

Minutes of the March 23, 2018 Me WARN Meeting

10am MEMA

Participant: Phyllis Rand, Herb Kronholm, Jim Leighton, Bill Dawson, Sarah Flannigan, Roger Crouse, Tom Bahun, Kirsten Hebert

Meeting opens at 10:10 am

Sarah and Herb update the group that they have been testing the HAN to verify that an “email to text” system will work. Herb noted that this will not work on Trac phones, but if the user has a national carrier, this resource should work well.

Sarah noted that the DWP did not incur additional costs with the use of the email to text system. Sarah said that each individual in the HAN system had to have a unique identifier. The system is limited to 4 emails per system. (i.e., there could be one email and three phones). Sarah and Herb will continue to research this.

Tom noted that it may be timely to reach out to the WARN users and send text email addresses to Sarah so that she can populate the HAN. Sarah will also verify that Tom has the permissions necessary to deactivate or update those “bouncebacks.”

Sarah recommended using the “generic” office address as one of the four accounts for each participating system. The group felt this was a good idea.

Minutes of the 9-28-17 meeting were motioned for acceptance by Jim and seconded by Phyllis. Motion carries.

Tom reviewed recent WARN activities. He stated that the wind/rain event of last October stressed several systems both in terms of loss of power and in having the necessary resources. Tom worked with MEMA and the EOC to assist in locating generators. Tom also noted that Canton has a backup generator, but that it failed. He worked with Daisy Mueller and she was able to expedite the reconnection of Canton’s power.

Herb talked about how utilities should verify that they are on the primary list and are among the first to get power back. He noted that this may come at a cost to the utility, though in some situations, there may be more affordable opportunities simply by reassessing which energy and internet providers the utility does business with.

Tom asked the group if they were concerned about cybersecurity and any related vulnerabilities. The group certainly expressed interest in knowing more and exploring this matter.

Tom reviewed the TTX that he, in conjunction with DWP and MEMA, conducted in 2017 (and into 2018). He offered a list of common deficiencies identified:

- Lack of an identified public information officer (a spokesperson).
- Concern over the ability/authority to issue water conservation orders.
- Formalization of a bulk water hauling policy that includes issues such as where does the utility secure water, load and offload water.
- Clarify procedures for shift in roles (i.e., the manager is not available) and provide necessary notification to participating agencies of this critical change
- Need to ID and communicate with critical customers and let them know to prepare to be without water, power, heating fuel, etc.

Phyllis and Jim both shared “lessons learned” from TTX that their respective utilities had recently done. This included a discussion of how individual assessments of situations and scenarios are influenced by personal opinion.

Sarah updated the group as to an upcoming EPA training on Cyber Security. This will be taught by Horsley Whitten and participants from Homeland Security Administration, FBI and is designed for system IT and Managers. Brochures are soon to arrive.

Sarah also announced that DWP and MRWA are collaborating on a Cybersecurity Resiliency Guidance Document and Self-Assessment tool. This will allow systems to integrate these findings into their ERPs. MRWA will be working with MEMA on this task.

Tom indicated that there was another EPA training taking place May 22 and May 24 – Resiliency Planning and Adaptation Training for Water and Wastewater Utilities. EPA will soon do announcements for these events.

The group then turned their attention to emergency preparedness training needs. Jim explained that there was need for continuity in transition of staffers. He has witnessed the retirement (or impending retirement) of staff prior to successors having time to become familiar with the placement of infrastructure. This speaks to the need for system mapping. This situation is more common than we know.

Bill asked Tom for a brief overview of the MEWARN. Tom noted that there were approximately 120 or so member utilities. They have voluntarily agreed to participate in the entity. There is an overarching written agreement that details the purpose and principles of the response network, including a rates sheet that depicts the price for staff and resources. Tom also explained that DWP hosts the website.

Next meeting date: September 14th at MEMA.

Adjourn 11:25am