

Cal-Essex REMC Meeting Minutes

DATE: Wednesday, May 27, 2026 **TIME:** 1pm

LOCATION: St. Johnsbury Town Office, also available virtually via Microsoft Teams.

The REMC Chair was unavailable. The meeting was called to order by VEM representative, Emily Harris, at 1:00pm.

Attendees: Voting members indicated with (V). Proxy noted indicated with (P)

In Person:

- Bradley Reed, St. Johnsbury (V)(P)
- Seth Wales, East Haven (V)
- Brent Smith, Groton (V)
- Robert Starbuck, Peacham (V)(P)
- Meghan Wayland, Kingdom United Resilience & Recovery Effort ([KURRVE](#))
- Molly Dockter, Northeastern Vermont Development Association
- Becky Petelle, Vermont Department of Health
- Emily Harris, Vermont Emergency Management

Virtual:

- Glenn Herrin, Danville (V)(P)
- Keith Wooster, Kirby (V)(P)
- Kristen Leahy, Hardwick
- Alissa Fontain, Northeastern Vermont Regional Hospital
- Michaela Olin, American Red Cross

10 voting members, including proxies, present. Quorum (9) reached.

Minute Review/Vote

The minutes from 3/25/26 were distributed virtually before the meeting, no modifications noted. Motion to accept minutes made by Robert Starbuck. Motion seconded by Bradley Reed. Unanimous approval.

Appointment - Statewide Local Emergency Planning Committee representative

- Next meeting will be held July 14th, physical location TBD but virtual option will be available.
- Each REMC is expected to have someone representing the region on that group – sharing information between the REMC and LEPC on Hazardous Materials. It was confirmed during the meeting that the appointee is made from membership, but doesn't need to be from voting membership.
- NVDA was previously attending, but they don't have funding to attend these meetings anymore and the discussions at that meeting are more beneficial for someone else.
- Motion to appoint Kristen Leahy of Hardwick made by Seth Wales. Motion seconded by Bradley Reed. Unanimous approval.

Update/Discussion – EMD/EMC lessons learned, ideas, needs, etc

- Discussion by Seth Wales about challenges and delays with FEMA funding from disasters. As a small town, they don't have the funding to keep waiting.

- Keith Wooster shared that the support isn't fast, but they've been getting support through the state's contractors.
- Molly Docktor shared that [Pat Moulton](#) from the State Recovery Office may also be beneficial as she has access to other funding sources.
 - **ACTION:** After the meeting, Emily connected Seth Wales to the State Public Assistance Officer at Vermont Emergency Management to coordinate additional support with FEMA reimbursement.
 - **ACTION:** After the meeting, Emily connected Seth Wales to Pat Moulton from the State Recovery Office to explore if there are additional funding sources East Haven could access.
- Discussion by Keith Wooster about a digital mapping system that was discussed in the fall. Keith is interested in a map-based system where everyone can see what is going on locally and upload issues and damages to other communities.
 - Emily Harris shared that the state promotes the use of [WAZE](#) to share local road closures and that towns can get access to [WebEOC](#), the state's disaster management software, but it is sharing state level information.
 - Glenn Herrin shared that the state is working on a Common Operating Picture webpage, but it isn't yet available and is designed to share state level information and isn't currently designed for local information.
 - Discussion about "I am Responding"
 - Bradley Reed shared that St. Johnsbury uses "I am Responding" which include mapping features. St. Johnsbury currently pays \$800 a year for the service.
 - Robert Starbuck shared that Peacham is also using "I am Responding", but they currently pay \$400 a year so it is likely based on amount of use.
 - Post-meeting follow up: Bradley Reed reached out to I Am Responding for additional information about what a regional membership would look like, but the contact is on extended leave. Bradley will reach back out this summer to get more information.
 - Meghan Wayland shared that Crisis Cleanup is used for individual damage tracking and has a mapping feature to track damage and see areas with lots of needs. Crisis Cleanup has allowed the state to use this free of charge in the past, and the Long Term Recovery Groups fed 211 data into it, but it is unknown if it will be free in the future.
- Discussion about Incident Support Plan, created June 2025. It noted that there would be a review at each meeting to make sure contacts were up to date. Changes were noted for East Haven, Hardwick, and Danville and Glenn Herrin agreed to make those updates. When created, each town picked the person(s) they wanted to include so towns are welcome to change the contact to the person that makes the most sense.
- Meghan Wayland shared that KURRVE is working towards becoming a Community Organization Active in Disaster (COAD), though it will likely be known as a Community Resilience Coalition (CRC). They're working with the Vermont Community Foundation to discuss funding for the next phase of what KURRVE will be.
- Meghan Wayland shared that she'll be conducting a Muck & Gut training on 6/6 at the Barton Fair Grounds, likely at 11am, 12pm, and 1pm. She can also deliver this in person free of charge in other places.
 - Post meeting update: Kristen Leahy and Meghan Wayland began discussions of holding an in-person Muck and Gut training in Hardwick in the fall.

- Emily Harris noted that an email list is in the process of being finalized, which would allow individuals to sign up to receive information from the REMC, and would allow REMC members to have email conversations outside of meetings.
- **ACTION:** Before the next meeting, Emily Harris will verify the status of 211 changes and the state Common Operating Picture to share with the group.
- **DECISION:** Motion made by Keith Wooster, seconded by Seth Wales, and unanimously approved that the agenda for our next meeting include a discussion and demonstration of the various apps people are using to coordinate disaster response. Before that meeting, it would be beneficial for individuals to share links to the apps they are using.

Vermont Emergency Management Update

Emily Harris shared the following updates from Vermont Emergency Management:

- Emergency Management Directors or Public Safety Officials can [request National Weather Service support for a vulnerable outdoor event](#) no later than 2 weeks prior to the event - these are outdoor events where, if there was a sudden weather emergency, it would require additional time to safely evacuate large groups of people. This is not a rain vs no rain forecast - you can get those at www.weather.gov/forecastpoints. Things like fairs are a good example of when you should request support for a vulnerable outdoor event.
- Emergency Management Directors or members of the Local Emergency Management Teams can join the WXAlerts list to get heads up, non-public, emails. These are things that are not solid enough for public distribution, but emergency management teams should be aware of in case they develop. If you are a member of your local emergency management team or a first responder and want to join that list, email Emily.harris@vermont.gov to be added to that list.
- Solid Waste Management Entities are currently working on 4-page plans for what to do with various debris, due by April 1, 2027. Expect that they will be contacting the town to discuss the plan. Additional information is in [Vermont Emergency Management's May Newsletter](#).
- Local Emergency Management Director Course - virtual - June 11&12 1-5pm both days. Course reviews roles & responsibilities through all phases of an emergency. Registration is via [State Learning Management System](#). You can get notified about trainings directly by signing up for our [VEM Training email list](#).
- [Vermont Emergency Preparedness Conference](#) will be held September 23 & 24 in Burke. Save the date! We're still working on some details before we open up registration, but registration will be shared through that training list.

Overview of the Emergency Management work happening in St. Johnsbury – Bradley Reed

- Bradley Reed noted that they are working on moving their Emergency Operations Center to a location that is more useful during a disaster, and discussed challenges St. Johnsbury has with staffing shelters.
 - Becky Petelle shared that Medical Reserve Corps members are available through the Department of Health to staff a shelter, but they cannot be the shelter manager – the town needs to fill that role.
 - Meghan Wayland shared that KURRVE members sign waivers for liability, but it is unclear how towns could request those volunteers as the response group (NEKO) is no longer in existence.
 - Emily Harris shared that the statewide Volunteer and Donations Management Plan discusses the use of a Voluntary Agency Liaison to coordinate volunteers at the state level. If individuals need volunteers and don't already have them coordinated at the local level, you can request them through the State Emergency Operations Center (1-800-347-0488)

- Glenn Herrin shared that Danville has a list of volunteers and if Danville wasn't impacted and St. Johnsbury was, some of those individuals would likely be available to help.
- Michaela Olin shared that the Red Cross is in the process of making a Regional Shelter in St. Johnsbury. They are currently exercising the ability to stand up 4 regional shelters simultaneously, but those shelters are activated strategically so if the event is impacting a large area there may not be the ability for the Red Cross to stand up the St. Johnsbury shelter.
- Seth Wales asked how many staff are needed for shelters. Michaela Olin shared that the Red Cross staffs 17 individuals if the shelter is on 24-hour operations, and that includes supervisors, mental health services, medical services, feeding support, and worker bees. Others shared that in local shelters, 2-3 individuals is more realistic and you have people filling many different roles. For feeding, you can have an MOU with a local restaurant, hospital dietary department, or schools to help accomplish this. Discussion about issues with staffing shelters with minors and the corresponding liability issues. Emily Harris discussed the presentation from the 2023 Vermont Emergency Preparedness Conference on [Using federal child nutrition programs for emergency feeding](#).
- Glenn Herrin noted that Danville has a small town sheltering plan that they are willing to share.
- Anyone interested in sheltering can take [Shelter Fundamentals online anytime](#). Starting this summer, American Red Cross is expecting to start hosting more of those in person – if you are interested in bringing it to this region, please let Emily.Harris@vermont.gov know before the end of June.
- Bradley Reed shared that St. Johnsbury has quick reference guides for their Emergency Operations Center, so someone can take one and run with it even if they are new. He shared that one of his guides is about declaring a state of emergency, but that Emily Harris is working on that legislative update. Post-meeting note: It isn't necessary for towns to declare an emergency to get state level support. If you have outstripped your ability to respond to a disaster and can't get the resources locally or regionally, contact the State Emergency Operations Center (1-800-347-0488)

The next meeting will be Thursday, October 1 1-3pm. (NOTE: Our typical Wednesday meeting needed to move due to scheduling issues) Post-Meeting update: REMC Chair Darryl Perkins volunteered to host our next meeting in Ryegate. Exactly location will be sent when the meeting is closer. An RSVP will be included in the calendar appointment for in-person participation so Vermont Emergency Management can provide snacks. The agenda for our next meeting include a discussion and demonstration of the various apps people are using to coordinate disaster response.

2:20pm Adjourn to facility tour