

**City of Sonoma Disaster Council
REGULAR MEETING
Emergency Operations Center
175 First Street West
March 11, 2010
Draft Minutes**

Present: Mayor Steve Barbose, City of Sonoma
Linda Kelly, City Manager
Milena Bates, City of Sonoma, PW Director
Debra Rogers, City of Sonoma
Sondra Costello, Vintage House
Rodger Doncaster, American Red Cross, Sonoma County VOAD
Paul Gradolph, VOMWD
Mark Heneveld, Faith Based Churches and VOAD
Kathleen Hill, Sonoma Valley Food
Diana Lawrence, Sonoma Valley Unified School District
Rich Lee, Arroyo Veterinary Hospital and Rotary
Ken McTaggart, Auxiliary Communications Service, ACS
Phyllis Onstad, Volunteer Center, Sonoma County
Kristen Reeder, Sonoma County Wildlife Rescue, SCWR
Charlene Rundstrom, Creekside HOA Disaster Preparedness Committee
John Saguto, American Red Cross Volunteer
Kathleen Scanlon
Bob Smylie, County Department of Emergency Services, OES
Rhonda Stallings, DVM, Arroyo Veterinary Hospital
Hans Steuck, Chantarelle HOA Disaster Preparedness Committee

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Barbose. Introductions were held.

2. Comments from the Public

City Manager Linda Kelly reminded everyone that the File of Life magnet with emergency contact information card (insert) that the Disaster Council has been talking about, are available for sale at \$1.00 each; they are also available at City Hall. Three thousand were ordered which are being used also by the Sheriff's Department.

Kristen Reeder, Sonoma County Wildlife Rescue, SCWR, invited commissioners to attend their annual Disaster Preparedness meeting with local wild life rescue organizations and supporters. The date is March 31 at 12 noon, 403 Meham Road, Petaluma. The invitation announcement is available on their website: <http://www.scwildliferescue.org/index.shtml>

3. Review and Approval of Minutes

The minutes of January 14, 2010, were approved as presented by consensus.

4. Establishing a Local Volunteer Center for Disasters, Sonoma Community Center

City Manager Kelly said that Kathy Swett was unable to make the meeting. A tentative date has been set for a volunteer training at the Community Center of April 24, which was a great step towards our 2010 goals. Ms. Kelly said that the City was in the process of signing a memorandum of understanding for the Community Center to act as the Volunteer Center. Phyllis Onstad, Volunteer Center, Sonoma County, clarified that the morning will be a logistical training for the Community Center staff and establishing data base; during a real disaster, they would be registering volunteers. The second part of the training will be an exercise to test the model and offer the community an opportunity to participate in emergency preparedness; she will speak to Kathy Swett to finalize the format. Rhonda suggested that Ms. Rogers forward to the DC information on the exercise, which then can be more widely distributed to other volunteer organizations as appropriate.

5. Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD) Mark Heneveld & Rodger Doncaster

Rodger Doncaster, American Red Cross and President of the Sonoma County VOAD, gave a PowerPoint presentation overview of VOAD, from a National, State and Local Level. He said Mark Heneveld's presentation would discuss his experience of VOAD training offered by a faith based organization.

Mr. Doncaster summarized that in Sonoma County, VOAD members can be volunteers, paid staff, public health and office of emergency services personnel - anyone who wants to participate. One of VOAD's strengths is bringing agencies together to help in disaster recovery. A successful collaboration will depend on people who communicate, cooperate, develop together, and have a plan of action.

California has two VOAD groups, Northern and Southern Charters, as do most Counties in California and are flexible in how they are organized. The Sonoma County VOAD Chapter wants to see what groups are doing to prepare and what resources organizations bring to the table. Groups can be volunteer organizations, faith based or community organizations. Groups indicate when becoming a member what their specialty is and how they would participate in a disaster (i.e. ARC and Salvation Army feed people). He emphasized that it is not hard to become a member; come to a meeting, providing your name or group's name, and email – from there VOAD will keep you informed. When a disaster happens, VOAD will have resources and contact information. Not only does VOAD help during a disaster, it focuses on long term recovery. For more information: www.calvoad.org

The next Sonoma County VOAD meeting will be held in Sonoma, so that anyone who is interested can attend. The meeting is scheduled for April 15, 2010 in the EOC room; he encouraged Councilmember's to attend and see how other groups are involved. At this point, the Mr. Doncaster said the City of Sonoma's Disaster Council is the most active group as a citizen based group with regular meetings and attaining goals and invited commissioners would attend this meeting. During a disaster, the strength of a response is based on advance planning and a coordinated response. Phyllis Onstad added that National and State agencies (FEMA) will look to the recognized VOAD groups after a disaster to help with recovery.

Mark Heneveld talked about the VOAD training he attended as a citizen (not a VOAD member) in Los Altos Hills hosted by the Baptist Church, who brought in UMCOR, United Methodist Committee on Relief who is one of the larger organizations that will come to a disaster when asked to do such things as clear properties to make sure people are not trapped, coordinate with Red Cross, Fire, Police and many other groups to help bring organization/coordinated effort to a disaster.

Mr. Heneveld said a key issue during a disaster is informing the public knows what is going on to alleviate panic and to provide accurate information on what is important to know, and what resources are available. For instance, where parents can drop off children while parents are securing services; some churches specialize in providing services for children who are particularly traumatized by disasters. John Saguto expressed concern that ARC is very careful with standards of excellence with skills training and background checks; good meaning citizens may or may not have –ARC knows what levels of activity volunteers can or can not go based on background and skill. Phyllis Onstad clarified that Northern VOAD has such standards in place and specialize say – in child care; some faith based organizations. She said discussions within the Sonoma County VOAD membership continue - to evaluate how groups communicate, the level of training and certification that will be recognized by others. One of the issues with spontaneous individuals, is they are not affiliated with these organizations. Folks that come in that are already affiliated have credentials. Mark Heneveld added that UMCOR will not send any volunteers in unless they are certified and have photo I.D. badge, with certification (to eliminate any gray areas).

Mr. Saguto asked protocol of calling either VOAD or Volunteer Center. Ms. Onstad said during a disaster, if for example, five food handlers are needed, a call is made to the local volunteer center that would do their best match people who are qualify for that task; the Sonoma Community Center has agreed to take on that task. Linda Kelly said the volunteer training and exercise is happening in conjunction with the MOU coming into place with the Community Center and the City of Sonoma. During a disaster, the EOC would not have the capacity to meet people at the door and direct them to where volunteers are needed (nor to register them). Staff designated in the EOC as the Logistics Coordinator will be in charge of resources and the volunteer point person with the Volunteer Center, at Sonoma's Community Center.

Someone asked a question of when VOAD is activated. Bob Smylie, Sonoma County Emergency Services, said the local volunteer center will have a data base registry of VOAD members – groups who are recognized and pre-registered. By joining VOAD as a “go to” organization - the volunteer center would call on that VOAD organization as needed to see if they can respond.

Before a disaster, Mr. Smylie said that organizations like the Rotary would contact VOAD, indicate they want to become a member, and what their specialty would be during a disaster. In addition to Rotary being called out for their skills by the Volunteer Center, they could be asked to train spontaneous volunteers. For example, during a disaster, the Volunteer Center may call the Rotary and say, we have 20 spontaneous volunteers that need “vetted” – can they train those volunteers. In other words, the volunteer center can match up individuals with organizations that are members of VOAD.

Rhonda Stallings asked if there was a local VOAD Chapter, which seems to be part of the confusion. Bob Smylie said no. Linda Kelly said the Disaster Council has already done much of what VOAD is - we have identified groups, which groups have disaster plans in place, and a data base listing individuals with their organization. Why recreate a new system – why not have the City of Sonoma register with VOAD – then the City of Sonoma Disaster Council and the Volunteer Community Center – could be the VOAD contact. Have a standing item on our DC agenda for VOAD information versus another set of meetings each month. Mayor Barbose asked Mark Heneveld to take on a more formal role of as a representative working with the faith based organizations, which Mark agreed to.

Kathleen Hill said she has attempted to gain participation from the Ministerial Association and specific churches, finding it difficult to engage their interest beyond their own congregation.

Mayor Barbose suggested getting all the names from the individual churches, to get into our data base – contact person for congregations, and hopefully gain their participation, but at least having them part of the date base which might be as good as it gets.

6. Auxiliary Communications Service (ACS) – Preparedness Ken McTaggart

Ken McTaggart introduced Jim Hill, Assistant ACS Unit leader; they both got their amateur radio licenses back in 1950's. Ken said his first experience with amateur radio use for emergency purposes was at City Hall, when the emergency communication center was on the second floor; using only two-way radios at that time, a VHF antenna on the flag mast was directed towards Santa Rosa in 1958. He said in listening to the Commissioner's discussion on disaster preparedness, the key phrase is – “need to communicate”. He report on some of the statistics from FEMA on Katrina related to failed communication systems, and statistics on how bad services/communication can get during a large disaster; the number of cell towers and cell sites that went down hampering communication; 20 million phone calls that couldn't get through, 7 billion people without telephone service, broadcasting stations off the air. ACS is a volunteer organization, comprised of amateurs and anyone with professional radio communication skills.

Mr. McTaggart provided a handout for more information, and provided a sample paper form used to document radio communications. During a disaster, both amateur and government systems would be used

to help the EOC to communicate. He also emphasized how important and effective runners are, on foot and on bicycle and can be used to deliver messages for short distances across town; utilizing such groups as the Boy's and Girl's Scouts – utilizes dependable people for tasks that don't have radio skills.

7. Updates from Disaster Council Members

Rhonda Stallings announced: 1) outreach to veterinarians in the Valley with a group coming together to work towards emergency preparedness for pets; 2) she has scheduled a class at the Sonoma Community Center on Pet Disaster Kits/Preparedness and will provide the date and time.

Rich Lee asked Ken McTaggart who would be good candidates for ACS training. Ken said typically what works best is individuals who become HAM operators for a hobby, so that they are familiar with the process, so during a disaster, it is automatic (know what to do).

John Saguto said that the Sheltering Services Subcommittee was working on their first project priority, to place Disaster Checklists in all listed shelters, updating MOU's and updating all the contact information.

Sondra Costello, Vintage House, reported that she had been in contact with Joe Morrison regarding scheduling a SCOPE training which will be open to the public, and possibly will be in September, 2010.

Milenka Bates, Public Information Outreach subcommittee will continue. As community events and parades get closer, Sondra Costello will be calling on Commissioners to participate.

8. Next Meeting Date – May 13, 2010

May 13, 2010 was set for the next regular Sonoma Disaster Council meeting, at **3:30 p.m.**

Sheltering Services Subcommittee & Public Information Outreach Subcommittee will meet at **2:45 p.m.** on the same date.

Respectfully submitted,

Debra N. Rogers