

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

Regular Quarterly Meeting:

Thursday, October 21, 2021, 7:00pm

The regular quarterly meeting of the Cedar County Emergency Management Commission was held on October 21, 2021. The meeting was held both in-person and by online forum with the call originating from the Cedar County EMA Administrative Offices at 1410 Cedar Street, Tipton, IA 52772. Those attending in-person included: Warren Wethington, Cedar County Sheriff; Kevin Knoche, Cedar County Sheriff's Office; Brenda Johnson, Cedar County Dispatch Manager; Heather Worrell, Cedar County Dispatch; Jill Cinkovich, Mayor of Lowden; Dustin McAtee, Mayor of Stanwood; Roger Laughlin, Mayor of West Branch; Jacob Koch, Mechanicsville Fire Chief; Kevin Stoolman, West Branch Fire Chief; Lisa DuFour, Tipton Police Chief; Jodi Freet, Director Cedar County EMA/911; Kate Ehlers, Office Coordinator EMA/911; Sue Hall, Press.

Vice Chair Wethington called the meeting to order at 7:42pm.

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

Mayor McAtee/Stanwood made a motion to approve the minutes from the July 8, 2021 meeting, motion seconded by Mayor Cinkovich/Lowden; Motion carried.

Vice Chair Wethington yielded the floor to EMA Director Freet for discussion of expenditures in the previous quarter. Atypical expenditures include payment in August for Director Freet to attend the FEMA Region 7 Higher Education Conference. This expense will be reimbursed by the HSEMD within the next two months. Additionally, purchases were made from Amazon for various office items such as a pop-up canopy, a folding table, acrylic displays for informational brochures and a stand for the office to indicate employee areas. In July, payment was made to Johnson County Hazmat for their annual retainer. Freet also informed that population figures changed due to the 2020 Census, and an additional payment was requested by Johnson County Hazmat for the difference in population figures. Freet advised that the annual transfer payment from 911 to EMA was received for Infrastructure/Data Management/MSAG. Mayor McAtee/ Stanwood made a motion to approve the expenditures, motion seconded by Mayor Cinkovich/Lowden; Motion carried.

Vice Chair Wethington yielded the floor to Director Freet for discussion of old business:

- Freet reminded that Salamander Credentialing for Emergency Responders is still available and to contact her to schedule a day for EMA to visit your agency.
- Inventory is still being listed on the agenda; Freet is hopeful to start that process in the near future.
- In EMA's continued response to the COVID-19 Pandemic, Freet shared that EMA has made several trips to the Cedar Rapids node for PPE. Also stated that since there is no longer a shortage within the PPE supply chain, EMA will be a last resort to obtain PPE. Agencies will need to exhaust all other avenues prior to requesting.
- Freet then gave updates regarding building updates:

- The lighting in the hallway restrooms is nearing end of life, we are currently working with Roth Electric to replace lighting fixtures.
- Unity Point has communicated with us that they are able to move forward with the parking lot project. This project may take place Spring 2022 and is currently in the process of being rebid, since it is in worse shape than when the original bid was presented.
- The vanities in the hallway restrooms are showing extensive wear and age. Freet recommends we be proactive and look into replacing those sooner rather than waiting until they fail. She also suggested updating the restroom faucets to a touchless option.
- Freet shared information regarding grants the EMA has applied for:
 - Freet stated that the Weather Radio Project that was launched in September from the Community Foundation grant is still ongoing. Roughly 40 weather radios are still available to Cedar County Residents who complete and show us their Family Emergency Plan. EMA's goal is to do another push of these radios in Spring of 2022 correlating with the start of Severe weather season.
 - Freet has requested funds through the states EMPG-ARPA grant. There is no required match for this particular grant, and if awarded, those funds would be used to purchase various equipment for EMA. Items for purchase would include a small enclosed trailer, small generators, a portable conferencing system as well as tablets that can be used to collect and enter damage assessments in the event of a disaster. Freet stated we are still waiting on that award.
 - Freet also requested funds through the ARPA funds awarded to Cedar County. If awarded those funds would be used to purchase a new Mobile Command Center. The current Mobile Command Center has several issues: water leaks throughout; a wall has become soft, leading to electrical issues as well as the concern for mold. It was also a recently subject to a break in, a police report was filed in that instance. Freet stated that if funding is not granted then EMA will use the current one until absolute end of life and will try to find funding elsewhere.
 - Freet also applied for a Theisen's grant. If awarded those funds would be used to purchase 2 small generators.
 - Freet advised she is looking for funding for two small community projects. One project would involve the distribution of a strobe light/pillow shaker accessory for weather radios that can be distributed to those with special needs. The second potential project is to have automated weather stations set up within Fire Departments in the County. Freet's goal is to establish 3 weather stations in our western communities initially. Those include West Branch, Mechanicsville and possibly Tipton. Doing this will give better visibility and preparedness during inclement weather events.
- Freet then presented proposed updates to the EMA by-laws. The current by-laws were reviewed by the Assistant County Attorney Blank. It was suggested that the current number to establish quorum be changed from the current five (5) to six (6) based on the participating entities. Freet then presented findings from past EMA meetings dating back to January 2019 and out of those meetings there would've only been 5 meetings were the proposed quorum would have been established. There is a concern for the difficulty in establishing a quorum for future meetings. Freet wanted to inform the

board of this suggestion and purposes to revisit and vote on the matter at the next regular scheduled meeting on January 13, 2022.

- Freet informed that the Unimog is currently listed on the Purple Wave auction platform. EMA has had several inquiries regarding it and the listing. That auction will close on 10/26/2021. Stanwood Fire Department had inquired about the 15KW generator, Freet will follow up with them to clarify interest.
- Freet announced that in joining the statewide COAD Group, that Office Coordinator Kate Ehlers will be assisting with working with the Red Cross as well as engaging with other community groups and agencies that can be called upon in the event of a disaster to assist in communities. The United Way has asked to come meet with the group but with other matters scheduled this evening we weren't able to schedule. This will be continually developing.
- Freet reiterated the importance to promote the Alertlowa warning system throughout the county. Reminded that she and her assistant are able to come out to communities to host a sign-up event at city halls. Cedar County does currently have a low sign-up rate, and as we move into the colder months we see a higher instance of water main breaks, cities can use Alertlowa to notify affected residents. There are still jurisdictions that have not attended the required training to be able to obtain a log-in. However, Freet stated that in the event of an emergency Freet can send out an Alert at the request of a city.
- Freet then gave updates regarding overtime and compensation:
 - Freet informed the commission that the Cedar County Board of Supervisors have requested information from numerous departments about the amount of overtime they have worked during past disasters. Freet has submitted the requested information, and will continue to work with the Cedar County Board of Supervisors to report and communicate any additional requests.
 - Freet is also still in the process of researching and continuing to create a job description for the 911 director position that she maintains in addition to being the EMA Director.

Freet then gave updates regarding planning, training and exercises. Due to recent changes within the state level, planning, training and exercises will be added to all agendas moving forward.

- Planning - Freet will be reviewing and updating ESFs 6 (Mass Care), 8 (Public Health), 10 (Hazardous materials) and 11 (Agriculture and DNR). Freet then disclosed that after numerous inquiries and requests to obtain ESF 8 from the Cedar County Public Health Department that she was forced to submit a Freedom of Information Act Request (FOIA) to obtain the requested information. The information has been received now. As a result of this request, communication was sent to communities from another department questioning the dedication of Director Freet in her role as well as bringing forth several charges against her. Freet wanted to reiterate that if any member of this board has any question in her abilities or her day-to-day events, she is more than willing to provide detailed documented information regarding a synopsis of days, events, etc. She is also happy to provide documentation that can verify the allegations brought forth as false.
 - Freet then shared that the supplemental plans such as debris management, sheltering, etc. within Cedar County are very outdated and are found to have numerous errors within those plans. Freet will work towards those plans being updated and rewritten.

- Another change through the state is that ESFs are now to be submitted to the state on a quarterly basis. Freet is optimistic that this change paired with the updated ESFs will be easier for city leaders to review and discuss.
- Freet then announced that the Annual update of the Hazard Mitigation Plan is currently set for February 24, 2022. Annual review of this plan is required annually so that Cedar County Communities can review and plan any updates to this plan when eligible. All city leaders within Cedar County as well as additional stakeholders will be invited and are urged to attend. More information will be available as we approach that date.
- Training: - Homeland Security has issued new requirements for training.
 - Freet explained that per Iowa code she is required to complete a minimum of 24 hours of continuing education on an annual basis. Due to recent changes at the state level, 12 of those training hours will be decided on by Homeland Security. These training courses that are decided on by the state typically follow the ESFs that are scheduled to be reviewed and submitted. The remaining 12 hours of training is now up to the discretion of this commission board. Freet then presented her proposed training schedule for review and stated that if there are any questions or suggestions on training opportunities that you wish Director Freet to take please reach out. This schedule is not something that will need to be voted on it will just need to be signed off on by the Commission Chair.
 - Freet also shared that she attended the HSEMD Annual Conference where she was able to connect with other EMA's and gain ideas for the VOAD group.
- Exercise – There are two current exercises planned: A tabletop in Durant in June 2022 and a County-based tabletop on May 5, 2022.

Vice Chair yielded the floor to EMA Director Freet for discussion regarding new business:

- Freet then presented the Five-Year Plan and detailed changes that include: promotion of the weather radio program, request of a HAZMAT Ops course for Cedar County, obtaining grant funding for the weather station projects and the recommendation of establishing a CERT (Community Emergency Response Team) team within Cedar County.
- Freet then presented the proposed budget for the 2022-2023 Fiscal Year, Freet detailed proposed budgetary changes in several functions. She also advised that she is proposing a modest 25¢ increase in the per capita funding rate. Freet shared that EMPG revenues have been decreasing over the years. While Freet understands that this was just recently done, due to the decrease in EMPG funding she feels like this is a necessary step to make up that difference. Discussion was held. Since there is no quorum established tonight, we will revisit this subject at the next regular scheduled meeting in January for further discussion and to vote on.
- Freet stated that a Commodity Flow study was completed within our County through our Regional LEPC group. Freet disclosed that this document is available for official use only. Due to the sensitive nature of the reports content, it is not subject to public disclosure. The next LEPC project will be a Gap Analysis comparison, where a contractor will contact County Fire Departments to determine if area fire stations have applicable tools to respond to the majority of the Hazardous Materials that travel through Cedar County.
- Freet then provided information regarding a recent HAZMAT situation where Johnson County HAZMAT agency responded to an event within Cedar County. Following the

event Director Freet was notified by a concerned resident referencing pictures that were posted to Johnson Co. HAZMAT agency Social Media page. After reviewing the posted media and information, it was determined that Johnson County HAZMAT had potentially disclosed Personal Identifying Information. Freet reached out to Johnson County HAZMAT and requested the information and media be taken down and that request was initially refused. After much discussion the information was taken down however it is unclear how far that information traveled. Freet referred the matter to the county privacy officers who have advised that any liability for privacy breach will rest with Johnson County HAZMAT.

- Freet is also exploring options for HAZMAT coverage within Cedar County. Currently we have agreements and pay retainers to Linn County HAZMAT and Johnson County HAZMAT. Due to price increases Freet feels it is important to explore and review all options available. She also recommends that future 28E agreements with any contractor include language pertaining to privacy and social media expectations.
- Freet shared that the EMPG reports have been completed. The current fiscal year has yet to be awarded, EMA is expected to receive those funds in November of this year.
- Freet informed that there has been discussion to recommend that Emergency Managers play a larger role in the unfortunate event of a Line of Duty Death in the County. Freet stated that she will continue to be available to any and all Fire, EMS and Law agency in the event of a Line of Duty Death, however she will not self-deploy. As always, if her assistance is needed or requested to please contact her.
- Freet shared that she will be reaching out to communities to verify or obtain all Mayor's phone numbers as well as alternative contact information. This will be updated yearly.
- Freet announced that John Benson was introduced as Director for HSEMD. He was previously the interim Director.
- Freet then gave updates regarding personal and general office.
 - Freet announced she was appointed by the Governor as part of the Iowa Flood Mitigation Board. Freet looks forward to participating on this board and representing Cedar County.
 - Freet attended the FEMA Region 7 Higher Education Conference in Olathe, KS. Freet was requested to attend since she is one of the few Emergency Managers who holds a Master's degree in Homeland Security and Emergency Management. Freet was able to make contact with several other Emergency Manager's on the Federal, State and local levels.
 - The Iowa Certified Emergency Management program has changed, it is now non-expiring. Freet is going through the process of making sure her certification is being updated to reflect this change. Freet also announced that she will be working on the Advanced Certification in 2023. Freet feels this would be an overall benefit to the county as a whole.
 - Freet also shared that Office Coordinator Kate Ehlers will be working with the Auditor's office as a Precinct Election Official on November 2, 2021.

Freet then gave updates regarding additional training;

- Mechanicsville Fire Department will be hosting a HAZMAT training through the LEPC. This will be an Operations class and is scheduled for January 29, 2022 at 8:00 am. Freet reminded that if any departments have responders that are in need of the initial class or

the refresher to take advantage of this opportunity. Freet is also looking to schedule a refresher only class. Information regarding that will be sent out as details emerge.

- Freet also shared she will be doing elected official training. Information regarding this training will be sent out after the November 2, 2021 elections in the event of any city leadership changes, and will be sent to City Clerks. Freet reminded that City Leaders are required to take and complete ICS training so that they are prepared in the event of a disaster.

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

Vice Chair Wethington announce that the next regular meeting will take place on January 13, 2022 at 7:00 pm at 1410 Cedar Street, Tipton, IA 52772.

Mayor McAtee/Stanwood made a motion to adjourn the meeting, motion seconded by Mayor Laughlin/West Branch; Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned 8:25 pm.