

MEMORANDUM

To: Traffic Incident Management Group and Interested Parties

From: Josh Mack, Transportation Planner

Date: October 16, 2007

RE: Meeting Notes from Traffic Incident Management Group on September 21, 2007

Those in attendance included: Dan Blanchette, Town of Eliot; Bob Bohlman, York County Emergency Management Agency; Guy Cassavant, Biddeford Public Works; Lt. Gerald Congdon, Wells Police; Pete Coughlin, MaineDOT; Kathy DeRoches, New Hampshire Technology Transfer Center; Robert Gardner, Maine Emergency Management Agency; Pam L'Heureux, York County EMA/Communications; Josh Mack, Southern Maine Regional Planning Commission (SMRPC); Lieutenant Arthur Murdock, Maine State Police; Larry Owen, Buxton Public Works; Tom Reinauer, SMRPC; Bill Shapleigh, Eliot Highway Department; Lt. Charlie Szienewski, York Police. The meeting was held at the Wells Activity Center.

This special meeting was called to learn about New Hampshire's Public Works Mutual Aid Program and to discuss opportunities for enhancing mutual aid in Maine. The meeting focused on the following:

- New Hampshire Public Works Mutual Aid Program
- York County Mutual Aid Program
- Prospects for a Statewide Mutual Aid Program in Maine

New Hampshire Public Works Mutual Aid Program

The meeting began with Kathy DeRoches, Director of the New Hampshire Program out of the University of New Hampshire Technology Transfer Center. Kathy DeRoches gave a presentation on the New Hampshire Public Works Mutual Aid Program in New Hampshire and showed a short promotional film about the program. The program was tested recently with the Mother's Day Storm of 2006 and the Patriot's Day Storm of 2007, which caused major flooding and washouts. Major talking points from the presentation and film are shown below:

- Very few states have public works mutual aid programs. Other states include Utah and Connecticut.
- New Hampshire's program includes 93 communities—The 93 communities offer over 700 trucks, 50 graders, 1,100 people, building inspectors from across the state.
- Benefits include:
 - Reducing community vulnerability
 - Program enables prompt & effective response
 - Provides for rapid and orderly rehabilitation of infrastructure
 - Under declared disasters, facilitates reimbursement from FEMA
 - Covers certain liability issues and expenses

- Statewide participation is important because often neighboring communities are experiencing the same emergencies and are using their own equipment or competing for neighboring equipment.
- NH Public Works Mutual Aid Program maintains current database of equipment and personnel.
- Communities can join the program during an emergency—membership benefits are not denied to communities in the event of an emergency.
- Donor community can bill community for costs including food, lodging, fuel, etc.
- Program in New Hampshire has focused on natural disaster type emergencies (flooding, ice storms, hurricanes, etc) and may have some application for Traffic Incident Management.
- One issue experienced by New Hampshire is that some towns don't feel like they have anything to offer to the larger towns. This is not necessarily true. Town clerks and other administrative staff can be invaluable in dealing with the paperwork required to document services, keep track of hours and costs of people providing mutual aid services.
- NH DOT does not participate in the program, but they have board membership on the Public Works Mutual Aid Program

York County Mutual Aid Program

The next focus of the meeting was on York County Mutual Aid. Bob Bohlman, EMA Director for York County, gave a brief description of a program York County started based on the New Hampshire Public Works Mutual Aid program. Bob said he currently has between 8-10 communities involved in a York program, but it has not been utilized to date. The program was initiated a few years ago and some of the communities that joined may have forgotten that it is available to them. The program is administered and managed out of the York County Emergency Management Agency office. Bob would like to see the program expand beyond public works personnel to other municipal employees that might benefit from mutual aid including fire and rescue, police, etc.

There are several examples of other mutual aid agreements that neighboring towns have with each other in York County. Some of these agreements are formal—some informal. For those that are informal, the town may be risking future liability.

Prospects for a Statewide Mutual Aid Program in Maine

Bob Gardner, Technological Hazards Coordinator from the Maine Emergency Management Association, passed around a draft Maine “Statewide Mutual Aid for Emergency Management Model Authorizing Resolution” to the group. Bob hopes that a statewide program can be initiated like the one in New Hampshire, but would like mutual aid agreements beyond public works departments. MEMA attempted to start a statewide mutual aid program several years ago, but was not able to implement the program. Bob asked the group to reexamine the draft document and discuss the viability of reviving the initiative.

Pete Coughlin explained that he would be willing to manage and house a statewide program in Maine. His Local Roads Center is the equivalent of the center run by Kathy DeRoches in New Hampshire.

Tom Reinauer offered SMRPC's assistance to York County and Maine in taking the mutual aid idea up the next level. SMRPC could help in outreach to communities and gathering inventory.

Josh Mack noted that there may be two different statutes in Maine the group may want to look at as it goes forward with the mutual aid idea. New Hampshire's program is enabled by an interlocal cooperation statute 53A. Maine has a similar statute which can be found at 30A, Chapter 115. MEMA's proposal for mutual aid may be enabled by 37B. The links to these three statutes follow for the reader's reference:

Maine's interlocal cooperation statute:

<http://janus.state.me.us/legis/statutes/30-A/title30-Ach115sec0.html>

New Hampshire's interlocal cooperation statute:

<http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/rsa/html/III/53-A/53-A-mrg.htm>

Maine's Emergency Management statute:

<http://janus.state.me.us/legis/statutes/37-B/title37-Bsec784.html>

Several volunteers agreed to take a closer look at the MEMA proposed resolution. Volunteers included Tom Reinauer, Kathy DeRoches, Bob Bohlman, Pete Coughlin and Bob Gardner. It was noted that Maine Municipal Association should also be involved in the discussion. SMRPC will set up a future conference call or meeting to go over the mutual aid agreement proposal.

There was a brief conversation about future collaboration between New Hampshire and Maine on emergencies. Bob Bohlman and Kathy DeRoches noted that this is enabled for larger events through federal emergency management guidelines. Also, it is common for fire and rescue of neighboring communities across state lines to have their own mutual aid agreements.