

FEMA National Advisory Council

May 2017 Meeting Minutes

NAC | May 23-25, 2017



FEMA

PARTICIPANTS

NAC Members	5-23/AM	5-23/PM	5-24	5-25
James Featherstone, Chair	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Teresa Scott, Vice Chair	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
James Akerele	No	No	No	No
Gabriele Almon	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Brett Bailey	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Peter Barca	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Meloyde Batten-Mickens	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Donna Boston	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Sarita Chung, P&P, Vice Chair	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Jeanne-Aimee DeMarrais	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Jerry Demings	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Gerard Dio	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Lee Feldman, FI&M, Chair	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
W. Scott Field, GIS, Vice Chair	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Peter Ginaitt	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Jeffrey Hansen	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Eugene Henry	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Chris Howell, R&R, Vice Chair	No	No	No	No
June Kailes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Emily Kidd	Yes	Yes	No	No
W. Nim Kidd, R&R, Chair	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Anne Kronenberg	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Linda Langston	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Chris Littlewood	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Suzet McKinney	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Catherine Nelson	No	No	No	No
Gerald Parker	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Samantha Phillips, P&P, Chair	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Robert Salesses	No	No	No	No
Michael Sprayberry, GIS, Chair	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Jeff Stern	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Guy Swan	No	No	No	No
Darryll Wong	No	No	No	No
Phil Zarlengo	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Dan Zarrilli, FI&M, Vice Chair	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

DHS and FEMA Personnel	5-23/AM	5-23/PM	5-24	5-25
Dan Alexander, Acting Director, NIC (FEMA)	No	No	No	Yes
Shauna Blanchard-Mbangah, ORR, NAC Liaison (FEMA)	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Emily Blanton, FIMA, NAC Liaison (FEMA)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Jasper Cooke, Alternate Designated Federal Officer (ADFO)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Lauren DeMarco, Analyst, Region I (FEMA)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Elizabeth Edge, Director, Office of Regional Operations (FEMA)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Bob Fenton, Acting Administrator, FEMA	No	No	Yes	No
Kathleen Fox, Acting Deputy Administrator for PNP (FEMA)	No	Yes	No	No
Corey Gruber, Acting Associate Administrator for ORR (FEMA)	No	Yes	No	No
Colt Hagmaier, Office of Policy and Program Analysis (FEMA)	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Eric Heighberger, Chief of Staff, FEMA	No	No	Yes	No
Dwyn Jolly, Management and Program Analyst (FEMA)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Deana Platt, Designated Federal Officer (DFO)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Tyeshia Roberson, Analyst, Federal Advisory Committees (DHS)	No	Yes	Yes	No
Tony Robles, ADFO, National Continuity Programs	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Tony Russell, Superintendent, EMI (FEMA)	No	Yes	Yes	No
Traci Silas, Director, Federal Advisory Committees (DHS)	No	Yes	Yes	No
Kyle Symanowitz, ADFO, Office of Chief Counsel (FEMA)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Gracia Szczech, Regional Administrator, Region IV (FEMA)	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Rachael Wolff, Analyst, Office of Regional Operations (FEMA)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Roy Wright, Deputy Assistant Administrator for FIMA (FEMA)	No	Yes	No	No

Other Attendees	5-23/AM	5-23/PM	5-24	5-25
Brad Kieserman, Vice President of Disaster Operations and Logistics, American Red Cross	No	No	No	Yes
Theresa Marie Crowder, Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART) Provider	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

The FEMA National Advisory Council met at The Barrymore Tampa Riverwalk in Tampa, Florida from May 23-25, 2017. On Tuesday, May 23, the meeting included briefs from FEMA's Federal Insurance and Mitigation Administration, the Region IV Regional Administrator, and National Preparedness and Protection. On Wednesday, May 24, the NAC heard from the Office of Response and Recovery, and Acting Administrator Bob Fenton. In the afternoon, each subcommittee presented draft recommendations for the full NAC to discuss, deliberate, and vote on. On the last day, May 25, the NAC heard from Brad Kieserman, the Vice President for Disaster Operations and Logistics at the American Red Cross, on the future of emergency management, and received an update on the National Incident Management System from Acting Director of the National Integration Center Dan Alexander.

The National Advisory Council voted on and approved 18 recommendations for FEMA's consideration. Recommendations addressed the Public Assistance deductible concept, nuclear decommissioning, continuing and

improving integration of disability and access and functional needs considerations in FEMA training programs, improved use of technology, and improved accessibility to FEMA's geospatial information systems technologies and data.

The meeting concluded with open discussion among the members on developing and assigning topics for the NAC to research and address in preparation for the November 2017 meeting in Washington, DC.

Introduction—Tuesday, May 23, 2017

NAC subcommittees met from 9:00 am-12:00 pm Eastern in separate meeting spaces at The Barrymore Hotel. Deana Platt, FEMA NAC DFO, called the public session to order at 1:00 pm Eastern. She presented the meeting agenda, indicated safety protocol in the event of an emergency, reviewed the new recommendations template/guidance, pointed out flipcharts available for member topic development, and introduced some new faces from FEMA leadership. She also invited members to sign up for an optional dinner after the day's meeting at The Columbia in Ybor City.

Chair Jim Featherstone and Vice Chair Teresa Scott welcomed the NAC and thanked the members for their hard work since the last meeting.

ROY WRIGHT, DEPUTY ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR FOR INSURANCE AND MITIGATION

Presentation

Mr. Wright introduced FIMA's status as fundamentally different from where it was two years ago. The NFIP was suffering publicly and financially. Thanks to improvements developed during the Sandy response and tested recently in North Carolina and Louisiana, customer service and satisfaction have shifted in a positive direction. Congress is researching and legislating the NFIP reauthorization legislation that is due later this year.

One of FEMA's primary initiatives to turn public opinion of the NFIP was to improve the claims process. FIMA received approval to issue \$10,000 pre-payments to NFIP policy holders in direct-hit areas, improved messaging and communications between the JFOs and state coordinators, and improved the appeals process through a new casework office. These initiatives were developed in the fall of 2015, and have been effectively tested and further refined in response to Texas' 2016 spring floods. Disasters provide the best opportunity to test new practices, and the August 2016 flooding in Louisiana, one of the largest flooding disasters in the NFIP's 49-year history, has shown significant reduction in customer complaints and claims appeals. State insurance commissioners have also expressed approval and support for the changes.

FEMA is also working to develop policy options similar to car insurance policies that offer different price points and coverage options to appeal to a larger policyholder population. Updating policies is another priority: the NFIP was last reformed in 1986, and rates were last adjusted in 1994.

Moonshot program goals are to double policyholders from 5 million to 10 million by 2023. At the same time, FIMA is working to quadruple mitigation investment nationwide. This will take considerable collaboration with and engagement of the private sector. FEMA also hopes to see an increase in private industry options for flood insurance.

Discussion

Is the increase in Congressional engagement due more to scrutiny and a desire to understand the fiscal aspect, or to understanding of flooding as a national threat?

Both explanations are correct. There is also an increased understanding of widespread effects on urban and rural populations and industry. Members of Congress who felt impacted by negative public opinion from the 2012 Biggert-Waters legislation want to avoid a repeat, so are proactively requesting hearings and briefs from multiple partners and stakeholders in order to develop better-balanced legislation.

How do you measure your progress and achievements?

FIMA has two criteria for gauging progress in meeting enrollment and mitigation goals. Meeting the goals successfully leads to faster recovery after a disaster. Right now, fewer than 30% of high-risk properties have flood insurance coverage. FIMA has established certain targets for communities to withstand events.

There is also a mathematical sense to the financial underpinning of the program. If flood insurance coverage is increased across the nation, including areas of low to moderate risk, the flood insurance program overall becomes more financially stable. Increasing enrollment primarily in high-risk areas leaves the program with the same economic instability we hope to reduce. One proposed strategy for boosting enrollment is to present flood insurance as a “mandatory ask” with mortgage approval, requiring an active decision to deny coverage.

Explain the competition for mitigation funding.

FEMA set aside \$90 million for community-level mitigation projects. Projects cannot overlap with those where the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) has authority, but can have other collaborations (e.g., housing, energy) in order to increase private investment. Projects drawing from this fund can cover up to 25% of the project cost with this federal money. The program realizes this is a relatively small amount of money but hopes that it will incentivize private sector investment. We recognize that business as usual is not effective—we need new strategies to address rising costs of disaster response and recovery.

Some members, including Mr. Feldman, commented that while the additional funding is helpful, the corresponding increase in administrative costs to use the federal funding will likely negate any meaningful benefit. The government’s approach has to be with more than just dollars; it needs changes to the rules. Mr. Wright agreed with this comment, indicating that the Administration is focused on streamlining processes to decrease administrative costs and improve spending efficacy.

FIMA is working with the White House to build out infrastructure effectively. This is part of the broader conversation on the increasing cost of disasters. Chief Kidd indicated that many urban areas are already addressing infrastructure concerns and would rather work independently than spend valuable time and resources incorporating federal funds.

Why is most mitigation funding through the post-disaster HMGP program instead of through more-effective pre-disaster projects?

I would like to see more pre-disaster mitigation. Most mitigation funding is awarded through the HMGP and other post-disaster funding where the uses must be identified in a short period of time. The time constraints sometimes force communities to use the funds on less-effective projects, like stormproof windows, that do little to reduce

future risk. Pre-disaster mitigation (PDM) is harder to fund because it's only proven effective after another disaster-type event hits the area.

[There have been past discussions on true cost-benefit analysis and how local governments lack capacity to make improvements. How can we make the process more applicant friendly?](#)

States need to understand/analyze the infrastructure and know how to execute projects before they receive funding. HMGP policies also need changes—right now the timelines for using these funds are so stringent that states and communities are forced to use them on smaller, less-meaningful projects like storm windows in order to meet the deadlines. PDM programs have done a lot of work to promote bringing money to communities to focus on pre-disaster mitigation rather than post-disaster response.

States also need to recognize and understand that small communities lack the resources for planning large, meaningful and effective infrastructure projects. Grant project applications require a sophisticated understanding of the project and process. States also need to recognize that they frequently aren't as prepared as they believe or portray themselves to be. While politically savvy to promote improvements, states can suffer when requesting grant funding if they do not completely understand or properly represent their actual capabilities.

States also need to help themselves in building capabilities. Seven core capabilities in the emergency management community answer these questions and are scalable (e.g. housing programs). Long-term risk reduction is an example of a core capability.

[What type of communication have you had with private sector insurance firms?](#)

Many private markets are interested in being in the flood space through reinsurance. Property and casualty markets are more difficult to grow and maintain. Congress is taking a considerable interest in the overall picture, and has introduced a bill requiring new construction projects after a certain date to buy flood insurance in the private market.

[Clarify surcharges submitted in the budget; if I were a new buyer, would I be joining with preferred risk and surcharges?](#)

The President's budget does include a number of surcharges for policies in the flood insurance program aimed at helping increase the financial stability of the program.

[Are there any issues that the NAC could work on for FIMA?](#)

Brock Long, the current nominee for FEMA Administrator, is known for promoting community resilience. As mentioned previously, increasing the number of people with flood insurance policies and increasing the amount spent on mitigation are both priorities as well and areas where FIMA would welcome your input. What are ways the government can incentivize public sector development and private investment?

[How do we see more insurance coverage across the country and private investment?](#)

We have achieved some success in requiring known high-risk areas to carry insurance. But transferring risk through insurance comes with a price: eventually, the policies will probably be claimed, and honoring those policies takes money. Where does/should the money come from? FEMA has been authorized Treasury loans, but the program should ideally be self-sustaining. Subsidies to boost policy sales in high-risk areas are helpful but

reduce program revenues and transfer costs to the taxpayer. Help us think beyond our standard way of thinking to find solutions.

Flood insurance surcharges seem costly, especially for a high-risk area like Florida. Since there are not a lot of private insurance providers in the market, where do consumers stand?

Risk transfer has a price and can be expensive. It is like a smoker trying to get life insurance: you come with a preexisting condition. There is a portion of Congress discussing affordability, but no one is identifying or providing where dollars come from to pay for the discounts. Some nonprofits are looking at rental contents policies, but that is still expensive. It's also important to remember that policies and claims are based on the replacement cost of the loss—taking policies out for actual cost rather than property value can help decrease yearly premium amounts and manage expectations.

What are your priorities and initiatives outside of the flood world?

FIMA has an appropriation of \$9 million to leverage across hazards, including earthquakes and straight-line wind events like tornadoes. FIMA has responsibility for the National Earthquake Hazards Reduction Program and building codes. There is a lot of debate on how to use the international building code to reduce risk.

We know that higher building standards reduce risk—the goal is to avoid building twice. Especially for the policy holder, the cost of meeting higher codes will be balanced against the cost of policy premiums and claims values. Those who need insurance will buy it, but potential customer's belief of lower risk leaves them balancing best-case scenarios against potential recovery costs when deciding whether or not to purchase insurance.

Are there any proposals under consideration for policy and legislative updates?

There are some reports and recommendations, but there isn't a lot of appetite to change from business as usual in the private sector. Higher building codes/construction standards, for example, may significantly increase costs or cut into profit margins and don't always guarantee long-term savings or actual mitigation significance without a proving disaster. Recommendations on better consumer education strategies from the NAC could be very helpful. People who do buy coverage don't always understand what is in their coverage. As seen in the new NFIP casework program, improved customer education and understanding reduces claims appeals and customer complaints.

What are your thoughts on the emerging concept of catastrophic disaster bonds?

They are part of the insurance that links security markets sold around the world. They are paid in full based on meeting certain parametric triggers like when water hits a certain level. Some stakeholders, such as transit authority, are more likely to play in this space (e.g., Manhattan), but this concept may not work at a residential level since costs are high. However, this is still a new market and we will continue to watch it develop.

GRACIA SZEZCH, REGIONAL ADMINISTRATOR, REGION IV

Discussions about Matthew have dominated Region IV, but we've been busy elsewhere and in addition to this response. Region IV supported 11 major disaster declarations and four emergency declarations. Hurricanes Matthew and Hermine reminded us that "it only takes one disaster." Region IV was the first region to request and receive a presidential disaster declaration from the current Administration. This is encouraging as we seem to be

carrying on our work, business as usual, in time for the beginning of this year's hurricane season. Region IV is preparing by supporting several conferences and exercises.

Hurricane Hermine (4280 DR-FL) made landfall on September 2, 2016 as a Category 1. Florida received a declaration on September 28. FEMA has awarded \$8.5 million in individual assistance (IA) and \$17.1 million in public assistance (PA).

Hurricane Matthew touched down in Florida on October 6 and South Carolina on October 8 at Category 1 strength, resulting in four major declarations. Thanks to improved predictive techniques, North Carolina had assets on-site six days ahead of landfall. Supplies were positioned at Fort Bragg and Marine Corps Logistics Base (MCLB) Albany for efficient distribution. FEMA deployed 2,500 personnel, and made 264 mission assignments across 18 Agencies. FEMA reported 47 deaths, 24 of them in North Carolina, mostly due to driving into floodwaters. Urban Search and Rescue operations completed over 700 missions. We identified a gap in their swift water rescue capabilities and are working to secure training to meet this need in the future. The area saw \$10 billion in damages. 2.5 million survivors lost power, and 51,000 filed claims for IA. NFIP covered claims from 19,264 policyholders. Thousands of survivors were evacuated during the initial response; 104 are still in transitional shelters. 3,101 used emergency shelter temporarily. One primary result of Matthew was to highlight failing infrastructure, the need for mitigation, and the value of planning and preparation.

Mr. Sprayberry added that about 60% of evacuees in North Carolina were renters assisted through Disaster Housing Assistance and Transitional Shelter Assistance programs to cover rent and utilities. Streamlining of the PA delivery process seems well-received. The state also worked closely with HUD to provide temporary Manufactured Housing Units (MHUs) where possible, and provided hotel shelters elsewhere. To date, NFIP paid out \$195 million in claims. While most survivors have returned to their homes, 94 remain in temporary shelter. Most of these residents were disadvantaged populations in the first place and suffered substantial uninsured loss. Most flooding was riverine, and well-modelled by North Carolina's robust GIS and Homeland Infrastructure Foundation-Level Data (HIFLD) resources. Evacuations were accurately preemptive, which significantly reduced loss of life. Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD) partner support has been improved through vetting and providing password access to personally identifiable information (PII) that improves targeted response and assistance activities.

Region IV also received 14 fire management assistance grants to help with millions of burned acres. Some of the fires escalated due to drought conditions last year. West Mims Fires on the Florida-Georgia line were the worst. Due to the sudden and time-sensitive nature of fire disasters, Region IV personnel have pulled long hours to process requests for assistance and declarations in a timely manner.

Region IV's upcoming projects and initiatives include addressing tornadoes, the Seismic Zone Planning Refresh, and Super Bowl 53. We're also looking forward to a Private Sector Summit, including major partners like Lowe's, and Coca Cola, and neighboring regions. Improved coordination results in better outcomes for survivors. As far as earthquakes, the New Madrid fault spans seven states and would immediately affect 44 million citizens; economic and seismic effects could be felt nationwide, so reviewing existing earthquake planning is a priority. We're also working on the co-location of DHS' Office of Infrastructure, some Region VII operations, and some of our offices as part of the government consolidation and reorganization.

KATHLEEN FOX, ACTING DEPUTY ADMINISTRATOR FOR PREPAREDNESS AND NATIONAL PROTECTION

Preparedness and National Protection (PNP) is supporting the ONAC on coordinating the RESPONSE and IPAWS subcommittees. IPAWS membership selection is progressing. The RESPONSE subcommittee recently finalized their membership selection and held their inaugural meeting. As Congressionally-mandated subcommittees of the NAC, the members will report to the NAC, and the NAC will forward any approved recommendations to the Administrator and other named officials. RESPONSE scheduled their next meeting in June. The IPAWS subcommittee is working towards an August meeting. Tony Robles from National Continuity Programs was appointed an Alternate DFO to support the IPAWS subcommittee.

Since the last meeting, PNP spent time addressing the accidental exposure to active toxins in training at the Center for Domestic Preparedness (CDP) in Anniston. While we want to ensure that training is as realistic as possible, there are practical considerations that include safety of students, trainers and the public. PNP is reviewing its contracts to ensure that this does not happen again.

Dan Alexander will go into more detail, but PNP is also prepared to release a National Incident Management System (NIMS) refresh. Two years in the making, the primary objective was to not modify the aspects that are proven to work well. One major area we addressed was Intelligence and Investigations (I&I), which we revised in conjunction with Law Enforcement advisors. The NAC Chair asked about PNP's use of NAC's recommendations to broaden the communications strategies to include more than radio. Ms. Fox indicated that the update does include more modern technology capabilities. Mr. Featherstone also recommended that PNP consider including GIS technologies in the next refresh as its use is becoming as intrinsic and valuable as radio communication has become.

Notices of Funding Opportunities (NOFOs) for grants will be issued later than usual this year due to the transition. To facilitate this short timeline, PNP is developing a streamlined application process to quickly use the funds effectively. The money must be used within the fiscal year.

The National Preparedness Report is under review. Preparedness and protection challenges include addressing cyber security and encrypted communications. Response and recovery operations are emphasizing post-disaster temporary and long-term housing programs, and improving access for people with access and functional needs (AFN) and disabled populations. Mitigation focuses on getting people to prepare independently. This is likely to be a major topic for the FEMA Administrator nominee Brock Long. Mr. Long's work on liquid asset poverty may impact FEMA's communications strategy regarding preparing for disasters. Over 50% of America's households cannot afford a \$500 expense outside of their regular budget—this affects their ability to respond to costs from a disaster. FEMA may shift away from recommending kits and more towards making individual plans. Planning individual-level response supports awareness and preparation which improves community resiliency. This review creates an opportunity for the NAC to provide feedback that can be used in the revision process. The 32 Core Capabilities as currently defined will probably remain, as there is no overlap or redundancy.

Discussion

Returning to the NIMS Refresh, some members expressed concern about tying grant approval to NIMS compliance which they feel requires extensive and unnecessary training for non-critical staff.

NIMS compliance is frequently an incentive for grants approval. If the two are unlinked, NIMS compliance will fail. FEMA does recognize this issue, though, and is working to streamline both the training and the compliance requirements. We also understand that DHS grants support and incentivize valuable work in preparation and building response capabilities.

[FEMA's policy and messaging campaigns seem to be losing effectiveness. Can you comment?](#)

Part of the problem, which we are addressing, is changing the nature of the questions we ask and what answers we use. For example, it's not enough to tell people to have a plan—they don't know what they don't know, and can't plan effectively when they don't know the risks or countermeasures. To improve our messaging, we're looking for scientific research to support our recommendations. One example of data we're looking for is whether driving into a ditch to avoid a tornado is more or less effective than exiting your vehicle and sheltering in a ditch.

Gwen Camp presented at the NAC meeting in New Orleans on whole community preparedness. The data contained in the "Preparedness in America" report is what FEMA PNP also uses. FEMA's Individual and Community Preparedness Division (ICPD) has also been preparing a vulnerability index that will help us to identify and target critically-vulnerable populations in an emergency. To this end, we want to improve our messaging outreach and effectiveness. One proposal is to teach people to think of their home as a kit—what do you already have available? This reduces the need for additional purchases, and could help promote thoughtful advance planning.

Ultimately, we're looking to review our research and strategies. "Common knowledge" can be supported by science. Messaging should be standard. Standard messaging builds trust; locals can trust their local government's advice more if it aligns with federal directives, and vice versa. Redefining the "average" family is forcing us to reconsider our Planning messaging. It's important to consider as many sources and perspectives as possible in order to develop effective messaging and content.

[How can we apply Preparation strategies to Recovery?](#)

For example, FEMA previously sponsored a climate change exercise, incorporating a broad cross-section of stakeholders including those in building codes, urban planning and land use to address mitigation and planning capacity.

[The training facility in Pueblo, CO is part of the Consortium that provides specialized training in topics in emergency management. Does it rely on acts of Congress for funding?](#)

The Consortium is funded by Congress based on priorities identified in the National Preparedness Report. It also receives private sector funding.

CONCLUSION

Deana Platt, FEMA NAC DFO, adjourned the NAC meeting at 5:00 pm Eastern.

Introduction—Wednesday, May 24, 2017

Deana Platt, FEMA NAC DFO, called the public session to order at 8:45 am Eastern in the Ambassador Room of The Barrymore Hotel. She presented the meeting agenda, indicated safety protocol in the event of an emergency, pointed out flipcharts available for member topic development, and welcomed Committee Management Officer (CMO) Traci Silas and her staff from DHS, EMI Superintendent Tony Russell, FIMA's Emily Blanton, PNP's Shauna Blanchard-Mbangah, and Colt Hagmaier, lead on the PA deductible proposal.

Chair Jim Featherstone and Vice Chair Teresa Scott welcomed the NAC and thanked the members for their hard work yesterday during the subcommittee break-out sessions. They also welcomed Chief of Staff (COS) Eric Heighberger, and thanked members with expiring terms for their years of service the FEMA NAC.

COREY GRUBER, ACTING ASSOCIATE ADMINISTRATOR, RESPONSE AND RECOVERY

Presentation

The Office of Response and Recovery (ORR)'s work on transition preparation is being put to use as the political appointees are nominated and confirmed. Leadership has had an opportunity to begin briefing Administrator Nominee Brock Long, and is actively recruiting to fill the empty Senior Executive Service (SES) positions. Day to day operations continue, working around the "see, understand, decide" action philosophy.

ORR underwent a realignment in October 2015. The current structure includes up to 19 SES personnel. Mike Byrne returned from serving as Region II Acting Administrator to assume a permanent position at the Field Operations Directorate, which was established under the realignment. ORR also centralized the offices for doctrine and policy, and some other offices. To streamline operations, ORR defined and clarified roles and responsibilities at the federal, regional and local levels. A major initiative is finalizing draft doctrine and policy that tend to take a back seat to the next disaster. Nine of the 23 cadres fall under ORR, and are supported by 60% of FEMA's staff. ORR is considering consolidating some of these positions in a pilot project that may be applied throughout FEMA.

Current Disasters

FEMA is very active in Texas right now, with some response activity requirements spilling across the border into Oklahoma. Approximately 2,500 staff are deployed across the country in response to 19 major declarations. FEMA currently has 62% workforce availability.

Housing

Housing assistance is a major target for change, both now and for the pending Administration. Acting Administrator Fenton is currently looking for ways to streamline and expedite existing processes through policy, potential legislation, and work with the private sector. One initiative includes building capacity through partnership with the recreational vehicle (RV) industry. We are also working to improve the immediate repairs application process; applicants from the recent floods in Louisiana waited six weeks for this assistance, which is way too long to be effective at its mission. FEMA is seeking input from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and other academics, and by sponsoring contests to encourage new and innovative techniques

to streamline and improve the process. These ideas form the foundation for discussions with the private sector to assess actual feasibility.

Disaster Costs

FEMA receives pressure to reduce the cost of disasters. We are researching cost-share justification, assistance eligibility requirements, categories, and thresholds.

Disaster Housing

Ways for the NAC to Contribute:

1. How do we make services fast, effective, and efficient? Beyond DR-4277 LA, which encouraged FEMA to improve its direct repair program, what are some things FEMA has not considered with respect to sheltering and housing survivors? Housing is an interagency mission, so recommendations can include this broader space.
2. In practice, most direct housing missions are fewer than 400 units. Recent large-scale exercises like Cascadia and Gotham Shield highlight the need to address catastrophic losses and massive displaced populations for an extended period of time. Gotham Shield, for example, addressed a displaced population of 4.5 million for a year, and 2.5 million of those still in need at two years post-event when post-disaster housing assistance terminates. With 80% of the American population living in, and 85% of America's gross domestic product (GDP) coming from, urban areas, should urban housing and recovery strategies be a unique unit of analysis?
3. Like many other policies, housing is full of bureaucracy, which creates a compliance-based culture. How do we change this so that staff can act in the best interests of mission accomplishment? General Milley coined the term "disciplined disobedience" in which leaders are able to make the correct ethical, moral, and operational decisions in ambiguous or complicated scenarios in the spirit of the mission but that may be in conflict with established doctrine and policy. How do we develop leadership that can plan, produce and synchronize operations without specific guidance?

Discussion

Housing

Mr. Featherstone, the Chair, expressed that the housing mission should not be treated in a silo. It is important that housing shortages be addressed in conjunction with other missions, like evacuation and provisions. FEMA should consider broader exercises to build capacity for the bigger picture. These exercises should include industry and other private partners in order to develop professional relationships in advance of a disaster.

Dr. McKinney asked if any of the housing policy refresh would address health hazards, like the Ebola outbreak in 2013. During this time, CDC shut down inbound travel from Africa to all but five major U.S. cities. This created a temporary housing scramble as passengers and their companions required evaluation and confinement for observation. Mr. Gruber said that FEMA's current policy addresses this situation from an all-hazards perspective, but has not specifically looked at mass public health situations like Dr. McKinney faced in Chicago.

Ms. Kailes offered that FEMA could consider studying lessons observed and best practices from international partners. She also supported FEMA's decision to build private sector relationships with industry leaders that can support a large-scale response effort. Mr. Gruber agreed that working with international humanitarian service

providers could offer great insight and strategies based on mission experience that could be adapted for use here in the United States. He added that FEMA's goal regarding MHUs is to streamline the deployment process, minimize their use, and reduce associated costs and length of use. One strategy is improving the minimum repairs process to reduce the need for, or time spent in, MHUs.

Ms. Kronenberg said that one of the problems with finding and providing emergency shelter is that there is already a national housing crisis leaving a large population homeless or in poor housing conditions. Dr. Batten-Mickens suggested that FEMA consider consulting academia at several levels—rather than relying on advanced academia, consulting with entry-level higher education could offer some new strategies or insight. Mr. Sprayberry added that FEMA is doing great work at collaborating with federal and state, local, tribal and territorial (SLTT) partners, including HUD. In response to suggestions that FEMA provide rent vouchers instead of MHUs, Mr. Gruber reiterated comments from Ms. Boston about housing shortages and said that while rental vouchers are the ideal solution, in a mass evacuation the rentals are simply not available even with payment.

Disaster Costs

Proposed legislation includes charging the FEMA NAC with developing recommendations to reduce overall disaster costs. One of FEMA's initiatives to reduce costs is to reduce administrative costs by five percent in the next year through streamlined processes. While administrative costs are significant, this reduction will not make enough of a dent in overall disaster costs, so FEMA is working with legislators, think tanks and the private sector to identify other strategies and best practices that can also reduce the rising costs. Reducing the cost of post-disaster housing is a major target and is being addressed by close consultation with private industry.

Mr. Zarrilli and Mr. Featherstone asked about what technology resources are being applied to the problem. Mr. Featherstone said that the issue isn't necessarily obtaining data as much as using it in a meaningful way to affect change. Mr. Gruber replied that FEMA is working to develop better data formats and analyses to better access and leverage available data. FEMA has found applying these analyses to supply chain issues to be particularly valuable. The ultimate goal is to effectively and efficiently communicate current status and future needs to leadership to properly inform and support timely decision making.

Leadership and Workforce Development

One of the roadblocks to building a stronger emergency workforce is the relative scarcity of emergencies that require widespread activation. At the headquarters level, for example, activations are infrequent and average 15 days per year. We hold quarterly exercises to improve capacity and capability.

Building leadership is another challenge. FEMA has several leadership courses available through EMI, and works closely with the Naval Postgraduate School and Harvard to offer development courses to its supervisors and managers. These programs are important, although we recognize that leaders are developed, not trained.

To improve recognized capability and capacity, FEMA continues to develop the National Qualification System. Fostering a qualified workforce among our SLTT partners builds their capacity, and reduces FEMA's liability during a response because the partners can support their own operations with more independence.

Conclusion

Chief Kidd inquired as to the best way for the NAC to keep abreast of developing issues and policy at FEMA, as in-person meetings are too short and infrequent to provide timely commentary. Mr. Gruber offered that a lot of the current information requested is available in the transition binder; Ms. Platt will work to provide this document to the NAC.

ROBERT J. FENTON, ACTING ADMINISTRATOR, FEMA

Presentation

Mr. Fenton introduced himself and shared a short summary of his career in emergency management. He was asked to temporarily leave his position as Region IX Administrator to support FEMA through the transition and looks forward to Mr. Brock Long's imminent Senate confirmation hearings.

Mr. Fenton assumed his current position on January 20, 2017, and immediately dealt with tornadoes in two states and an audience with DHS Secretary Kelly. Mr. Fenton reported that FEMA's mission is highly valued by both DHS and the new President, and shortly after the first meeting was asked back by Secretary Kelly to continue discussing FEMA's mission, initiatives and needs. The next day he met with President Trump. Mr. Fenton also expressed support for Administrator Nominee Brock Long, and recently-appointed COS Eric Heighberger.

Employee morale seems high; FEMA currently has over 15,000 employees, including permanent full-time staff, a large Cadre of On-call Response/Recovery Employees (CORE) component, and a reserve force. A major workplace initiative is to foster and build leadership capability and career opportunities.

The grants program is receiving a lot of attention, within FEMA and from the Administration. Historically, every administration has cut grants funding, so President Trump's budget proposal is not unexpected. Most of the grants were created post-9/11 to combat terrorism which is another reason we've seen funding fall off in the last decade. Internally, FEMA is streamlining and optimizing grants management processes and programs. The end goal is to make a cohesive grants program picture accessible throughout FEMA programs.

FEMA is \$25 billion in debt to the Treasury from honoring NFIP policies. Currently, FEMA spends \$400 million a year in interest payments on this debt. The Administration is eager to reduce this debt, and federal costs in general. The Biggert-Waters legislation proved untenable, because the rates needed to make NFIP self-sustaining proved unaffordable for most of the population. That being said, there is also discussion on how much taxpayers should shoulder the burden of rebuilding in high-risk areas. The goal is to shift this burden to the individual, but FEMA studies show that a high percentage of the population building in these high-risk areas are economically unable to move. They can't afford housing prices in safer areas or to leave and find adequate employment somewhere else. Congress is working on ways to balance all of these concerns through the NFIP reauthorization process.

Preparing through pre-disaster mitigation is one area that shows a lot of promise in reducing long-term disaster costs. FEMA is also planning ahead because it has been ten years since a catastrophic disaster, and every day without one increases the likelihood of its arrival. At the federal level, FEMA is leading Cabinet-level exercises to prepare for a variety of scenarios.

The last Administration proposed the PA deductible as a way to incentivize mitigation and reduce federal costs of disaster recovery. FEMA has received pressure from Congress, OIG, GAO, and the Heritage Foundation to aggressively plan a cost reduction strategy that will reduce the costs of disasters, especially federal costs. While administrative costs are a target, PA spending is much higher and therefore more of a target. In addition to the PA deductible concept, another strategy to consider reducing the federal burden is to raise thresholds or to redistribute the federal-state cost-share.

During a disaster, housing becomes both a primary mission and a major cost. We are able to address most needs with temporary housing, rent vouchers, and MHUs, but this is only effective for smaller communities. In the event of a catastrophic disaster, the need will far exceed our current capabilities. FEMA has contracted with MIT and USACE to revamp the post-disaster housing strategy. One problem is that MHUs cost \$130-150,000 each per disaster, recently increased due to sprinkler system installations; this does not seem like the best use of available tax dollars. Another problem with MHUs is capacity—FEMA can generally support placement of about 40 units per day; during Katrina we were able to do 600/day, but they were not to code which resulted in major criticism.

Mr. Long is already at work developing his priorities and agenda for FEMA. He is very interested in engaging stakeholders, and this is where the NAC can really contribute.

Discussion

[Is there a way to make FEMA fiscally solvent, given that its mission is primarily reactive?](#)

Ultimately, it is the President's job to propose a budget, Congress' job to pass it, and the rest of the government's job to work within these limits. We will plan as well as we can once the budget is passed, and the Administration begins to define and shape its five-year strategic plan.

[Is there any indication that the current financial burdens will prevent FEMA's ability to assist in future disasters?](#)

The FY 19-23 Resource Allocation Plan (RAP) is forward looking. The Administration has already shown its support for FEMA's mission and continues to approve major disaster declarations that meet defined thresholds for assistance, so we don't anticipate that FEMA's current financial situation will prevent FEMA from supporting the nation in times of disaster.

[What private sector engagement is there in the insurance arena?](#)

First, we are working to boost enrollment in flood and earthquake insurance, both in the NFIP and through private sector insurance companies. Second, we are looking at ways to improve NFIP sustainability. This is taking a two-pronged approach, first to increase low-risk policyholder enrollment and second to conscientiously increase premiums in the high-risk areas.

[How is FEMA addressing the Executive Order on withholding disaster assistance to 'sanctuary cities'?](#)

FEMA will uphold the Administration's orders. That being said, there is a hold on this order because of injunctions filed by several cities, including San Francisco. There is also the challenge of defining criteria for 'sanctuary city' status before funds can be withheld for that reason. Once the definition is clear, policy on what types of funding is affected must be developed. The process is far from complete, but FEMA will abide by the Administration's instructions. The executive order will not affect grants this fiscal year.

Ms. Phillips commented that Philadelphia supports a lot of programs for the neighboring suburbs. As a self-declared sanctuary city it would likely be affected by the executive order; is it fair to punish the suburbs for Philadelphia's political stance? Sheriff Demings affirmed his understanding of Mr. Fenton's testimony: cities should continue 'business as usual' until the policy is developed and released.

How is FEMA addressing integration of AFN populations, including children, seniors and the disabled?

FEMA has taken action towards improved integration of the whole community. While we have done well with addressing the whole community in mass care, FEMA does need to do more to integrate AFN considerations across the five program areas.

How are you building relationships with the VOADs and faith-based organizations to counteract the effect of funding cuts?

FEMA has done very well in this area, including hosting the DHS Office of Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships. We started by working at the community level, and have slowly built our relationships up to the national level. Developing relationships is a two-way street and requires participation as much as outreach and engagement.

Recognizing that the current flood insurance program is unsustainable, many of us still don't think the PA deductible concept is the best solution to rising costs of disasters. What other options are on the table?

FEMA continues to look at several strategies to strengthen the NFIP and control disaster costs. Reinsurance has stabilized the program, and the reauthorization is moving ahead with promising Congressional engagement. FEMA supports the idea of a "mandatory ask" for flood and/or earthquake insurance with mortgages, but this would require legislative action to implement.

The DFO adjourned the meeting at 11:45 am.

PUBLIC COMMENT

The DFO called the meeting to order at 1:15 pm Eastern and opened the floor to public comment. As there were no members of the public present, the subcommittees began presenting their work for full NAC discussion and consideration. The DFO offered a second public comment period at 2:45pm Eastern. No members of the public were present.

Response and Recovery, Chair W. Nim Kidd presenting

Nuclear Decommissioning Regulation

During operations, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) and FEMA work together to coordinate emergency response operations for the surrounding community. Most plants were designed to operate for about fifty years and are nearing their life expectancy. Nationwide, 34 have either decommissioned or are in the process of decommissioning. The risk obviously decreases when the plants change from an operating to a decommissioning license, but reduction is not elimination. Current policy and regulation for decommissioning do not include external concerns for emergency response. This means that community preparedness for response to a nuclear emergency decreases sharply and may even cease. In Texas, one community's Emergency Medical Service lost 40% of its funding. Working with their Region VI Administrator and the NRC, Texas Emergency Management was able to negotiate for return of funding.

- Recommendation 1: *Provide provisions to ensure that the licensee provides a clear and concise explanation of the hazards associated with the nuclear power facility throughout the decommissioning process.*
 - Recognizing that the decommissioning process is as long as ten years, associated risks should be well-defined. One issue is that there is no clear disposal plan for spent fuel rods. FEMA’s responsibility to work with local responders was already discussed at the last meeting during the Medical Countermeasures (MCM) discussion. MCM for radiological hazards is specific, delicate and frequently scarce.
 - The recommendation is moved, seconded and passed.
- Recommendation 2: *Make a provision to ensure state and local offsite response organizations are in agreement to any NRC granted exemptions that the licensee receives in relief of emergency preparedness requirements set in 10 CFR 50 47 and 10 CFR 50 (Appendix E).*
 - The recommendation is moved, seconded and passed.
- Recommendation 3: *FEMA, in collaboration with state and local offsite response organizations, the NRC, and licensees should develop emergency preparedness standards for a nuclear power plant that is decommissioned or decommissioning.*
 - Members of the NAC asked for clarification on FEMA’s area of responsibility on this recommendation. The subcommittee cited FEMA’s existing operational oversight as precedent for continued influence. While the risk is reduced during decommissioning, an “Alert” status from the plant requires off-site EMS activation. The NAC supports the recommendation as long as it emphasizes FEMA’s jurisdiction.
 - The recommendation is moved, seconded and passed.

Improved training and integration of AFN considerations

- Recommendation 4: *FEMA should create and fund support a Center for Excellence (CoE) type training program for emergency management personnel. . . .*
 - While progress has been made in this area, further work must be done. The “baked-in” approach has only gotten us so far. FEMA should support a CoE or similar training program to provide properly vetted and specialized training in addressing those with disabilities and AFNs. The AFN population includes children, seniors and anyone who is unable to self-evacuate. The subcommittee also recognizes that there is no money for standing up a CoE but believes the CoE does not need to be solely FEMA-funded. Other training programs should still review their courses for AFN consideration inclusion, but enough of the needed works requires technical expertise for the AFN CoE to stand alone. Additionally, available training courses through EMI take three years to amend and update—the CoE could provide a more-flexible environment for presenting the latest information and research. It will also help FEMA to address whole community gaps identified in a GAO report. The most important reason to provide more training is that people want to comply but do not know how.
 - The recommendation is amended, seconded and passed.
- Recommendation 5: *FEMA should more fully integrate content related to persons with disabilities, access and functional needs and children into all existing and future emergency management trainings.*
 - Some members were worried that FEMA’s response will be summarized as “We are.” The subcommittee feels that the NAC’s continuing identification of AFN integration as an issue is proof that there is still not enough work or resources devoted to full integration of the whole community. Mr. Hansen cited tribal integration actions at FEMA and throughout the government as an example, explaining that additional verbiage is an inadequate solution. Steps to include tribal government essentially consist of adding “T for Tribal” to the SLTT acronym.
 - The recommendation is moved, seconded and passed.

- Recommendation 6: *FEMA should partner with known organizations such as IAEM or NVOADs to establish rigorous criteria for identifying and evaluating course developers, trainers and reviewers to ensure they are truly subject matter experts (including relevant specialized experience).*
 - The recommendation is moved, seconded and passed.

The DFO recommended including references to the NAC's earlier recommendations regarding integration of disabilities and AFN in the recommendations letter. Also, as some of the concerns are covered through the ADA and therefore enforced by DOJ, it might be helpful to include a note that the NAC would like FEMA to act without relying on DOJ.

Federal Insurance and Mitigation, Chair Lee Feldman presenting

Public Assistance Deductible

Mr. Feldman first thanked Mr. Hagmaier for his presentations and discussions regarding the Public Assistance deductible concept. The following recommendations stem from the subcommittee's feeling that the concept does not actually incentivize mitigation or preparation. Rather than reducing disaster costs, the deductible concept will simply shift the financial burden from the federal government to the state and local level, who may not be adequately equipped to respond. The subcommittee does agree with FEMA that disaster costs need to be reduced and managed.

- Recommendation 1: *FEMA should not adopt a disaster deductible proposal, unless it actually reduces the cost of disasters to the Whole Community.*
 - Much of the NAC supported this recommendation. Some members, including Mr. Stern, also believe that requiring states to monitor local investments to apply towards credits against the deductible will create an undue bureaucratic burden on the state.
 - The recommendation is moved, seconded and passed.
- Recommendation 2: *In the alternative to Recommendation 1, the disaster deductible proposal should include local mitigation investments included within local hazard mitigation plans toward that deductible.*
 - This recommendation accepts that FEMA is unlikely to discard the deductible concept and offers an alternative to the previous recommendation. Instead of starting over with a new policy strategy, the subcommittee urges FEMA to incorporate an aggregate Community Rating System (CRS) score for credit. This assumes that the CRS encourages increased and improved mitigation. Mr. Hagmaier reminded the subcommittee that the proposal does discuss a CRS credit. The subcommittee indicated it does not support the population-based weighting strategy proposed. The subcommittee included this alternative/supplemental recommendation in case the deductible is approved and enacted before the November NAC meeting, the Council's next opportunity to offer formal recommendations.
 - Mr. Fenton encouraged the NAC to propose alternatives or improvements to the deductible. Congress is also interested in the NAC's thoughts and alternatives and has included a Disaster Costs study in proposed legislation.
 - The members expressed mixed support for the recommendation. Mr. Stern voiced concern that the recommendation could be the basis for another unfunded mandate. Due to the need for more discussion and research, the NAC did not vote, and tabled the recommendation.

The FI&M subcommittee proposes the following for its work until the November meeting:

- Comment on NFIP Reauthorization legislation
- Affordability strategies for increasing flood insurance enrollment
- Continued follow-up on the CRS Recommendations from May 2016
- Continued follow-up on the insurance adjustor training recommendations from September 2016

Preparedness and Protection Subcommittee, Chair Samantha Phillips presenting

The P&P Subcommittee chose to address improvements to FEMA's technology, focusing primarily on improved format and socialization. Mr. Featherstone praised the subcommittee's work.

Data sharing formats

- Recommendation 1: *FEMA should engage private sector partners, including the Tech Sector Collaboration Program, to review and ensure FEMA's data sharing formats are effective and accessible.*
 - The recommendation is moved, seconded and passed with no further discussion.

Technology Readiness Self-Assessment

- Recommendation 2: *FEMA should develop a technology readiness self-assessment document for SLTT and private partners with the goal of accomplishing the following. FEMA is not expected to receive, manage, or act upon the results of the self-assessments. This is meant to serve as a stand-alone resource for partners. . . .*
 - While Mr. Fenton cautioned that FEMA would have to balance their response against recent EOs addressing cyber security and capability, the NAC generally supported the recommendation. One member asked why FEMA was not expected to collect results from programs that used the tool. Mr. Featherstone cited precedent for one-way assessment tools in the success and usefulness of the Logistics Capability Assessment Test (LCAT). The tool is meant to help SLTT partners assess their readiness and suggest steps to improve on their capabilities independently. Members of the NAC suggested including guidance on how often FEMA should revise and update the assessment in order to stay current with new technology.
 - The recommendation is moved, seconded and passed.

Regional Technology Officers

- Recommendation 3: *FEMA should develop specialized staff support to work directly with SLTT partners on enhancing technology-related understanding, build capabilities and integrate regional solutions. . .*
 - Ms. Phillips explained that the goal of this recommendation is to promote standardization within the Regions and across the country. The NAC is not recommending that FEMA create a new position, like they did when recommending Regional ODIC officers. The subcommittee wants to see improved integration and use of recent technology capabilities like social media and cell phones.
 - The recommendation is moved, seconded and passed.

Technology Training

- Recommendation 4: *FEMA should expand, and offer new, technology-focused ICS courses and awareness training to include a broader view of communications and disaster technology solutions. This training should focus on how technology can be further integrated into the National Incident Management System.*
 - One roadblock will be that FEMA can't support specific brands or companies, but the subcommittee stressed that private industry is eager to support humanitarian missions. The subcommittee would also like to see broader training. FEMA's communications technology currently focuses on radios and does not address recent capabilities.
 - The recommendation is moved, seconded and passed.
- Recommendation 5: *FEMA should consolidate technology-related topics and available resources on the fema.gov website so issues fall under one umbrella. This consolidation would create a landing page/awareness portal. . . Recommendation 5.1 – Overhaul whole website.*
 - This recommendation is coupled with a recommendation to do a complete overhaul of the FEMA website. The subcommittee is pleased with the resources FEMA has available or could reference, but would like these resources to be upfront and more easily or intuitively accessible.
 - The recommendations are moved, seconded and passed.

The P&P subcommittee proposes the following for its work until the November meeting:

- Review and continue work on the September 2016 MCM recommendations
- Continue discussion of the whole community concept with PNP

Geospatial Information Systems ad hoc Subcommittee, Chair Mike Sprayberry presenting

- Recommendation 1: *FEMA should identify critical subsets of GIS data and schema, and establish minimum attributes that should be maintained by SLTT EM programs in order to better facilitate information sharing with FEMA, and with other SLTT programs, to ensure accessibility during events. This may include studying existing lists, such as those in the GEOCONOPS and would not exclude other lists.*
- Recommendation 2: *FEMA should develop a protocol for sharing GIS data between EM programs at all levels of government (intra and inter-agency) before, during, and after incidents.*
- Recommendation #3: *FEMA should create an online portal or landing page that directs users to all existing FEMA GIS data, resources, and apps.*
- Recommendation 4: *FEMA should promote and raise awareness of the geospatial tools, apps and resources in its inventory. To do this, FEMA should develop a resource which will provide data (examples) and return on investment which demonstrates the value and importance GIS for emergency managers.*
- Recommendation 5: *FEMA EMI geospatial courses should be refreshed to address the current capabilities of geospatial technology. A course should be developed, geared towards non-technical practitioners, that speaks to the value and purpose of GIS to include a high level overview of how GIS is integrated into disaster operations. Another course, directed at GIS practitioners, should provide technical guidance on how to effectively integrate GIS into all phases of the emergency management cycle. Finally, use of GIS should be integrated into other courses (i.e. Operations, Planning, etc.) in order to institutionalize the use of GIS.*

The recommendations were considered as a group. The subcommittee recognized significant overlap, but no redundancy, of their recommendations with some of P&P's technology recommendations. All five recommendations were moved, seconded and passed.

Normally, the ad hoc subcommittees report and then conclude their work. Mr. Sprayberry believes there is still work that could be done to benefit FEMA and agreed that the members should wait for FEMA's responses to decide if further work is required. Further work may include reevaluating the recommendations if FEMA does not support them.

CONCLUSION

Deana Platt, FEMA NAC DFO, indicated changes to the order of the agenda for May 25th, and adjourned the NAC meeting at 5:00 pm Eastern.

Introduction—Thursday, May 25, 2017

Deana Platt, FEMA NAC DFO, called the public session to order at 8:30 am Eastern in the Ambassador Room of The Barrymore Hotel. She presented the meeting agenda, indicated safety protocol in the event of an emergency, pointed out flipcharts available for member topic development, and welcomed American Red Cross Vice President for Disaster Operations and Logistics and former FEMA employee Brad Kieserman, and Acting Director of the National Integration Center (NIC) Dan Alexander.

Chair Jim Featherstone and Vice Chair Teresa Scott welcomed the NAC and thanked the members for their thoughtful conversation yesterday with Acting Administrator Fenton and for the subcommittee report-outs. Mr. Featherstone sent a special thank you to Lee Feldman, Teresa Scott and Phil Zarlengo who are attending their final NAC meeting.

BRAD KIESERMAN, EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT...WHAT'S NEXT?

Mr. Kieserman thanked the NAC for inviting him to give his thoughts on the future of emergency management. He emphasized that his remarks are his own, and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the American Red Cross, his employer. He also gave his support for the NAC's work supporting FEMA's Administrator.

While some argue that we can't predict risk, it's all relative. We do predict risk—the weather report is ultimately a prediction of future risk. Compared to thirty years ago, our predictive powers are incredible, and I expect to see even more advances in another thirty years. While our abilities to predict the future are advancing, the field of emergency management needs to develop in kind. Today's talk will revolve around what I believe are three key concepts shaping the future of emergency management: Aging, Asymmetry, and Aggressiveness.

Presentation

Aging

This concept applies to emergency management in multiple arenas. First, America's population is aging. Current estimates say in the next 20 years that 20% of America's population will be over 65 years of age; this will be up from 13% today. Age plays a critical role in emergency management strategies and requirements. Medication needs are higher. The elderly have reduced independent mobility and have a high need for a variety of medical interventions for conditions like diabetes and high blood pressure. This obviously affects mass care planning but is also likely to increase the fatality count during a disaster.

At the same time, America's infrastructure is aging and a great deal of it is nearing the end of its life. Most of today's infrastructure was built in between the 1940s and 1960s, engineered to last 50 to 100 years. The average age of America's dams is 56 years old, and is therefore a major source of concern for communities across the country. Twenty percent of these protect high risk areas; 15% of these dams are themselves at high risk. Across America, 30,000 levees protect \$1.3 trillion in infrastructure.

Risk itself also ages. Statistically, the longer we go without a disaster, the higher its likelihood of happening now. Since we can't change that America's population is aging, we need to address our aging infrastructure.

Asymmetry

The amount of time or cost it takes to effect a disaster is frequently negligible compared to the cost of responding. 9/11 cost al-Qaida less than \$500,000 and best estimates put resulting costs over \$3.3 trillion. Most active shooter incidents last 5-12 minutes, but have life-changing effects felt for years after the incident. America's aging infrastructure carries its own asymmetry: refer to my earlier example involving America's levees.

Over 50% of America's population is living paycheck to paycheck, so as little as \$500 in disaster costs can push individual households into poverty.

Some asymmetry is good. Technology advances, particularly in communication, have significantly reduced fatalities during disasters. The United States is second in the world for frequency and impact of natural disasters, and while costs have risen resulting fatalities are significantly reduced.

Aggressiveness

Popular opinion believes that catastrophic emergencies like 9/11 were unpredictable. Given what we know now, this is not true. Still, it may be an example of a “black swan,” an event that is unexpected, infrequent, impactful and not predictable until after the fact.

Disasters act aggressively, leaving long-term impacts. Emergency management needs to be handled just as aggressively. Technology and social media provide effective and powerful tools to quickly, accurately and efficiently collect and disburse information to large populations.

As powerful as these and other tools are, they are also subject to aggressive attack. Cyber security is a major consideration as our use of and reliance on technology increases. Even food distribution can suffer from a cyber-attack, leaving the grocery shelves empty and creating another situation for emergency managers to address. Emergency management should consider opportunities to co-develop humanitarian technologies. Artificial Intelligence (AI) and the Internet of Things are the wave of the future and are full of both vulnerabilities and potential benefits.

The most important thing to consider when it comes to aggressiveness is our leadership: what we really need is a paradigm thought shift from passively responding to aggressively planning for and mitigating against disasters. Rather than managing consequences, we need to think and work in a way that brings order to the chaos. We need to focus more on preparing for what may come than responding to what is happening.

Discussion

Do emergency management professionals have the leadership capacity to plan for the future?

Infrastructure needs to be addressed, especially in the rural communities that don't have the resources to lead large-scale projects. We also need to recognize the different requirements for rural and urban communities when it comes to evacuations and shelter. Emergency management cannot plan independently of engineers and other professionals who may not be directly connected to the emergency management field.

All of the country needs to realize that infrastructure is a major concern and will require large investment and subject matter expertise. The non-profit world is engaged, but to fully address the big picture we need the experts, the politically savvy, the economists, and others. We need to engage our field experts as well as our visionary leaders.

How do we engage the private sector?

The private sector engages in issues in which they have a stake, mostly meaning where they can make a profit or avoid a loss. Privatizing assets will require showing an incentive to take on the action. One place for private partnership is something like asking Amazon to help with predictive analytics and distribution planning to anticipate what and how much will be needed where and how to get it there. Another industry to engage is social media. Instead of complaining about it, accept its presence and work to leverage it as a tool.

How should we leverage data and predictive analytics?

First, we have the data we need. We need to learn to approach the analysis differently because it is more than Excel. Then we need to use this to build realistic expectations. Some lifestyles are simply unsustainable—re-building in known flood areas without raising the building codes will lead to (another) re-building project. We also need to recognize that patterns are changing. Twenty years ago, Florida was at the front of disasters. Today, the Carolinas are having more disasters.

We also need to recognize the role that politics plays in grants and disaster declarations. Communities with local representation on FEMA oversight committees receive 20% more funding and assistance. As the Red Cross defines the term, the federal government responds to only about 2% of emergencies.

Most disasters happen at the local level, which means that local leaders and community members need to step up and address pending risk. The federal government needs to focus on the larger projects. The local level can support the low-risk/low-consequence projects, like storm windows.

At the county level, use data to prepare instead of to respond. Know your population and its needs ahead of time. Recognize that addressing populations with disabilities needs to be a constant theme in all planning and response activity. Be ready to serve your aging population by stocking up on appropriate MCM. Understand that disasters are eventualities and that response is much more effective if presaged with proper planning. The difference between catastrophes and emergencies is planning.

How can FEMA and the government in general build public trust?

Recognize that loss will happen, and that this is a reality of the job. Choose to be part of the change, rather than the failure. Accept that at some point you will fail, meaning that you will not meet the public's expectations, and choose your battles accordingly.

We should all identify a few major issues to address and attack aggressively. Rely on the truth, because transparency is what will build public trust. Finally, remember that you are only as good as your next response.

DAN ALEXANDER, ACTING DIRECTOR, NATIONAL INTEGRATION CENTER

Presentation

NIMS Refresh

The NIMS document is ready for publication, following two years of review and revision. One area we fell short in was collaboration with the NAC, and part of my mission while serving as Acting Director of the NIC is to make sure that this doesn't happen again.

While most of the document works well, we wanted to focus on scalability. Not all functions will be needed in every response. We worked closely with the law enforcement (LE) community to update guidance on the Intelligence and Investigations (I&I) section. While not every disaster will need this function, LE strongly advised that it still be included as a resource. Now, an incident commander has discretion on whether or not to include an I&I section.

Most of the NIMS doctrine is structured this way—rather than creating a prescriptive checklist, there is some flexibility to support adaptation to each unique situation. We plan to release the refresh in conjunction with webinars, teleconferences and other presentation methods, pending the Acting Administrator’s signature.

National Qualification System (NQS)

The NAC submitted several recommendations on the issue of credentials offered through the NQS. FEMA is working to model the NQS on similar programs sponsored by some of its partners. We hope to see the NQS used as a tool to build workforce capacity by creating a larger community of professionals available to provide mutual aid assistance. NQS-certified workers would have verified capability. So far, we have developed 44 positions which are ready for review.

The Chair supports this program, but reminded FEMA not to forget about or discount just-in-time training. Not everyone is seeking a certification—capable volunteers and short-term staff will still need support. Ms. Kailes seconded, explaining that who we train today may not be available tomorrow. The NQS is valuable, but just-in-time training is also important during a response.

Discussion

How do you keep training current? We know that EMI courses take three years to refresh.

FEMA brought on contractors to help EMI update all of its NIMS-related courses and course content for release in conjunction with the NIMS refresh release. FEMA is also working to revise the meaning of ‘NIMS compliance’ as it seems to be too prescriptive and generally has a negative connotation.

Mr. Feldman suggested reviewing the FEMA Qualifications System for lessons learned, while remembering that what works at the federal level may not best serve rural response staff.

How is the NIMS actually used?

We are looking into that to help guide the next refresh. This refresh targeted scalability to make the overall structure more approachable and usable. Mr. Stern recommended adding guidance to address biohazards, like the Ebola medical emergency described by Dr. McKinney.

FEMA also added measurable tasks, in addition to the scalability options, to improve the guidance. This should help smaller communities in their application of the NIMS doctrine. FEMA looks forward to working closely with the NAC on the next refresh, especially when looking at compliance requirements and optimizing scalability guidance.

Mr. Stern also suggested that training be re-evaluated. The Center Management System (CMS) itself functions well; it runs into problems more often because of leadership failures. Consider looking for the source of the failure: is there too much or not enough training? Is the training adequate and relevant and usable? Should training be different? We heard earlier how one problem in the emergency management community in general is that leaders are taught what to do, but are not always empowered to act outside of policy and doctrine. Leaders are developed, not taught, so there need to be more opportunities for today’s leaders to work with the next generation.

Ms. Phillips indicated that the NIMS structure worked well during some recent larger public events in Philadelphia. Her office was able to use the guidance to prepare for the Democrat National Convention and the

Pope's official visit. FEMA continues to work on making the NIMS adaptable to a variety of management scenarios.

Are the NIMS and the NQS at odds?

While the NIMS refresh targeted scalability and guidance over prescription, and the NQS is very detailed and structured, the two are not at odds. The primary function of the NQS is to build a recognized, qualified and trusted workforce that strengthens mutual aid resources. The NIMS can be scaled to the event, helping the Incident Commander (IC) to identify which staff are needed to support his operations. Then the IC can identify recognized practitioners through NQS credentials to support his available staff.

With technology constantly developing, is there a mission space for the NIC to have a constant running aggregation of different technologies and what they are trying to solve?

This could definitely be a part of our mission space. The NIC has not historically been a good "one-stop shop" for best practices or lessons learned, but providing aggregated resources could be useful.

POTENTIAL TOPICS/NEXT STEPS

Subcommittee structure

In order to escape the need to stay focused on specific mission areas in each subcommittee, we should consider a new format to collaborate and address high-level issues, especially the disaster deductible and housing. Mr. Cooke mentioned the Department of the Interior National Geospatial Advisory Council which receives topics at the end of each year from the Agency and local level, and then creates subcommittees for the next year based on those topics. The Chair defended the current structure, as the FEMA NAC did have a similar structure that resulted in an unwieldy number of ad hoc subcommittees. Mr. Feldman recommended holding off on any reorganization until the new Administrator is appointed.

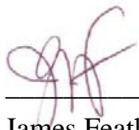
Disaster costs

Rising costs, especially in post-disaster housing, are a big topic across the country. Both subjects were mentioned several times during the meeting and may be tasked to the NAC through pending legislation. Mr. Henry noted his work on a similar project at the local level ten years ago. Mr. Feldman supports looking at these issues as the Congressional request and demonstrated public need would validate the NAC's work in this area.

CONCLUSION

Deana Platt, FEMA NAC DFO, adjourned the NAC meeting at 12:45 pm Eastern.

I hereby certify that to the best of my knowledge, the foregoing summary of the FEMA National Advisory Council meeting from May 23-25, 2017, is accurate and complete.



James Featherstone

Chair

FEMA National Advisory Council