone that has a Ham radio license on the Fire Department?" Chief DuCharme, "Not that I know of. Ham Radio is a very important part of emergency operations." Chief DuCharme, "Probably the biggest risk in East Bethel is a natural catastrophe. Tornado, severe blizzard. If it is a tornado, the cell phone towers will be affected. We do have an 800mhz radio system that works pretty well, but we need to be aware of these issues." DeRoche, "There are quite a few repeaters in the State of Minnesota." Ronning, "There used to be on the dial radios two civil defense stations, on the AM dial, are those still there?" Chief DuCharme, "I remember the triangle they had on the radio dial and that is not there anymore."

Chief DuCharme, "Anytime we talk about Emergency Management, there are four phases we talk about. Preparedness, Response, Recovery and then we and then sit down and look at

what can we do to make this better. To help the residents, recovery and the whole cycle go smoother. And, then, it starts all over. Because with what we learn in Mitigation, we incorporate that in our plan.”

Chief DuCharme, “When we put this together one of the things we try to do is understand the why and what the benefits are. Why we do it, of course, is to help our residents. We try to save lives and property. And the benefit is we are able to mitigate so the damage is not as severe or is quickly recoverable as soon as we can. There we go indentifying our biggest risk. We can have a manmade disaster. Other thing we do is give guidance during disaster. Communicate with residents and get information out to them. If we have to evacuate our residents or shelter them, get information to them. Advise whether or not we can shelter them, make determination if it is safer to stay in their homes or move them. Anytime we do this, we are relying on others for help and guidance. The other thing we do is identify resources and deficiencies. I define a resource as a piece of equipment, or even our personnel.” Ronning, “When you talk about this, you find yourself thinking, ‘Well, what could happen here?’ There is really a lot that could happen.”

Chief DuCharme, “This document is not solely my idea. This is researched and this information comes from other cities, from FEMA templates and that is what we used for resources. So that we are on an even keel with other cities and entities. This is a draft and isn’t even ready to be called a draft because there is information that is missing, but it is a good time to hop on this thing. Sooner or later it isn’t going to snow. The way this is set up is there is a list of distribution. And, we talked about it a little earlier, before the meeting started, the final plan will have some sensitive information in it. We will have to be somewhat careful with the private phone numbers, contact phone numbers of staff. Personal phone numbers of resources. Majority can be a public document, but a slice is usually sensitive and not made public. Distribution list, we want to make sure everyone that needs a copy, gets a copy. We also should be keeping track of any revisions that we do so we are all using the same version. Certification of plan approval, at some point and time the Council will say yes or no to the plan. And then we need that signed off by the Mayor with authorization. The reason for this is if we had a disaster, and if the council couldn’t get together and a staff member had a plan and wants to implement and someone asks, ‘What authority do you have to implement this plan?’ we have this certification here. And like emergency management and federal government, we abbreviate everything, so I threw a glossary of terms in there.”

Chief DuCharme, “The Table of Contents, you can kind of see how the plan is laid out form the Table of Contents. The basic plan is 15-16 pages. The rest is what we call annexes which are essential services and appendices that we have included. Everything follows the same format. You have the basic plan. And then the annex for that talks about what each department is going to do or how each plan will be assigned and task will be performed. We look at the four phases of emergency management and how they align with the plan. It talks about the structure of the basic plan. Talks about the basic operation plan. Talks about the annexes, which are the emergency plans for every function. And the appendices are the references that go along with that. And some of the objectives. When we get into emergency management we are looking to save lives, and to do the very best we can. And we are looking to figure out how we can protect the property of the residents and the city.”

Chief DuCharme, “I have made some assumptions here; I have taken a look at the outside departments of the City. These are ones I listed and there might be more, like the two school districts in the City, Forest Lake and St. Francis Schools. And, we actually have two schools

in our city. Metro Transit has an operation that runs through town. The gas companies, Excel and Center Point, we have Connexus Energy and we have MnDOT. Of course the Anoka County Sheriff's Department and they have outside resources. Minnesota State Highway Patrol. Anoka County Highway Department and Anoka County Government. And then all of the State of Minnesota Agencies and of course the University of Minnesota. The reason why we list these is because somewhere along the line these might become good resources for us. An example I can give is if we had a wild land fire close to Cedar Creek (we have), we have fought the fire along with the University of Minnesota personnel, and they have come out to help us. It is a nice deal. We talk about our resources and our capabilities and our capabilities are based on a well based fire department, law enforcement agency and public works department, those resources are strong and we have good mutual aid agreements. We have some major roads here and that could cause a major catastrophe."

DeRoche, "Have they ever updated the state law that they only have to put one placard on what they carry?" Chief DuCharme, "It depends on how much they are carrying also as far as placards go. We are pretty good at looking at tankers going up and down roads and the kind of figuring out what is in them. We know if it is placarded 1203 we got gasoline. We all carry response guides (I carry one in my personal car). It is a way to learn. We have a lot of materials that are being moved." Ronning, "Burlington Northern, anything could be there." Chief DuCharme, "We also make the statement that East Bethel officials are aware of the possibility of a major disaster emergency. It is a concern." Moegerle, "During a meeting it came up about having a Hot Air Balloon event at Booster Days. We talked about needing an evacuation plan for the event. Is there one? Or does the content of this cover it?" Chief DuCharme, "The best way you can exercise this and see if our command center works is to have an evacuation plan or have a whole emergency plan written up for your festivals. Before Booster Days, the Fire Department does meet a week before the event with the officers and designate who is going to be the duty officer, who is going to make the call, and we talk about where we are going to put people if there is severe weather. But, we need to formalize it more and more. Any time you have a baseball or soccer tournament, that should be laid out, a written plan. We do talk about that as a Fire Department and share that with Nate, and City staff."

Chief DuCharme, "Let's talk about natural hazards, technological hazards and some of the national security information. If you don't agree with this, I need to hear it. Some of the natural hazards are tornados, and we even have pieces of property that are flood zones. High temperatures can really affect seniors. It is something we have to be aware of. And, prolonged droughts. And the opposite, prolonged low temperatures. If any of these things happen, we have to know where we are going to put people. Techy hazards, burns up and creates hazards materials environment. Especially as the City starts building, we have to be aware of this. Then there is National Security and manmade incidents, I don't know if we are as at risk, but we can't rule this out."

Chief DuCharme, "So what is more likely to occur here? We know it is going to storm here it is just a matter of how severe. And then what is less likely to occur? You go with probabilities, but you don't forget about the things that are less likely to occur. When we talk about concept of operations, every level of government has some inherited responsibility for providing an emergency management plan and protecting its people. The first 48-72 hours local government will be the lead on an emergency." Lawrence, "If a disaster like that happened and is affecting our neighboring cities also, how are we addressing their reaction of their people that have been displaced?" Chief DuCharme, "A disaster like this doesn't see any political boundaries, you are absolutely right. What we have and we are well versed in

it, is consolidating an incident into one large one where we are able to do a unity of command where we are actually uniting forces and sharing responsibilities.”

Ronning, “In summer of 2003 in the Detroit area there was a power surge and if you had wells, part of the issue was where do you get clean water.” Chief DuCharme, “We would have to get the National Guard and FEMA to bring in bottled water.” Lawrence, “We talked about natural disasters with tornadoes probably being the leading one. We could possibly get some flooding.” Chief DuCharme, “About two years ago, we had a couple houses that we were close to sandbagging. No one knows who owns the drainage ditches.” Lawrence, “We have the railroad in Oak Grove and if we had a derail there of something toxic you would have to evacuate many miles of people.”

Ronning, “When you start talking about this, it is surprising how much stuff come up.” Chief DuCharme, “It is just like the positions in the plan. We try to go three deep, as an example on of the functions is Public Information Officer, and the Community Development Director would be in charge of Public Information. What would happen if she wasn’t available? Or if she got sick, who does that fall back on? So we have that three deep. Same for facilities, when I talk about Fire Station #1 being the Emergency Management Operation Center at this time, when you look at it, we also have two other backups that we could go to. I think there is more than that. I think the churches and Community Center at Coon Lake Beach is mentioned. When you get to evacuation and sheltering we also need to identify those places. You have to get the place set up, we need resources for that. The Red Cross is good at that. I remember a couple years ago with the floods that Castle Towers was having a lot of issues and we were really watching that and I had a conversation with Anoka County about what we would do if we had to move those people. These are things we don’t do alone, we work with other people. Anoka County Emergency Management is a huge resource for us. Other agencies we work with for resources are Minnesota Homeland Security and Emergency Management. We have helped them, it works back and forth. Minnesota Homeland Security has an emergency management center. And if resources are getting scarce they will help us. Then we have FEMA, and they are a huge operation.”

Chief DuCharme, “The Mayor is responsible for protecting the lives and property. The City Council, City Administrator, department heads and myself, we will give you advice. The ultimate responsibility comes to this group. Spelled out in state statute. This plan is set up that existing emergencies are going to be handled by East Bethel existing departments. The first ones to go out there will be the existing departments. We will take the brunt of it until we get the assessment of what is going on. From there we have outside groups we will reach out and contact to get help from. Such as the Red Cross, the Lions, Salvation Army, and others. Some of our residents have special needs and we need to make sure we accommodate them. An assumption I make is we want to keep the day-to-day functions of the city running. For some of the large scale disasters we might have to draw on some of the people’s capabilities and needs. As we refine the plan we will have to address continuity of operations.”

DeRoche, “For clarification, it is either the job of the Mayor or the Acting Mayor to strictly initiate this plan. Not to orchestrate it, correct?” Chief DuCharme, “Correct. Some of the language that is coming up is ‘What happens if the Mayor isn’t in the area? What happens if some of the Council Members aren’t here?’ But really it is the Mayor or whoever is acting as the Mayor their responsibility to say, ‘I am going to declare an emergency.’ And we will go from there. We can open up the Emergency Operation Center at really any time. And we kind of do that without making a big spectacle of that on our large fires. On an emergency,

you get the call from Jack, 'A tornado went through,' and that is when you all are going to report."

DeRoche, "I am looking at it because you go down the line here and the people in the organizational chart know what needs to be done, police, fire, medical, Jack, whatever. And, I would not want something to get where someone is going, 'You do this, you do this, you do this,' and unless someone is trained in it and has a mutual agreement with all these different departments, I can see that turning into chaos."

Ronning, "What you seem to be saying is, 'Whoever that responsible party is pushes the go button and everybody knows what their supposed to do.'" Chief DuCharme, "That is what we are trying to create here. We look at this as support both ways, have support both ways. Emergency Management Officer and City Administrator will be there to help make important decisions. There will be some important decisions such as when do we evacuate?" DeRoche, "That is one of my questions. Who makes that decision?" Chief DuCharme, "The Mayor of East Bethel shall exercise general direction and control over all emergency operations in accordance with Minnesota State Law Chapter 12. Chapter 12 deals with Emergency Management. If anyone needs a copy of this, we can get you a copy. I have also referenced City ordinance and if the Mayor is not available, then the Acting Mayor shall assume responsibility. If the Acting Mayor is not available, then those present on a majority vote have to decide who is going to be the Chair and then decide on a Secretary to take notes. That is why we talked about this, because if you want to change this, you have to change the ordinance. It would be very difficult to manage an emergency if staff didn't have some latitude to make decisions on their expertise." DeRoche, "I have no doubt about that. Just like Jack orchestrating staff now." Chief DuCharme, "If I was evacuating Coon Lake Beach, I would have the Mayor right next to me. First assignment, Mayor is responsible for overall control. Then there are other things the City can do with emergency powers, such as purchasing. Don't need to get into those now. Emergency Manager is responsible for maintenance of the Emergency Maintenance Plan. We are going to use the department heads to assign these jobs to. They have to prepare plans to cover the emergency functions. Nick is probably going to be in charge of damage assessment. Because he is a building inspector. He has to make sure he has the resources and can call his mutual aid friends."

Davis, "Staff went through NIMS Training three years ago. Even Rita is assigned a function. Staff has already undergone that training." Chief DuCharme, "I have talked to department heads and they understand the functions of what they are going to do. Some of them haven't gone through the specialized training, but I would guess shortly we will get them going. We will revisit each department at staff level and make sure what we have here will still work for them; we do have new names here. If we get this approved, we will need to look at it yearly. Probably every July. City staff has to be able to alert their staff if they need them to come in and do their functions. We need to be ready to implement this in a short amount of time."

Ronning, "When I first looked at this, it looked almost impossible. But, when you think about it, it will happen." Chief DuCharme, "If we can keep a strong incident command going, it will go fine. And keep communication open. Let them know what you accomplished during that shift and share the plan with them. We just covered the basic plan, didn't get into the functions. What you need to know, if there is an emergency, if a tornado comes through, if Jack calls, right now, I want to be able to use Station #1 as the Emergency Operation Center. That is where you should report."

April 3, 2013

East Bethel City Council Work Meeting

Page 6 of 6

Davis, "When do you want to schedule the next session for this?" Chief DuCharme, "If you have any comments, please e-mail them to me or Jack so I can make them before the next meeting."

Consensus was to schedule a work meeting for May 1st before the Council meeting to continue working on the Emergency Management Plan.

Adjourn **DeRoche made a motion to adjourn at 7:20 PM. Moegerle seconded; all in favor, motion carries.**

Attest:

Wendy Warren
Deputy City Clerk