



Fairhaven Board of Selectmen

October 29, 2012 Meeting Minutes

EMERGENCY MEETING

Present: Chairman Brian Bowcock, Clerk Robert Espindola, Executive Secretary Jeffrey Osuch, Selectmen's Secretary Anne Kakley.

Also present: Police Chief Michael Myers, Fire Chief Timothy Francis, Edward Fortin (Water), BPW Superintendent Vincent Furtado, Tree Warden Tony Medeiros, Shellfish Warden Timothy Cox, Building Inspector Wayne Fostin, John Rogers (EMA), Linda Schick (Sewer), Kathy Tripp (BPW), John Charbonneau (Highway), School Superintendent Robert Baldwin, Sergeant Kevin Kobza and other emergency personnel.

Chairman Bowcock called the meeting of department heads to order in the Fire Department meeting room at 12:03 p.m.

HURRICANE SANDY

Dr. Bowcock opened the meeting by giving an overview of Hurricane Sandy and her projected course. He said that Governor Deval Patrick had declared a State of Emergency for Massachusetts on Sunday, October 28, 2012.

Dr. Bowcock then asked for situational updates from the various departments present at the meeting.

Natural Resources: Mr. Cox said that the water was very high at Earl's Marina and that low-lying areas will likely be impacted by the storm, especially at high tide, which was set to arrive at 8:23 p.m. Mr. Cox said that he thought the West Island causeway would likely go under water at that time, because a tidal surge of six feet was possible.

Water: Mr. Fortin said it was looking like they would not have to turn off water to Scoticut Neck as of the time of the meeting, but they would reassess low-lying sections of the Neck as the day wore on.

Vice Chairman Charles Murphy, Sr. joined the meeting at 12:06 p.m.

Sewer: Ms. Schick said that sewer service would likely not be interrupted and generators were on standby, if needed.

Tree Department: Mr. Medeiros said that there had not been any calls for felled trees yet, but that he had a crew on standby for felled trees.

At the time of the meeting, there were no serious power outages reported in Fairhaven. Chief Francis reported a scattered one percent.

Mr. Cox reported that most of the boats at Hoppy's Landing had been pulled from the water, and that the boats at Earl's Marina had almost been pulled. He said that there were 10 Coast Guard boats in the harbor.

Dr. Bowcock said that the Town would not conduct any rescue missions if anyone ventured into the water on their boats.

Fire Department: Chief Francis said that the Fire Department would not be opening any outlying stations and that all business would be conducted from headquarters. He said that everything in the Hurricane plan had been conducted by the Fire department. NSTAR gas had five (5) crew members on site standing by.

Police Department: Chief Myers said that the Police Department had plenty of personnel on standby and officers were stationed at Fort Phoenix to keep sight-seers away from the Hurricane Barrier.

Mr. Medeiros asked if he would have any trouble getting some of his men paid by the Town if they have not been previously employed by the Town. Mr. Osuch told him that he should diligently document with time sheets.

Mr. Espindola asked if temporary/emergency workers would be covered by Town insurance in the event of an injury. Mr. Osuch confirmed that they would be covered by worker's compensation insurance.

BPW: Mr. Furtado said that the BPW was holding up well so far, keeping crews on and keeping roads clear.

At the time of the meeting, Chief Francis said that there were no plans to close Sconticut Neck.

Mr. Osuch said that he did not think that the storm was going to be on par with previous hurricanes, like Carol or Bob, but he did say that the Town Hall had gotten several calls regarding shelters being open. Dr. Baldwin said that, when the school shelter was opened in 2011 for Tropical Storm Irene, only one person came and stayed very briefly. He said that they could still easily open a shelter on short notice, if needed.

Chief Francis asked if they wanted to offer West Islanders shelter now instead of waiting until the height of the storm. Mr. Rogers said that he recommended erring on the side of caution. It was determined, however, that the EMA building on Sconticut Neck would not be suitable as it did not have a back-up generator for electricity in an outage.

The Board discussed the possibility of declaring a State of Emergency for the Town of Fairhaven.

At 12:32 p.m., the meeting was turned over to a conference call with MEMA, which gave an update on conditions, outages, and emergency calls in the Southeastern Massachusetts area.

The Board continued deliberations on opening a shelter. The Board ultimately decided to open the shelter at Hastings Middle School at 2:00 p.m., to be kept open until at least 10:00 p.m. At 10:00 p.m., it would be closed if no one used it.

Mr. Murphy motioned to declare a State of Emergency for the Town of Fairhaven, to begin at 2:00 p.m. on October 29, 2012 and continue to 2:00 p.m. on October 30, 2012. Mr. Espindola seconded. Vote was unanimous. (3-0). The Board agreed to meet on October 30, 2012, at 2:00 p.m. in the Fire Department meeting room again to reassess the situation.

Dr. Baldwin said that, with the State of Emergency in effect and Hastings Middle School being used for a shelter, school would not open on Tuesday, October 30, 2012. Pets were not to be allowed into the shelter, Mr. Osuch said.

The Board said that non-essential ACSFME workers at the Town Hall, the Council on Aging, the BPW and the Recreation Center would be sent home at 2:00 p.m. The Board agreed to have a reverse 911 sent out to the Town announcing the State of Emergency.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:20 p.m.

Respectfully,

Anne Kakley

(Minutes approved 11/13/2012)