



## Orleans-Essex REMC Meeting Minutes

DATE: January 20, 2026

TIME: 1pm

LOCATION: Newport Fire Station, also available via ZOOM.

The meeting was called to order at 1:04pm by Molly Dockter

Those attending in person were Zachary Borst- VEM; Molly Dockter- NVDA; Maurice Doyon- Westfield EMD; Kevin LaCoste- Newport Fire Department; and Rebecca Petelle- VT Department of Health. Those attending via ZOOM were Phil Brooks- Glover EMD/REMC Chair; Michael Sanville- North Country Hospital; Lyne Limoges- Orleans/Essex Visiting Nurses Association; and Sue Honan- UTG.

The minutes from November 17, 2025, were reviewed but were unable to be approved due to the lack of a quorum.

### **Presentation by Zack Borst on Orleans-Essex Incident Support Plan (ISP)**

This idea began with the question of “how do we communicate during an emergency?”. Flooding in the past few years has exposed challenges in regional communication. Cal-Essex REMC has formatted a double-sided ISP (see Attachment A) that helps to streamline the communication process during an emergency. However, this plan still needs evolution- next steps include a regional resource inventory and identification of possible regional EOCs. A regional ISP gives additional relevancy to REMCs, builds up the resilience of a region, reduces stress on EMDs by providing clear lines of communication, and uses time and resources more efficiently. Similar organizational tactics are used in other states on a county level and is also similar to how fire/EMS communication structures works.

Kevin asked how deep the contacts go on the list- Zack responded that they can be as detailed as needed but ideally the EMD and one back-up number. Kevin also wonders if there is any cross-border/cross-national

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planning with ISP. Zack said that as the Plan evolves we will capture more lines of communication. Molly notes that on the Cal-Essex example ISP contacts noted out of the immediate region are listed in blue on the map which allows for immediate identification of cross-border partners.

Maurice notes that he likes the idea of increased EMD connection. He knows the towns bordering Westfield but is less aware of EMDs/towns further out.

It was asked if resource type would be included in the ISP. Zack said that yes, and this system used to be more robust but FEMA changed the typing of municipal resources. VEM is currently looking to capture “other resources” section of LEMPs to create a searchable database. Mike added that he thinks the database should be searchable and statewide- this would help for a statewide understanding of available resources and gaps. Zack agreed and added that it will be important for information to be categorized in a similar fashion. Kevin added that it sounds very similar to run cards for resources identification and allocation in emergencies.

Zack brought up the idea of a REMC tabletop exercise in the next few months with possible topics being: physical protective measures, supply chain integrity & security, fatality management (bus accident, etc), and/or critical transportation/clearing debris.

Conversation turned to our regional DMORT and DMAT capacity if there were a large scale event. Mike mentioned that our region is supported by Fredrick Maryland DMORT but there may be some local, small scale expertise.

### **Presentation by Zack Borst- Integrated Preparedness Plan (IPP)- state/regional integration**

Zack outlined that this is currently an aspirational project with the intent of IPPs having a similar format throughout the state. The state level IPP will help shape regional IPPs and they will drive the planning and training. The state will embark on the beginning stage of their IPP formation in February.

Each REMC has a representative with the state IPP. Phil Brooks is our rep for Orleans-Essex. Any feedback or questions can go through Phil.

Phil asked about what stage the state would take over in a massive emergency with multiple fatalities, etc? Will local EMDs be charged with working this type of incident? Zack answered that 10 serious traumas would likely push any of our regional hospitals to the brink. If something such as a full bus crash happened it would likely be an immediate state level response- however, EMDs should be prepared to respond for the first few hours as state level crews mobilize. This is where regional resourcing and collaboration are paramount.

Discussion moved back to possible exercises for the REMC and how to go about forming one. We will schedule a presentation by VDH regarding mass fatality. The chief medical examiner will go over an incident and we will build a tabletop based on the presentation- geared towards our region specifically. We will build the ISP into the tabletop to test the functionality.

### **Vermont Emergency Management (VEM) Update**

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Zack referenced the most recent newsletter and reminds everyone to sign up for the pertinent VEM email lists for the most up-to-date information. He specifically called out updated animal sheltering in emergencies, upcoming Lunch & Learn, new CRASE (Civilian Response to Active Shooter Events) training, and Red Cross shelter fundamentals. The January newsletter can be found here <https://vem.vermont.gov/contact-us/newsletter/January26> and details everything Zack covered plus additional relevant information.

Molly reminded everyone about the upcoming flood seminars available online 1/27/26 on the VEM Youtube Channel <https://www.youtube.com/vtdemhs>

### **Discussion- by-laws update**

It was recommended by Molly that we table the bylaws revision and adoption until there is a clear idea of EMPG funding. Much of the REMC relies on RPC facilitation and funding is currently uncertain. We will revisit at a later date.

### **Additional Discussion**

Molly asked what we can provide to bring additional value to the REMC meetings and boost attendance and collaboration. Maurice mentioned that it would be helpful to garner more support from the younger generation to have fresh interest in the REMCs. The same people are tapped for multiple jobs- how to we distribute the work more effectively? Discussed an agenda at a future meeting to include REMC recruitment. Kevin added that volunteerism has been lacking in all aspects- agreed upon by many.

The next meeting is at 1pm on March 16, 2026 at the Newport Fire Station and also available via ZOOM.

The meeting adjourned at 2:35pm

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