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Secure Commonwealth Panel Meeting

April 17, 2007

Williamsburg, Virginia

Minutes

Bob Crouch, Assistant to the Governor for Commonwealth Preparedness, opened the meeting by welcoming those present and mentioning the events at Blacksburg the preceding day. It was noted that several members were not present due to the circumstances surrounding the shootings at Virginia Tech, particularly Kay Goss, whose grandson was wounded, and Secretary Marshal, who was assisting local law enforcement.

There was a moment of silence in honor of those killed and wounded in the April 16 Virginia Tech event.

There was an open forum discussion concerning the events at Virginia Tech prior to the Sub-panel reports. Specifically the group addressed when an after action report would be available, how the Higher Education Consortium might assist in discussing higher education security concerns, standards and training for campus security officers, interoperability, physical security infrastructure and asset response tracking issues that arose, the differences between a “state sponsored terrorist” and a lone actor from the law enforcement perspective, the aspects of a tactical response, the health and Regional Hospital Coordinating Center response efforts, and the role of federal agencies in the response and investigation. It was noted that the system for getting help to those individuals who need it in advance of such an event occurring is not as easy to accomplish as one would think at first glance – prevention is the key. It was also noted that the Virginia Tech students were composed, professional, caring, compassionate and concerned. It was also noted that dissecting such an event without the complete set of facts, beyond those in the press, is premature.

Doug Young, President of the Virginia Emergency Management Association (VEMA), welcomed everyone to the facility and thanked everyone for the opportunity to host the meeting with the Virginia Emergency Management (VEM) Conference.

Bob Crouch also thanked Michael Cline for the opportunity to team the Secure Commonwealth Panel (SCP) meeting up with the VEM Conference.

The Sub-panel reports were then presented:

John Knapp gave the Critical Infrastructure (CI) Sub-panel report. The group is overseeing the creation and implementation of a Virginia CI strategic and implementation plan, based on guiding federal and state documents. The need for sector specific panels is being discussed. A

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review of 2007 grant request items included a public/private table-top exercise, an interdependencies/risk assessment, the First Responder Authentication Card (FRAC) credentialing effort, and the ACAMS rollout.

Lee Middleditch gave the Business and Industry Sub-panel report. He noted that the group would like to work through the Regional Preparedness Advisory Committees (RPAC) to address key issues, such as the Retail Merchants Association concern with trash collection in disasters. He reviewed Dan Jenkins report on Dominion Power in New Orleans, stating that credentialing and safety were issues for them. It was noted that determining best practices from other states and businesses is critical and that large businesses have preparedness plans and exercises, Chambers of Commerce are key and Charlottesville has had several meetings that are good examples of best practice efforts.

Greg Lucyk gave the Outreach Sub-panel report. He stated that the group had met 3 times since last meeting to examine and monitor efforts to ensure that citizens are informed and prepared to deal with disasters. The group's priorities include special needs populations, assistance to localities in securing grants, and coordinating efforts at all levels of government with the private industry. An information gathering program has been conducted for a comprehensive report on outreach and support activities of Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM)/Virginia Department of Health (VDH)/Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT). The website will be kept updated; constituent groups will be asked to assist in keeping the information sharing effort current.

Delegate O'Bannon & Dr. Kaplowitz presented the Health and Medical Sub-panel report. The group has met twice to organize and plan the May 14 meeting. Issues being considered include how to deal with the smaller grant stream, standards of care in disasters, the hospital and private sector roles in emergencies, Pandemic Flu Readiness and the Cities Readiness Initiative. It was noted that the goal was to have the overall state plan completed for early summer. The Governor has mandated an exercise for the weekend after Labor Day and that VDH is working on a series of conferences around state on response at both state and local levels. In addition, state shelters are being assessed for special medical needs capabilities and VDH is looking at patient tracking systems, considering confidentiality. It was noted that the health system responded well to the tragedy at Virginia Tech and that VDH will be conducting after action reports (AAR) with the Office of Emergency Medical Services (EMS).

In response to several concerns that were raised, Chief Neuhard and Chief Stanley noted that speculation is dangerous concerning the situation at Virginia Tech and that Virginia is well advanced in implementing the National Incident Management System (NIMS) and the Incident Command System (ICS).

Chief Stanley gave the First Responders Sub-panel report. He discussed the use of the statewide system at the Virginia Fusion Center, grants applied for in 2007, credentialing and background checks and Statewide Agencies Radio System (STARS) interface with locals. It was

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noted that Office of Commonwealth Preparedness (OCP) is reviewing options to link up all areas and a feasibility study being done to determine cost on this and national interoperability channels. He reviewed the need for more heavy and tech rescue teams (7) and training and exercise and maintenance issues. It was also noted that the 17 NOVA Police Chiefs officially adopted the common language protocol last week and that the results of the interoperability baseline survey would be shared with the Panel in the future. The security of radio systems and state laws regarding personally identifiable information and credentialing were raised for report out at the next meeting. Questions concerning the STARS system implementation, publicizing the process for integration into local systems, budget components, and identification of future needs were addressed.

Bob Crouch thanked Wendy Hoffman for all of the arrangements and a Lunch Break occurred from 11:40 a.m. to 12:00 noon.

Upon returning from Lunch Break, the Panel was asked to pause to remember the Virginia Tech faculty in addition to the students and also to remember the Prince William County fireman, lost the day before in a house fire, and his family and colleagues as well.

Hampton Hart gave the Virginia Emergency Response Team Exercise (VERTEX) Presentation noting that the details presented were to be considered For Official Use Only. He reviewed objectives and details of the exercise, scenario, participants, partnerships and roles. He then answered questions regarding state agency and locality levels of involvement, lane reversal, tunnel traffic and sheltering issues, Virginia Modeling and Simulation Center (VMASC) role in modeling and simulation, and public information components. It was noted that later in the spring, the Ready Virginia Campaign will be rolled out, adding robustness to the preparedness effort as a complement to localities public awareness efforts. It was noted that whether evacuating select areas or a whole city, the determination will be played out based on assessments and local planning.

Susan Mongold gave an overview of Grants Coordination activities. She noted that the 2007 grant submission is in to Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and she is ready to start working on the 2008 submission. She reviewed the January stakeholders grant meeting issues, prioritization and investments process. The multi- state component was addressed as well as the regional UASI efforts. The 2008 process will be strategically readjusted and baselines will be leveraged as the assessment is rolled out in July and August to the localities. The RPACs will be used to filter issues and the new OCP website will interactively facilitate information gathering. OCP will be sending out releases to obtain input into design and conduct of the assessment. A brief on the DHS SALSA program was requested for a future meeting. It was noted that the goal is to avoid having the localities repeat something they have already done.

Chief Harmon and Chief Luton gave the Jamestown Anniversary Events Presentation. They reviewed the three key signature events, steering committee and participant roles, the challenge of putting together such a large and diverse series of events, logistics and security concerns, the

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Queen and President's VIP attendance implications, concurrent event issues, the schedule of primary activities for the anniversary weekend, the NIMS component, the volume of attendees expected and they answered questions from the Panel members regarding interoperability. They concluded by encouraging everyone. Bob Crouch thanked the Chiefs for their presentation and hard work on the Jamestown Anniversary Events.

A short discussion on NIMS followed. It was noted that NIMS was designed to standardize Incident Command (IC) across the country. It has been effectively used in Northern Virginia. A goal/component of NIMS is to foster interoperable communications, resource typing and the IC system itself.

Mike McAllister and Bob Griffin presented the FRAC overview. The Commonwealth and Arlington County have been working together for several months to implement the FRAC with good success. They gave a short history of the FRAC Card and reviewed its uses in relation to HSPD12 and FIPS 201 Standards. It was noted that the FRAC consists of a repeatable process and that VDOT developed the program on behalf of OCP. Arlington County was the first locality to enter into this program and they have given FRAC Cards to all of their Emergency Support Functions (ESF), as has the City of Alexandria. The COOP & COG (Continuity of Operations and Continuity of Government) implications of the FRAC were discussed and it was noted that Virginia requires every state agency have a COOP plan annually updated. It was also noted that the problems encountered in New Orleans post Katrina with getting physicians from the perimeter to on-scene in less than 72 hours would have been somewhat alleviated by the FRAC system had they had it in place. Several questions concerning cost, lifespan, similarities with the Transportation Workers Identification Card (TWIC) card, federal equivalent use, potential for on-scene perimeter access controls and certification compatibility verification were answered. Bob Crouch thanked them for their efforts and leadership in this field.

Open Discussion Items:

In response to a Panel member's question, it was noted that the interoperability baseline data base is currently a CASM system, though that may change as the needs of the system users and the Commonwealth Interoperability Coordinator Office evolve.

VDEM is working to address the need for an improved GIS component in WebEOC; it was noted that VDEM currently keeps resource data and contract resource data on hand at the Emergency Operations Center (EOC).

The Commonwealth has identified more than 100 potential shelter sites across the state and is working to identify gaps to be addressed. The General Assembly supported the Governor's budget amendment to help fill those gaps in state facilities and encouraged looking at how to support locally run facilities as well. It was noted that preparedness would benefit from cross-

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pollination and mutual understanding of issues between the various regional, governmental and private sector groups.

Bob Crouch gave closing remarks and requested that the members please consider ideas/issues for the Panel to take up and email them to Wendy Hoffman at OCP. The next SCP meeting was set for July 13, 2007 and the Panel members were invited to stay for the VEM Conference.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:10 p.m.