

Cedar County Emergency Management Commission
1410 Cedar Street
Tipton, IA 52772
(563) 886-3355

Regular Quarterly Meeting:

Thursday, July 8, 2021, 7:00pm

The regular quarterly meeting of the Cedar County Emergency Management Commission was held on April 8, 2021. The meeting was held both in-person and by telephone conference with the call originating from the Cedar County EMA Administrative Offices at 1410 Cedar Street, Tipton, IA 52772. Attending by phone was John Hanna, West Branch Police Chief; Those attending in-person included: Warren Wethington, Cedar County Sheriff; Jon Bell, Cedar County Board of Supervisors; Jared Semsch, Durant Fire Chief; Lisa DuFour, Tipton Police Chief; Jill Cinkovich, Mayor of Lowden; Jacob Koch, Mechanicsville Fire Chief; Andrew Oberbreckling, Mayor of Mechanicsville; Joe Sparks, Mayor of Bennett; Kevin Rasdon, Bennett Fire/Ambulance; William Wagner, Mechanicsville Police Chief; Roger Laughlin, Mayor of West Branch; Kevin Stoolman, West Branch Fire Chief; Jodi Freet, Director Cedar County EMA/911; Kate Ehlers, Office Coordinator EMA/911; Sue Hall, Press.

Chair Bell called the meeting to order at 7:08pm.

Mayor Sparks/Bennett made a motion to approve the agenda, motion seconded by Mayor Laughlin/West Branch; Motion carried.

Mayor Sparks/Bennett made a motion to approve the minutes from the April 8, 2021 regular meeting, motion seconded by Mayor Laughlin/West Branch; Motion carried.

Mayor Sparks/Bennett made a motion to approve the minutes from the June 10, 2021 budget amendment public hearing meeting, motion seconded by Mayor Laughlin/West Branch; Motion carried.

Chair Bell yielded the floor to EMA/911 Director Freet for discussion of expenditures of the previous quarter. Atypical expenditures include payment towards the graphics to mark the EMA truck. EMA paid for one year maintenance contract with Mainstay, along with local match for equipment upgrades that took place within the EOC. In May, payment was made for the COVID19 response website that EMA runs for Cedar County. Payment for half of the river gauge located at Cedar Bluff was also paid in May. In June, atypical expenditures include payment for EMA training that took place in Des Moines for both Freet and Office Coordinator Ehlers. Expenses from that training were reimbursed by the State. The remaining funds from the Walmart Foundation Grant was used to purchase additional PPE. Grant funding received from the Community Foundation were used to purchase weather radios for an upcoming project that EMA will be launching within Cedar County. Atypical revenues include federal match for equipment upgrades within the EOC and the Community Foundation Grant funds. There were no questions regarding expenditures. Mayor Sparks/Bennett made a motion to approve the expenditures, motion seconded by Mayor Laughlin/West Branch; Motion carried.

Chair Bell yielded floor to Director Freet for discussion of old business:

- Freet shared that Emergency Responders and Fire Departments that are in need of Salamander cards can contact EMA to set up a day where we can come to your station. Reminded that Fire Chiefs will need to sign off on the information but that we can create and print those cards for responders to have.
- Freet announced that starting August 1, 2021 EMA will start the inventory process of the storm shelters located within communities. She will reach out to communities to schedule as needed.
- The Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan is finalized and copies are available for Mayors to take this evening. Our office will also be contacting the other participating agencies to schedule receipt of their copies of the plan. Freet expressed thanks to all those involved in the completion of this plan.
- Freet informed that EMA is still responding to the COVID-19 Pandemic.
 - PPE purchased was done so with grant funds, Freet did disclose that she did purchase \$200 over the initial \$2500 grant funding amount to ensure that all grant fund was used. These purchases will help in the event of additional infectious waves throughout this pandemic emergency.
 - PPE pickups and deliveries are still taking place within the EMA office. Currently it appears that the State is looking to close some of their stock warehouses. Thus, in turn doing a series of PPE pushes to various responding agencies. Freet estimated roughly two more PPE pushes from the state in order to clear additional warehouses.
 - The COVID-19 SitReps are still being sent out weekly. EMA Office Coordinator Kate Ehlers will be taking over the completion and distribution of those SitReps moving forward. Freet informed that currently not a lot of new information is being received from other departments but that we are still completing these since it is still declared an Active Presidential Emergency. Freet obtained information stating that the Governor of Iowa is planning on shutting down the state's Covid-19 website. This could be problematic since data reported on the website is used in the SitRep to provide situational awareness. Freet asked those in attendance that currently receive them how beneficial they are. Discussion was held and it was determined that the EMA office will still continue to compile information and create those SitReps but we will not send those out unless requested or if information becomes available that is pertinent to city leaders and department heads for situational awareness.
- Freet then informed of some building updates that included the removal of some berms and shrubs located in the middle grassy section of the parking lot. Graphics and signage in the hallway and on the door to the office were installed to provide clear and more professional direction to our office. We are also anticipating some electrical work to be scheduled and completed in the hallway restrooms. As stated in previous meetings only 50% of the lighting in the

women's restroom is functional and the men's restroom lighting is experiencing intermittent issues. This poses a safety issue and will be addressed soon.

- Freet then provided updates regarding grants:
 - The grant from the Community Foundation in the amount of \$2000 was used to purchase Weather radios. EMA did spend \$51.28 over the \$2000 amount to ensure all funds were used. In total 72 weather radios were purchased. Starting in August/September 2021 EMA will launch a program that when a Cedar County resident presents their completed Family Emergency Plan, they will be given a weather radio for free. Freet is hopeful that this program will increase our county's community preparedness efforts as a whole.
 - The \$2500 received from the Walmart Foundation was used in its entirety, this grant was used to purchase PPE in the form of: N95 masks, procedural masks and pediatric masks
- Freet stated that both the Siren Activation Policy and updates to Bylaws are currently pending and will be able to discuss more at the next scheduled meeting.

Chair Bell yielded the floor to Director Freet for discussion of new business:

- Freet presented ESF10- Hazardous Materials plan to be adopted by the Cedar County Emergency Management Commission. There were no questions presented. Mayor Sparks/Bennett made a motion to adopt ESF10-Hazardous Materials emergency plan, motion seconded by Mayor Laughlin/West Branch; Motion carried.
- Freet informed that the Lower Cedar River Watershed will be meeting on August 10, 2021 at 6:30pm. Currently meetings are held virtually and information can be sent out to those interested in attending those. Since the watershed does affect a majority of our county's communities, Freet wanted to extend that information and invitation to attend those meetings.
- Freet expressed desire for the county to be better informed and prepared for weather events. Freet has submitted an application for Cedar County to become a "Weather-Ready Nation. This is a program through the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to assist in promoting weather awareness and preparedness throughout the county.
- Freet is currently working with the National Weather Service (NWS) to renew our Storm Ready status. This renewal is done every 3 years. Freet also presented various city's their Storm Ready certificates from past years that were filed at the EMA building.
- Freet then discussed changes to the AlertIowa warning system. This system change took place on July 1, 2021, and affects all of the residents of Cedar County. This new system has proven to be difficult for a portion of Cedar County residents. To be able to sign up for this system, a smart phone or internet access is required, along with the creation of an individual profile for each registered user. Since a username, password and agreement to the site's terms of usage is required we are unable to sign up or add individuals to the Alert Iowa system without them being present. EMA is fielding numerous calls daily with questions and is utilizing appointments to assist Cedar County

residents in signing up. Freet stated that she and Kate Ehlers/Office Coordinator will be reaching out and scheduling days where we can visit and set up a small area within each town's City Hall or public community event and assist residents in signing up or to answer questions. Freet also informed that on August 11, 2021 there will be a nationwide IPAWS test going out.

- Freet informed that during the August 10th, 2020 Derecho it was made clear that Cedar County did not have the relationships in place with groups/organizations (Ex: Red Cross, Salvation Army, various church groups). Freet is proposing that the Cedar County Emergency Management Commission join the Iowa Disaster Human Resource Council (IDHRC), doing this will allow this commission and community to become more visible in the event of future disasters and thus allowing resources avenues to be more readily accessible to assist in the recovery process. Consensus was to join this council.
- Freet then went on to discuss the Generator and military SEE(Unimog) that are currently non-operational and are sitting parked in the parking lot. These two items were purchased in 2014 for \$2000 and are owned by the EMA Commission. Freet is requesting that these items be decommissioned and sold since they are not operational and have fallen into further disrepair. Freet reasoned that in the event of an emergency, EMA employees are not emergency responders, and would not be the personnel operating that type of machinery. Also, since the purchase in 2014, Freet stated she could only find documentation of it being used on 3 separate occasions, one of which was for a community social event. For these reasons Freet is suggesting that these items be offered to County jurisdictions first on an "as-is, where-is" condition. If no county jurisdictions are interested it can then be listed on Purple Wave for auction. EMA could then use the proceeds to fund things that could be of better use for the commission. Examples given include: portable emergency lights, enclosed trailer, smaller generators. Freet opened the floor for suggestions, questions and discussion. Discussion was held. Mayor Sparks/Bennett made a motion to approve both the Generator and SEE(Unimog) to be offered to any Cedar County Government Entity for use and then listed on Purple Wave if no jurisdictions are interested, motion seconded by Mayor Laughlin/West Branch; Motion carried.
- Freet then gave update to EMA's five-year plan, changes include working with NWS for the Storm Ready renewal, launch of weather radio program within the county. Freet also added that she is going to be researching grant funding options to be able to put a weather stations in all of the fire stations within Cedar County. In future years, plans include: establishing a CERT team. This can be integrated into city's as much or as little as each individual city prefers but is a good way to get volunteers involved in their community's emergency preparedness. Also requested is a HAZMAT Ops course for both this year and again in 2 years.
- Freet presented policies and updates to policies for annual adoption. Policies included: Security Information Policy, Website Links Policy, Mandatory Disclosure of Violations of Federal Law and the Annual Adoption of the Cedar County Employee Handbook and HIPPA Policies. No questions were presented. Mayor Sparks/Bennett made a motion to approve all policies presented, motion seconded by Mayor Laughlin/West Branch; Motion carried.

- Freet informed that we have completed one exercise requirement and are awaiting approval for other exercise from the state.
- Freet stated that training requirements for this FFY have also been completed.
- Freet also wanted to inform the EMA Commission of information that was requested by and presented to the Cedar County Board of Supervisors.
 - Freet was requested to present findings regarding the amount of overtime she and the Office Coordinator accrued throughout a period of time while responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. While Freet explained that she is a salaried employee and is exempt from overtime payment, she still documents and tracks all hours including overtime due to specific grant funding requirements. Based on that documentation from her start date as Director through 2020 Freet totaled 338 hours of overtime, which translates to 42 days. So far in the 2021 calendar year Freet has totaled 125 overtime hours to date. Kate Ehlers/EMA/911 Office Coordinator is an hourly employee and from her start date with EMA/911 through 2020, accrued approximately 75 hours of overtime, this time was accrued as Comp time since EMA does not budget for or pay out overtime. Freet felt it was her responsibility to share this information with the commission since it was requested and presented to the Cedar County Board of Supervisors. Freet then went on to give heartfelt thanks to all emergency response agencies for the additional hours and hard work they put forth during the early and unprecedented response to the COVID-19 Pandemic and August 10, 2020 Derecho.
 - Freet also shared that presently she is responsible for both the Emergency Management Director as well as the 911 Coordinator. She is current only receiving compensation for her role as EMA Director. She is bringing this to the attention of this board and is requesting further review and suggesting to combine the two positions and job descriptions and in turn adjusting compensation accordingly. Discussion was held, Chair Bell recommended talking to the County Human Resources employee to see what steps can and may be taken to review this.
- Freet then gave updates regarding personnel and other office updates. Freet announced that she will be out of the office for a period of time and gave a return date. Started that she will be available by phone in the event of an emergency and to still contact her first if needed. Office Coordinator, Kate Ehlers will be attending and be stationed at the Cedar County during normal business hours on July 14th-16, 2021 to spread both emergency preparedness messaging and to assist in AlertIowa signups. During that time the administrative office will be closed. Freet also announced that she was recently named the Audit Chair for IEMA (Iowa Emergency Management Commission).

Chair Bell then yielded the floor to Director Freet for discussion of training:

- Training newsletters have resumed and these resources will be available at Fire Association meetings.
- ICS100 and ICS700 are currently available to be taken online at any time. There is a possibility that an in-person session may become available in the fall of 2021.

- HazMat operations training was requested through the LEPC to take place this year, Freet is just waiting grant funding and approval for that to take place.
- Alert Iowa training is still available and information was sent to every city, however not all cities responded. If training is still needed or if anyone has questions regarding the system, please reach out to Director Freet or her assistant.
- Freet has recently resumed monthly EOC trainings with County Department heads, if any jurisdiction has city staff who would like to attend these please let EMA know so we can extend those invitations to your City Administrators and staff. Meetings typically last one hour and take place the first Thursday of every month at 8:00am located at the EMA Administrative offices, 1410 Cedar Street, Tipton, IA 52772.

No issues were brought forth from members of the public or from emergency responders.

Chair Bell announced that the next regular schedule meeting will take place on October 14, 2021 at 7:00pm at 1410 Cedar Street, Tipton, IA 52772.

Mayor Sparks/Bennett made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Motion seconded by Mayor Laughlin/West Branch; Motion Carried.

Meeting adjourned 7:54pm.