

LEYDEN EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES

Thursday March 14, 2024

6 pm

7 Brattleboro Rd.

Leyden, MA 01301

Approved 4-11-24

Present members: Sara Seinberg, Liz Kidder, Dave Pomerantz,

Department Representatives: John Richardson, Beth Kuzdeba

Other attendees: Janell Howard, Ken Medvetz, Erica Jensen, Devorah Vester

Meeting called to order at 6:02 pm by Dave Pomerantz

Minutes: David moved and Sara seconded to approve 3-1-24 minutes, unanimously approved.

Next steps and plans for the year

David is stepping down after tonight's meeting for health reasons. He will still be in an advisory position to the LEMC and has talked to Glenn to see what being advisory will look like.

The CEMP will be rolled out in May, the momentum for emergency management for the town is going well and finding someone to fill the Co-EMD position will help to keep the momentum going.

John said he is available to help out with anything EM as well, he has experience and enjoys doing emergency management. He's on the EM committee for Bernardston. It would be nice to keep the momentum up while things are moving forward.

ACTION: Erica will check with Donna to see if there are any legalities involved with John doing Co-EMD

Plan for Spring Town Hall on CEMP

CEMP will feature food to help bring people together. Then the Emergency Management will be presented. The goal of CEMP is to get as many people involved in emergency preparedness in the town as possible so that residents can be a help and support to one another. This will be similar to ready fest except there will not be booths. We will put the map up and introduce the neighborhood concept so that LEMC can have discussions with the residents. Each of the different departments will present their part of the plan. It will not be a super long event but will cover the different departments. Sunday evenings seem to be the best time for larger attendance of residents. May 5th will be CEMP at 5pm at town hall. The plan is general enough that whatever emergencies happen Leyden residents will have an overall process for an emergency, especially with regards to the neighborhood concept of neighbors helping neighbors.

ACTION: Janell look through minutes to find if a date was set.

ACTION: Janell will add to next meeting's agenda to review CEMP.

Updates from department heads

Police-

- Bernardston Police have been doing lots of training. Leyden has been invited to trainings as well, the focus has been on medical responses.
- The staffing of the police department is still okay, but Bernardston is trying to hire an additional officer.
- There have been rumors of town incidents but nothing official has come forward to the police. So far this has been a good solid spring with not much happening. The roads are in good condition.
- At the last Bernardston/Leyden meeting, the Bernardston SB raised the salary for an officer who was going to quit for a better paying job and the SB gave him a raise so the officer would stay. It is nice to see they were willing to step up and pay a good officer more when it is needed to keep competitive with other police departments.

Fire-

- The sealed bid process failed for a bid for a mini-pumper truck. The SB, through legal counsel, declared a state of emergency. The fire department can now go forward and purchase a mini-pumper without going through the procurement process. The Fire Department will work on finding a mini-pumper and a brush truck. They might switch the order of purchases if the fiscal year ends and they haven't purchased a mini-pumper.
- The Fire Department has training this weekend and then four firefighters are going to Basic 6 in April.
- The purchasing of PPE equipment for all firefighters is continuing.
- The Fire Department is actively looking for EMS Coordinator
- The Fire station is in the process of getting insulation in ceiling this week and next week.
- Carey, Tom, Liz, and Janell met with Matt at community 911 to help us connect with medical personal and the pharmacy. He also helped define what the EMS coordinator responsibilities will be and what the administrative assistant responsibilities are.

The Fire Department is doing really well, they have excellent leadership and the firefighters are very engaged.

Emergency Management-

The town had no incidents to initiate a warming center this winter. There were no significant power outages for days like last year. This was a very mellow winter. After the CEMP roll out in May the SB will be reviewing the EM plan and then it will go to Donna.

Public Comments and other business

Devorah expressed a thank you for the draft EM Handling Personal Information Policy. She had some concerns about some of the information in the policy that she wanted clarification on. See attached addendum

ACTION: Devorah is going to send public comments to Janell and Janell will email them to Erica.

Public comments are welcome and can be used to improve the policy. This is the first draft of policy with SB and it's an ongoing process and then Donna will look at it as well.

David reached out to MEMA and then with the help of Erica they drafted a policy. A number of towns don't really have policies. Some do but nothing too intense, so far there have been no privacy issues in other towns, people fill it out voluntarily to help others out and haven't had an issue.

The audience was thanked for their comments.

Possible EM Events in the future-

Bernarston does an emergency preparedness event educating residents on rain barrels for rain water. The committee wants John to look into having an event like that in Leyden

ACTION: John will send email to Janell about rain barrel event and Janell will send it out to the LEMC.

Next Meeting April 11, 2024 at 6pm.

ACTION: Janell will email out for items for the agenda 1 ½ weeks before next meeting

Motion: Liz moved and Sara seconded to adjourn meeting at 7:06 pm

Respectfully submitted by,

Janell Howard

Administrative Assistant

Addendum

Comments by Devorah Vester, Don Sadowsky, 24 Keets Brook Road, Leyden, in Red

Emergency Management – Handling Residents Personal Information

- Document needs title, who prepared/approved it, and dates
- Overuse of acronyms (not necessary to repeat acronyms or use them if no multiple references in doc)

Purpose.

The Leyden Emergency Management policy regarding the handling of Personal Information (PI) seeks to encourage transparency while safeguarding the rights of individuals and complying with legal requirements for handling and storing personal information (PI).

- PHI (Protected health information) not PI
- PHI - Undefined
- Stated purpose but what follows does not really explain how PHI is safeguarded or how the town is complying with fed, state and local laws to protect PHI.
- No explanation re which legal requirements apply. They should be identified. Otherwise, stated purpose “to encourage transparency” not promoted.
- Transparency by itself is not part of a privacy policy unless you mean transparency in how, e.g., records are treated. It’s not clear from this language what “transparency” refers to.

Storage of Personal Information (PI). PHI

All hard copies of emergency management health-related responses will be kept in the locked Emergency Management office in the Town Office. Within the EMD office, the paperwork will be kept in a locked filing cabinet. The paperwork will be moved to a locked fire-proof safe in 2024 as the EMD plans to acquire one.

- No explanation re who will have access or levels of access to locked office or filing cabinet
- No explanation re who will move the PHI to a fireproof safe
- No explanation re who will have access to PHI paperwork
- No explanation re if or how neighborhood captains will have access to PHI

Access.

The Emergency Management Director (EMD), the Public Information Officer (PIO), the Deputy Emergency Management Director (D-EMD), and Administrative Assistant will be able to intake have access to these materials, but will only access them in case of emergency.

- No explanation that list of folks with access is exhaustive. If plan is to provide neighborhood captains with PHI to assist residents during an emergency, the policy needs to be clear that 3rd parties will also have access to PHI. Even if neighborhood captains never have access to the actual paper documents, somehow someone has to relay this info to them in order for them to act on it. The document fails to address how this is supposed to occur in an emergency situation.

If, for example, PHI is made accessible electronically, there is a host of security-related issues the document needs to address.

- Contrary to what the above paragraph states, it is not true that the named persons will have access to PHI only during an emergency. For example, such persons (or unidentified 3rd parties) will be initially handling PHI and transferring it to a fireproof safe. In addition, there may be some kind of digital transmission of data prior to an actual emergency (see above).
- No identification of procedures which named persons will follow when they do get access to PHI
- No mention of 3rd parties to whom EM core folks can give information or legal requirements 3rd parties must comply with - training?
- No explanation of how those 3rd parties who have access to PHI are made aware of their obligations to protect the information. Q: Will they sign an agreement that spells out their obligations to protect the information? Training?
- No explanation of record keeping systems re persons who have obtained access to PHI and under what circumstances.

Computer-Aided Dispatch System (CAD System).

All information supplied by residents and entered into the CAD system is under the purview of the Bernardston Police Department. All members of the Bernardston Police department have been trained in HIPPA requirements as they pertain to CAD.

Information volunteered by residents on Emergency Management surveys can be used to make digital and hard copy files for quick reference in case of emergency, and for the purpose of emergency preparedness drills in Leyden under the authority of the EMD.

- If re PHI, does not address digital safety measures
- If re PHI, does not address who is participating in emergency preparedness drills (which implicates access)
- If re PHI, not clear why PHI needed for emergency preparedness drills
- If re PHI, “information volunteered” by residents implies some sort of informed consent. There can be no informed consent absent full disclosure of all relevant information that may impact a person’s consent. This is particularly true where you may be dealing with a population that is unknowledgeable about rights.