

Cal-Essex REMC Meeting Minutes

DATE: Wednesday, March 25, 2026, **TIME:** 1pm

LOCATION: Barnet Fire Station, also available via ZOOM.

The meeting was called to order by REMC Chair, Darryl Perkins, at 1:05pm.

Introductions: Voting members indicated with (V)

In Person:

- Darryl Perkins, REMC Chair & Ryegate EMD (V)
- Ron Morse, Barnet EMD/Fire Chief (V)
- Molly Dockter, Northeastern Vermont Development Association
- Becky Petelle, Vermont Department of Health
- Emily Harris, Vermont Emergency Management

Virtual:

- Robert Starbuck, Peacham EMD (V)
- Lynette Farnham, REMC Vice Chair & Walden EMD (V)
- Stephen Colby, Lunenburg Fire (V)
- Keith Wooster, Kirby EMD (V)
- Brad Reed, St. Johnsbury EMD/Fire Chief (V)
- Kristen Leahy, Hardwick Zoning Administrator
- Gregg Williams, Lunenburg Road Foreman
- Joanne Bourbeau, Vermont Disaster Animal Response Team
- Nancy Benoit

Minute Review/Vote

The minutes from 1/28/26 were reviewed; no modifications noted. Motion by Lynette Farnham to accept the minutes as written, and seconded by Gregg Williams- approved unanimously.

Presentation/Discussion by Joanne Bourbeau- Overview of the Vermont Disaster Animal Response Team (VDART)

[Overview of VDART](#) - what local emergency management directors need to know 48 minute presentation was recorded. Additional resources related to this presentation including:

- [VDART Website](#): which includes [Planning Resources for Pet Owners, Animal Facilities and Emergency Managers](#)
- Humane Society of the United States: [Pet Disaster Preparedness](#), [Equine disaster preparedness](#), [Livestock disaster preparedness](#)
- PetMD: [How to Stock a First Aid Kit to Care for Injured Pet Birds](#)
- Gecko Time: [Emergency Preparedness for your Geckos \(and other reptiles\)](#)
- Vermont Emergency Management: [Emergency Animal Resources Annex](#)

At the conclusion of the presentation there was a discussion about if parts of town were cut off and there was no place for sheltering pets, towns should explore pet fostering.

For questions or assistance, please contact Joanne Bourbeau, Northeastern Regional Director, Humane World for Animals, jboubeau@humaneworld.org

Discussion – Updates

Molly Dockter shared that this is a new agenda items for folks to discuss successes or challenges they are experiencing.

Darryl Perkins shared that there is a challenge with setting expectations with individuals in towns for opening shelters and cooling centers. His town also has a history of checking on neighbors which seems to be working. Emily Harris shared that many communities are not opening a stand-alone cooling center, they're directing individuals to libraries, town offices, and other locations that they can stay cool. The Department of Health maintains a [cooling center map](#) where EMDs can also report other facilities where individuals can go to stay cool in a heat wave. Emily Harris shared that VEM recently published a [Preparedness Zone Playbook](#) which gives towns information about dividing the town into smaller geographic regions, and using volunteers within those regions to report information and issues to the town. Discussion about setting clear expectations for individuals during the planning process.

Emily Harris noted that as long as Zack Borst is unavailable, towns can reach out to her if they want to talk through any challenges, need help with their Local Emergency Management Plans, or have any questions or needs from Vermont Emergency Management.

Molly Dockter shared that with the money from VEM to NVDA still on hold, Emily Harris will be taking on some more of the work of the REMC. NVDA is still committed to the REMC and will still be coming to the meetings, but you may be seeing changes as things shift to Emily Harris.

Update- VEM

Emily Harris shared the following updates from Vermont Emergency Management:

- FEMA Independent Study Courses remain offline until FEMA reopens.
- VEM still waiting on answers to questions from FEMA about what is needed to provide funding to the RPCs.
- Local Emergency Management Plans are due by June 1st. Nothing has changed in the requirements this year, so if nothing has changed you can readopt what you submitted last year. Please consider including more members of your community in the planning process.
- Organizations and communities requiring additional coordination. This is a section of your Local Emergency Management Plan where you identify those organizations and communities you need to communicate with more than others – which can include those serving a vulnerable population, but also those that can create unique challenges – such as a place serving lots of animals in a flooded area.
- [Spring Flood Seminar videos](#) are available - videos in this series are from partner agencies talking about the services they provide and how you can best prepare for spring flooding.
- [Access and Functional Needs Gap Analysis Tool](#) is now available. This tool helps town review plans to identify potential gaps and communities that may not be considered, including language barriers or physical accessibility.
- Vermont Emergency Management Director course – 8 hours of preparedness, response, mitigation and recovery. Registration is through the state [Learning Management System](#). 2 offerings coming up, both virtual: June 11-12, 1-5pm each day or November 4-5, 1-5pm each day.

- [VEM Engagement Survey](#) – this is the annual survey where you tell us what you need, what we do well, and what we don't do well. Please consider completing this 7-minute survey by Wednesday, April 8th at noon.

Molly Dockter and Brad Reed shared that **the next meeting will be May 27th at 1pm at St. Johnsbury Town Office (51 Depot Square) on the second floor.** Moving forward, the REMC will be piloting having meetings a different locations, including potentially having tours, so if anyone would like to host a future meeting, please let Emily Harris and Molly Dockter know.

Adjourn

Ron- motion

Lynette- second

All in favor- 2:40pm