

Annual Report of the Emergency Management Director

In 2018 the Brewster Office of Emergency Management received an EMPG Grant from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts which was utilized to fund our sixth annual Table Top training exercise that tested the Towns local and regional response to a tornado event involving widespread destruction of homes and business from the area of Ocean Edge southeast through Harwich. This real-time, hands-on training exercise was developed by the Brewster Department of Public Works and Emergency Management officials in conjunction with staff members of the Horsley-Witten Emergency Management Planning Group.

During the training session attending Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) members worked in partnership with other emergency response personnel and department of public works employees from our contiguous communities, the Barnstable County Incident Management Team, and the Barnstable County Regional Emergency Planning Committee to develop and implement a response and recovery plan to this severe weather related incident. The session included the intentional injection of a variety of real time emergency scenarios in rapid succession that were designed to test the decision making, response, and planning capabilities of the attendees. These professionally moderated programs which have become the focal point of our annual training efforts have led to significant improvements in working relationships within the LEPC and with our regional partners.

Prior to any severe weather, potential winter storm, or large community event group planning meetings are held between LEPC members and key Town employees who respond to local emergency situations. In these work sessions response and recovery plans, individual department staffing and resource needs, weather reports, crowd control issues, road closures, sheltering plans, and other necessary response and mitigation needs are discussed and written response and recovery plans developed. During 2018 as in past years, several of these sessions were held to prepare for impending winter storms which have become one of the more major threats facing our community. In 2018 severe winter storms that significantly impacted our residents and Town operations occurred on March 2-3 and March 13-14. These events caused widespread long term power outages, significantly challenged our local responses resources, and required Barnstable County to open several regional shelters.

After these storms the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) declared these events as natural disasters which opened up the ability for communities to pursue reimbursement of storm related expenditures. One of the responsibilities held by the Emergency Management Director is the coordination, development, and submission of these required documents. Many of these submissions take several months to complete and several years to be funded. An example of this occurred during 2018 when the Town received \$71,000.00 in reimbursements for a storm that occurred in 2013. For the March 2-3, 2018 storm the LEPC team was able to submit a reimbursement request to FEMA for approximately \$11,000.

Being prepared and having an established response plan prior to these events taking place has proven to be the deciding factor in the LEPC group's ability to maintain a high level of response during these incidents and manage post storm recovery and reimbursement efforts.

Emergency management personnel also continued to attend monthly meetings with the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency, Barnstable County Incident Management Team, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and the Barnstable County Regional Emergency Planning Committee maintain a continuous level of community response readiness and knowledge of regional emergency response and sheltering plans.

Coordinating the response to emergency events within our community is a dynamic and challenging process. With this said, Brewster residents should be aware that while it is the responsibility of all Town agencies to provide the community with life safety services on a daily basis it is those personnel assigned to field positions that respond to your requests for assistance during natural and man-made disasters that make up the foundation of our Town's emergency management endeavors.

Local Emergency Planning Committee Members

Mark Forest

Paul Anderson

Denise Rego

Chris Miller

Sherrie McCullough

Donna Kalinick

Heath Eldredge

Nancy Ice

Lisa Souve

Kathy Lambert

Victor Staley

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Patrick Ellis

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Tom Thatcher

Lisa Vitale

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