

## November 19, 2020 – Meeting Minutes

### **Attendees:**

James Stevens-Burke Corp  
Mary Navratil- Essential Water  
Maria Melendez-Merck  
Gary Backous- SCSO  
Anne Owen-Volunteer Center  
Melissa Spencer – SCEMA

Nikki Kyle- Central Iowa Air Service  
Michelle Farnham-ISU Research Park  
Bob Steffes-NAHC  
Rawlin Kinney-Syngenta  
Keith Morgan- SCEMA

**Originating from the Story County Emergency Operations Center. Public Access provided via Zoom video conferencing platform.**

**SPECIAL NOTE TO THE PUBLIC: Due to recommendations to limit gathering to no more than ten (10) people in order to help slow the spread of the COVID-19 virus, public access to the meeting will be provided via Zoom. Public who wish to access the meeting should contact the Story County Emergency Management agency at [storycntyiaem@storycountyiaem.gov](mailto:storycntyiaem@storycountyiaem.gov) or 515-382-7315 and they will be supplied the access information.**

### **Call to Order**

Meeting called to order at 1:30 PM by Chair Morgan with a welcome and introductions

### **Approval of Agenda & Minutes**

Motion by Melendez 2<sup>nd</sup> by Kinney to approve November tentative agenda with the change from February to May for the approval of minutes. MCU

Motion by Stevens, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Navratil to approve the May 28<sup>th</sup> meeting minutes. MCU

**Guest Speaker: None**

**Old Business: None**

**New Business:**

### **COVID Update**

As of the meeting, Story County has the lowest 14-day percentage of positive COVID-19 cases in comparison to surrounding counties. The hospitals are managing the increased strain of admissions. However, there is a concern about staffing shortages if hospital admissions continue to increase. There is an expectation of an increase in positivity after the holidays. Recommend businesses stress the importance of managing risk with family gatherings to help decrease the spread of COVID.

The vaccine is on the horizon with two vaccines close to approval by the FDA with 95% efficacy rate. The vaccine may require ultra-cold storage at -80C. The first priority will be vaccination of health care providers with essential workers and the general public when additional vaccine becomes available.

There was discussion about if positive numbers or is the 14-day percentage would change once ISU students leave for break. Story County is testing more individuals than ever before. The testing results are based upon the home address used when signing up. If they are using a Story County address for home it will register as a positive in Story County. If they use an address outside of Story County the

positive test will be registered as part of that county's total numbers. It is expected the numbers will stay neutral over the holidays.

### **COVID Response Review**

The Emergency Operations Center (EOC) activated select positions once the Governor shut down businesses and services due to COVID. EOC staff identified shortages in personal protective equipment (PPE) and coordinated procurement from the State of Iowa. Staff coordinated with community partners to address child care needs for essential workers as many childcare centers closed. The partnership coordinated with Barilla and Iowa State University Food Service for packaging and delivery of pasta to local food pantries and schools to provide to meet the increased need for services. The focus continues to be rebuilding stock of PPE, planning for contingencies, schools reopening and planning for vaccinations.

Backous mentioned the Sheriff's Office was using a program called National Business Emergency Operations Center <https://www.fema.gov/business-industry/national-business-emergency-operations-center>. A great tool they offer is the NEBOC Operations Dashboard. You will have to register for access to the system as it is sensitive and restricted information. <https://fema.connectsolutions.com/nbeoc>

During discussion LEPC members when asked, did not identify any issues purchasing the needed PPE and cleaning supplies. Members also were not aware of any childcare issues and were able to make accommodations for essential workers when needed.

Syngenta shared their best practices of co-hording workforce, spacing and social distancing and identifying changes to operations the move inside during the winter.

### **Derecho Review**

The SCEMA activated the EOC after the derecho passed. The main priority was the county wide power outage. A significant issue was maintaining the power to the Ames water plant in order to maintain pressure in the water system. The EOC coordinated with Iowa Homeland Security for a generator to keep the system pressurized. COVID-19 made traditional congregate sheltering difficult. The EOC was able to secure assistance from a few hotels as power started to be restored. A future planning issue will be to address individuals with medical assistive devices that do not have batter power capabilities. Several individuals went to local emergency rooms in order to maintain power which was not optimal. The online damage assessment software was very helpful in expediting the disaster proclamation for Story County.

There was a question on finding information on how to help locally. The SCEMA will be looking at way to share information on needs locally. Once volunteer needs were identified, Story County RSVP stood up an online volunteer registration process. Part of the process was balancing the community needs against volunteer availability. If local businesses have an interest in building a response capability that could also be utilized across the county let the SCEMA know.

Merc had difficulty receiving the alert through their NOAA weather radios in all three of their buildings. They did not go off for the derecho event. SCEMA will follow up with the National Weather Service to determine if there were any issues on their end. SCEMA staff can come out

and look at the positioning and programming of the radios if needed. Morgan suggested they check the radio to ensure it is set to channel 7.

The Ames Airport reported they lost runway lights when the power went out in Ames. They would like to know if there are grant programs that would assist with purchasing a generator for the airport. They are going to be doing a remodel and want to have the capability to connect one if needed. Morgan suggested they talk with the city to determine if they would like to pursue a hazard mitigation grant for the purchase.

Morgan asked if the group received information from the SCEMA and/or were aware of the business and government programs available to recover from the derecho. Most replied no but this information might not be part of their duties. Some were aware of the information shared on the SCEMA website for individuals.

Syngenta shared some of the after-action items they are looking at are how to track employees spread across 30 miles and notification processes. They sustained damages to their operations in Slater and are moving operations to other sites. They primarily utilize Weather Bug for weather notification but are looking at other applications to assist with decision making. They did do some preplanning the morning of the derecho and pulled in field workers based upon the planning decisions made. They also had a fair amount of luck.

### **Training**

LEPC has nothing coming up. COVID has restricted the ability to conduct training in person.

### **Exercises**

On hold due to COVID restrictions. SCEMA was able to conduct the annual I-35 closure drill. The plan required minor modifications and new hotels were added to the map available to the public. The NWS has a new Snow Squall Warning notification this winter season. The NWS will activate the warning when there is an intense snow storm that rapidly decreases visibility. The NWS treats them similar to Severe Thunderstorm Warnings and will activate the WEA alerts that will send notifications to your cell phone if you are near the warned area.

### **IDNR reported spills:**

There was an uptick in spill numbers from the previous meeting. Not sure why there has been an increase. Spills since the last meeting have been fuel, anti-freeze, mineral oil and blanket reports from MidAmerican Energy and Alliant for damages to transformers from the derecho. This was the first we had seen this type of reporting from the power companies.

### **Other: Nothing**

**Next meeting:** February 25<sup>th</sup>, 2020- May still be virtual

Motion to adjourn by Navratil, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Melendez, MCU at 2:48 pm.