

Orleans-Essex REMC Meeting Minutes

DATE: Wednesday, May 18, 2026 **TIME:** 1pm

LOCATION: North Country Hospital, also available virtually via Microsoft Teams.

The meeting was called to order by REMC Chair, Phillip Brooks, at 1:02pm.

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

In Person:

- Phillip Brooks, REMC Chair & Glover EMD (V)
- Michael Sanville, Irasburg Emergency Services (V)(P)
- Maurice Doyon, Westfield EMD (V)(P)
- Russell Curtis, Westmore Emergency Services (V)(P)
- Shane Rogers, Relevate Power
- Molly Dockter, Northeastern Vermont Development Association
- Becky Petelle, Vermont Department of Health
- Emily Harris, Vermont Emergency Management

Virtual:

- Jeffrey Willison, Coventry EMD (V)
- Michaela Olin, American Red Cross
- Jaron Borg, Agency of Natural Resources

8 voting members, including proxies, present. Quorum (11) not reached.

Minute Review/Vote

The minutes from 3/16/26 were distributed virtually before the meeting, no modifications noted. As quorum was not reached, vote on minutes could not occur.

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

- Local Emergency Management Plans:
 - Due to Emily.Harris@vermont.gov by June 1st. If you have any questions, please also reach out to Emily.
 - Discussion on process of updating plans, the importance of including individuals with a role in the plan in writing the plan, and the need for Emergency Management Directors to play an active role in that plan development.
 - Discussion about what contact information for neighboring Emergency Management Directors should be included in the plan, and that each town must discuss redaction of items in the Local Emergency Management Plan with their legal counsel.
 - Discussion about if towns refer to the Incident Support Plan (discussed later in the agenda) in the contacts section, if that opens up that sensitive contact information to a public document
 - **ACTION:** Emily will follow up with the Department of Public Safety legal team to find out if the Regional Emergency Management Committee's Incident Support Plan becomes a product of the Regional Emergency Management Committee and, if so, who would handle requests for public records associated with it – including

redaction. Will also ask if towns referencing that plan in their LEMP create a cascading effect for FOIA.

- Discussion about LEMP requirements. Emily confirmed that it is OK to keep contact information in one place and reference back to it rather than retyping it in each section. Emily confirmed that it is OK if the person you have listed in your Local Emergency Management Plan as running the shelter doesn't end up being the shelter manager during an actual disaster. Emily noted that if the Red Cross is able to support a shelter, it will likely be 72 hours out, and that towns should be prepared to operate for 72 hours on their own.
- Discussion about need to enhance coordination between towns to provide support to one another during a disaster.
 - **ACTION:** All Emergency Management Directors should reach out to the Emergency Management Directors from surrounding towns to get to know them, and find out the best way to reach them before a disaster happens. If you don't know your neighboring Emergency Management Directors, see: [Emergency Management Director Public Contact Information webpage](#)
- Discussed need to test communications plans, as if your primary method fails you need to be able to transition to a back-up. Discussed issue with a repeater that didn't have back-up power so responders were unable to receive calls for an extended period of time. Currently working on back up plans.
- Discussion about Federal Funding for Regional Planning Commissions, and that Vermont Emergency Management still does not have an avenue to pay Regional Planning Commissions, like Northeastern Vermont Development Association, to provide administrative support for the REMC. If support is needed, please reach out to Emily.Harris@vermont.gov
- Discussion that Vermont Emergency Management can share the contact information in the Local Emergency Management Plan with critical partners, like dam owners, unless a town opts out on the Local Emergency Management Plan municipal adoption form.
- Emily requested that anytime you change contacts throughout the year, please reach out to Emily/Zack and Molly to let us know so we can reach the correct individual(s).
- Discussion about exercises.
 - North Country Hospital will be having some upcoming exercises and may be interested in having individuals participate, either as players or pretend victims. If Michael Sanville is soliciting folks to exercise, he may send it out to the Regional Emergency Management Committee to solicit interest. Phillip Brooks expressed interest in involving Mutual Aid in those exercises.
 - Hospital will likely do an active shooter exercise, a decon exercise, and infectious disease exercise – if EMS is available and wants to play, he would welcome it. All are in planning stages right now.
 - Glover is hoping to do a town-only tabletop exercise on their town-owned dam. Glover will reach out to Vermont Emergency Management when they are ready to start planning that. Hoping to hold it before the September Regional Emergency Management Committee meeting, so we could discuss the outcomes of the exercise at that meeting. If we're able to discuss that exercise, Phillip Brooks will outreach to the impacted towns to request they join the meeting.
 - Jeffrey Willison discussed need to include utility providers in exercises. Phillip Brooks shared that there are many times you may need to call the power company to cut the grid, so having those relationships and contact in advance would be good. Molly Dockter shared that as she is working with a town on their Local Hazard Mitigation Plans, she's found it

valuable to include the utility contact information and it may be beneficial to include in Local Emergency Management Plans.

- Discussion about potential for doing a Regional Emergency Management Committee exercise.
 - **ACTION:** Phillip Brooks requests that Emergency Management Directors and Coordinators go back to their communities and think about the exercises you would like to do as a Region, or do within their town or with other town partners, so we can discuss at the next meeting.
- Phillip Brooks goes to mutual aid meetings, which typically happen the same day as the Regional Emergency Management Committee meetings. He shares information from this meeting with that group. Phillip said he'd look into if he could get and share the Mutual Aid Group meeting notes with this group.
- Emily Harris shared that she is working on an email list for the Regional Emergency Management Committee, which others would be able to send to. Emily would moderate it, so she would only let through things that are relevant for the rest of the Regional Emergency Management Committee. Once complete, Emily will share that information with the group.
- Discussion about summer camps being part of the "Organizations and Communities requiring additional coordination" in the Local Emergency Management Plans, and that they might be a good topic for an exercise. An exercise could include bacteria coming out of a pond, a fire at the camp, a disgruntled non-custodial parent – as events happening at a camp are more likely.
- Shane Rogers, Relevate Power, shared that the company has been split in half, and the half Shane is with is being bought by Eagle Creek. The part that is expected to become part of Eagle Creek will include the Newport Dam, but the regulatory people (and the people working on the After Action Report for the recent exercise for Newport Dam) went with the other half company. Shane will follow up on the status of the After Action Report.
- Michael Sanville shared that he developed a Hazard Vulnerability Assessment that he uses for the hospital and shared it with Vermont Emergency Management. Vermont Emergency Management has made modifications to it and it can be used by towns to quickly assess probability and impact across various hazards. It is expected to be put on the Vermont Emergency Management website this week, when posted it would be [announced in the news section](#).

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, 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 If you need immediate weather support, you can contact NWS Burlington at 1-802-863-4279. 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](#).
- Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program - virtual - October 5, 6,7 & 9 12-4pm each day. PREREQUISITES: [IS-120](#). Learn how to deliver exercises in your community!
- [Vermont Emergency Preparedness Conference](#) will be held September 23 & 24 in Burke. Save the date!
- We still believe Zack Borst is coming back at the end of June 2026. Once he is back, we'll announce it.

Incident Support Plan discussion

At the 3/16 meeting, it was noted that there was an interest in drafting an Incident Support Plan annex for the region, like the Cal-Essex Regional Emergency Management Committee had recently completed.

Emily Harris presented a draft of that plan with questions:

- **DECISION:** The following regional contacts will be added to the plan: Newport PD, Newport Ambulance, Colebrook Police Department & EMS.
- **DECISION:** Emily will add all the neighboring towns, along with the corresponding public contact information that is currently on the VEM website (or in the case of New Hampshire, the public contact methods listed on their website)
- **DECISION:** Emily will remove all acronyms from the plan.
- **DECISION:** Under Plan Conventions, Emily will update the second bullet to clarify that designee should only make contacts they are requested to.
- **DECISION:** Under Incident Notice, Emily will remove action for outside contact to call the SEOC or Watch Officer, as the town should make those contacts. Will clarify that requests for mutual aid will most likely go through normal mutual aid channels or could go from selectboard to selectboard.
- **DECISION:** Depending on the results of the legal team consultation on if this document is a product of the REMC:
 - If the personal contact information is able to be redacted, then Emily will message individuals with the ability to opt out.
 - If personal contact information is not able to be redacted, then Emily will message individuals with the option to opt in.

It is hoped that this plan will be ready for final review at the next Regional Emergency Management Committee meeting. The plan will continue to note that it will be reviewed and updated at each meeting.

Overview of the Emergency Management work happening at North Country Hospital – Michael Sanville

- Primary objective: Create a “Best in Class” sustainable emergency preparedness program.
- 5 Pillars: Emergency Operations Planning, Equipment, Exercises, Education, Engagement
- Hospital received a Gold Level award for Pediatric Readiness Assessment – 1st hospital in Vermont.

- Created and implemented: Plain language codes, Risk Vulnerability Assessments, Active Shooter Saferoom Standards, Security Vulnerability Assessment, Role-Based Access Control, and Northern Hospital Coalition (North Country, Copley, Northeastern Vermont Regional Hospital, Northwestern Medical Center), Participates in National Disaster Medical System for Definitive Care MOU
- For alerts: Announce type of alert (Facility, Security, Medical) then announce location of emergency, the follow announcement with appropriate directions.
- Equipment – updated ballistics glass for many patient facing areas, 24/7 badge access for clinical areas, vendors and EMS are badged, panic buttons on key locations, mass communications, new decon room and collection tanks, new and updated cameras, new hazmat and infectious disease PPE & Equipment.
- Recently held exercises for hazmat decon, infant abduction, fire & evacuation drills, IV shortage, lockdown, Ham Radio quarterly communication drills, Dam Breach tabletop & functional exercise.
- Engagement – Vermont Healthcare Coalition, Regional Emergency Management Committees, Northern Hospitals Preparedness Group, Regional Information Sharing Coalition, and encouraging tours with law enforcement and fire.
- Discussion about infectious disease – the hospital needs to be warned in advance so they can avoid contamination. The Department of Health confirmed that they would share information if they knew a patient had an infectious disease.

The next meeting will be September 14th at 1pm-3pm at Glover Fire Station (63 Bean Hill Road, Glover). Agenda is expected to include discussion of Glover exercise, discussion on other exercises the region would like to hold, and discussion on Incident Support Plan. When the calendar appointment an RSVP will be included so we can adequately plan for space and snacks. If anyone would like to host a future meeting, please let Emily Harris and Molly Dockter know.

Adjourn to facility tour.