**LOCAL EMERGENCY PLANNING COMMITTEE (LEPC) ASSOCIATION**

**BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES**

**April 18, 2025**

**8:00 a.m. – 12:00 a.m.**

**William A. Egan Center**

**Anchorage, AK**

I. CALL TO ORDER - Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC)

Association Co-Chair, Brenda Ahlberg and Tom Vaden

A. Welcome and Introductions

i. Housekeeping remarks for bathroom locations

ii. Roll Call

1. Aleutian & Pribilof Islands LEPC - N/A
2. Aleautians East LEPD - N/A
3. Anchorage LEPC - Amanda Loach Present in person
4. Bristol Bay LEPC - Deborah Jones Present in person
5. Copper River Basin LEPC - N/A
6. Delta-Greely LEPC - N/A
7. Denali Borough LEPC - Forest Shreeve Present in person
8. Fairbanks North Star Borough - Nancy Durham Present in person
9. Iditarod Region LEPC - N/A
10. Juneau LEPC - Ryan O’Shaughnesey
11. Kenai Peninsula Borough LEPC - Brend Ahlberg Present in person
12. Ketchikan Area LEPC - Steve Rydeen Present in person
13. Kodiak Island Borough LEPC - Rich Gonzalez Present in person
14. Kuspuk LEPD - N/A
15. Lake and Pen Borough LEPD - N/A
16. Lower Kuskokwim LEPD - N/A
17. Lower Yukon LEPD - N/A
18. Matanuska-Susitna Borough LEPC - Kara Cahill Present in person
19. Nome LEPC - Tom Vaden Present in person
20. North Slope Borough LEPC - N/A
21. Northern Southeast LEPD - N/A
22. Northwest Arctic Borough LEPC - Elsie Sampson
23. Petersburg LEPC - Aaron Hankins Present in person
24. Prince William Sound LEPD - N/A
25. Sitka LEPC - Craig Warren Present in person
26. Skagway LEPC - N/A
27. Southern Southeast LEPC - N/A
28. Southwest Region LEPD - N/A
29. Valdez LEPC - N/A
30. Wrangell LEPC - N/A
31. Yakutat LEPC - N/A
32. Yukon Flats LEPD - N/A
33. Yukon-Koyukuk LEPD - N/A

B. Administrative Announcements from Co-Chair

II. Approval of, and changes to, the agenda

1. JJ Little motion to approve Agenda
2. Aaron Hankins, Petersburg Seconded the motion

III. Approval meeting minutes

1. Tom Vaden motion to approve meeting minutes
2. Aaron Hankins moved to approve
3. Nancy Durham seconded the motion to approve

IV. Old Business

1. LEPC Status Report
   1. Aaron Hankins, Petersburg
      1. In 2025, have not met yet and have not had any outstanding business.
      2. LEPC wrote a letter to Petersburg Assembly to help support grants to support the revision of their EOP and all hazards plans, which are both expired from 2010.
      3. Update from Wrangell - new contact in role and Aaron Hankins will reach out to them to get an updated contact to send to committee
   2. Deborah Jones, Bristol Bay
      1. They are working with local government and trying to get ICS classes started. IT departments have been working with cybersecurity. Have grants to support these classes. Working on getting staff trained.
      2. Working with DHS&EM on getting a 300 level class in that area.
      3. Grateful for support from Lake and Pen Borough. Bristol Bay and Lake and Pen Borough are working on how to share resources in smaller communities.
   3. Kara Cahill, Mat-Su Borough
      1. Continuing recruitment
      2. Increased membership and activated a few of the workgroups, setting strategies and goals to meet and achieve by the end of the 2025 year.
      3. Continue to work on the 17th annual expo that is held in September 2025. Planning committee is getting together.
      4. Mat-Su Borough held quite a few classes this last fall and winter.
      5. CERT teams have been very active. 3 new CERT classes which have recruited 59 new CERT members for all areas of the borough.
      6. Working on reviewing plans, coordinating with agencies within the borough EOC.
   4. Ryan O’Shaughnesey, Juneau
      1. In the last year, LEPC has been primarily focusing on supporting, training and planning initiatives.
      2. LEPC support multi jurisdictional all hazard mitigation plan
      3. In partnership with Tlingit and Haida, they supported the 2024 glacial lake outburst flood response. They had a good response but a lot of untrained volunteers. Focusing on training this upcoming cycle.
      4. Moving towards quarterly 300 and 400 level trainings
      5. Partnering with the Red Cross for shelter training for CBJ Employees as well as volunteers.
   5. Rich Gonzalez, Kodiak
      1. Created in January for Kodiak Emergency Managers.
      2. LEPC has not met yet. Working on getting the meeting scheduled, networking with the community.
      3. Training coming up in July to be hosted at one of the volunteer firehouses.
      4. Working with Texas A&M for them to present a crisis management course.
      5. Will participate in the mass casualty drill put on by the state and the Coast Guard.
   6. Amanda Loach, Anchorage
      1. Had 3 LEPC meetings since the last report.
      2. Quarterly meetings entail looking at the big plans in Anchorage and comprehensive emergency operations plans.
      3. Hazard mitigation plan has been updated to concentrate on updating the risk assessment for experiences such as a Tsunami.
      4. Took a look at the 3 year strategic plan for the Office of Emergency Management and will be reviewed by stakeholders.
      5. Community Right to Know plan reports out at each LEPC meeting.
      6. Had an ammonia release in Anchorage and the after action report has been provided by John Huffman from University of Alaska Anchorage emergency manager.
      7. COVID-19 after action report was completed with input from the community and LEPC.
      8. Hosted an annual integrated preparedness planning meeting with stakeholders involved.
      9. Safety items - had earthquake preparedness, winter safety, wildfire season safety, and reviewed Mount Spur activity and reviewed preparedness actions.
      10. Updated bylaws.
   7. Tom Vaden, Nome
      1. Submitted written status report.
   8. Brenda Ahlberg, Kenai Peninsula
      1. They have a working group of 8 individuals that will assist with updating the emergency operation plan.
      2. Will be reaching out to each of the LEPC reps throughout the year with JJ Little to understand the status of the LEPC and how she can be of assistance.
   9. Nancy Durham, Fairbanks North Star Borough
      1. Submitted report
      2. In addition, have had issues with reaching a quorum. Hopefully with the new members, they will be able to start meeting with quorum requirements. Fairbanks North Star Borough Mayor and City of Fairbanks Mayor’s office will participate in LEPC.
      3. Re-electing chairs and vice chairs.
      4. Emergency Preparedness and Safety Day is coming up in may and they are preparing for that.
      5. Looking to change format of their meetings.
      6. Carlson center just put down a new ice floor in the building that including ammonia and it was presented at the board.
      7. Question to the group - has anyone done field inspections at facilities? And if so, how are they being done?
   10. Steve Rydeen, Ketchikan
       1. Have partnered closely with National Weather Service and other local partners
       2. Fire station burned down and was unable to attend this meeting last year
       3. August last year there was a landslide that killed 1 person and injured 7.
       4. Another landslide happened 3 weeks ago
       5. Had an ammonia leak due to a structural collapse at one of the cannery facilities causing injury.
       6. Metlakatla had fire in cannery which caused an ammonia leak.
       7. In between emergencies - trying to do landslide outreach and drought outreach.
       8. Started to update all hazards mitigation plans
       9. Had first town hall that was poorly attended.
   11. Forest Shreeve, Denali Borough
       1. Submitted status report
       2. Had 2 meetings since the state LEPC meeting occurred.
       3. Finished community wildfire protection plan at the end of 2024.
       4. Now has CWPP for the first time in the borough
       5. Partner with Golden Valley Electric Association to get a community wildfire defense grant to get some mitigation work done for wildfire mitigation along power lines throughout the borough.
       6. Have landowner permission to stop hazard trees from falling on power lines due to significant wind and snow in the region.
       7. Held a health and safety fair in March 2025 with good attendance.
       8. Getting student / school buy ins to have students participate.
       9. Had railroad displays as well as the state troopers for displays.
       10. Working on evacuation zone maps and have a first draft ready to review at next local LEPC meeting.
       11. Have first draft of fire mitigation plan to also review at next local LEPC meeting.
       12. Had an avalanche in January that has caused on and off closures. Luckily no one was injured in that avalanche.
       13. Question for the group - how many LEPC members do each LEPC’s have and what is a common membership number to maintain?
   12. Craig Warren, Sitka
       1. Having issues getting a quorum.
       2. Gotten through a quarter of their all hazards plan - to include volcanos and tsunamis.
       3. Tier two reporting has quickened.
   13. Elsie Sampson, Northwest Arctic Borough
       1. Region affected by fall storm that caused some erosion.
       2. Some villages are moving to higher ground due to storms.
       3. Local LEPC was reinstated and include their meeting with the Public Safety Commission Meetings.
       4. Have a commitment to keep community informed.
       5. Held annual village summits where all the villages are called upon once a year for a status report.
       6. Have had table top conversations with smaller villages to get more information from them as well as.
       7. Recently hired an emergency manager to update policies and procedures.
       8. Will be training with search and rescue, fire department, schools and more after the house fired that occurred in 2024.
   14. Tom Vaden, Nome
       1. Received correspondence during the last few months from Peter, Aleutian/Pribilofs, LEPC, to join the Aleutians East LEPC, and that they allow the Aleutians East LEPD to be part of their LEPC.
       2. Wondering what the procedure is, because what his arguments was, was everybody in these communities are going through his community to get their. And there's lots of ammonia and lots of hazardous material, and they have spills. And so he's trying to get something worked out with that. Does anyone know anything about that?
   15. JJ Little, LEPC Coordinator
       1. This is JJ Little, the LEPC coordinator. I did receive that request. And by Alaska statute, the SERC is responsible for establishing the LEPD's districts, and then the LEPCs within them. And so while, I think our position is probably that we do not have an issue with that, but there have to be an inter jurisdictional, agreement between those LEPCs so that lanes can be, decided on.
       2. Additionally, if the LEPCA would like to serve to, adjudicate or relook at the geographical boundaries of the 21 established LEPDs and LEPCs, we can do that. But, that could be a discussion in the future and maybe something that we have as a talking point in October. But to your point, Mr. Chair, if there is a question about interrelationships between LEPDs or LEPCs, as long as those agreements are made in writing with either a memorandum of understanding or a memorandum of agreement, I would bring that I would recommend that is presented before the SERC to get, ratified in, and then we can go from there.
2. LEPC funding letters
   1. Tom Vaden, Nome
      1. Mr. Fisher with Department of Homeland Security Emergency Management has requested that if any LEPC is writing letters for funding to their representatives to please include a copy to Department of Homeland Security Emergency Management. That being said, since we have basically 12 of the LEPCs out of 34 represented here, it's kind of shows you what the status is with where we are with emergency management and a lot of things in the state.
      2. Motion for LEPCA to write a letter to our legislatures to see if we can get some funding for a lot of the smaller LEPCs to fund emergency manager.
      3. Aaron Hankins would make the motion
      4. Craig Warren to second motion.
      5. Tom Vaden asked for Discussion.
      6. Amanda Loach from Anchorage asked if they don’t have proof of hazard mitigation plans that FEMA won’t pay for recovery? she is under the impression that it is a requirement by the State of Alaska to have those plans.
      7. Ryan O’Shaughnesy had mentioned that the Juneau hazard mitigation plan had lapsed in 2017 and had been receiving public assistance reimbursements but it does disqualify them from the BRIC program. He is not eligible for funding projects through the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP)but receiving public assistance. Only way to receive grant money from HMGP is a grant to create the plan.
      8. Bryan Fisher clarified what the state is seeing from local communities for Hazard Mitigation Plans and funding. He also clarified that the state is also able to support travel for local emergency planning committee chairs that attend the conference and the LEPC meeting.
      9. Deborah Jones, Bristol Bay Borough, mentioned that there is lack of interest in commitment. Even if funding is available and secured, the position may not be filled immediately.
      10. JJ Little, LEPC Coordinator, vocalized that funding is unsure and most positions are volunteer positions and not paid. Suggest to review the 2018 LEPC handbook for roles and responsibilities of local LEPCs. He had also recommended gathering community members to solve community issues regarding emergency plans.
      11. Forest Shreeve, Denali Borough, voiced that he would like to see funding go towards supporting emergency management positions over anything else that might be funded through LEPC.
      12. Tom Vaden recommended to take a vote.
      13. Group in favor to have Chair and Co-Chair write a letter to legislators requesting funding.

V. Correspondence/Communications/Presentations

1. SERC Finance Committee
   1. Tom Vaden, Nome, stated that there are no funds per Director Fisher and the finance committee is inactive.
   2. Director Fisher confirmed that there is no funding.
   3. Amanda Loach, Anchorage, posed the question, is there funding to assist with participation for those with hazardous materials?
   4. Aaron Hankins, Petersburg, mentioned that his understanding of the rules as written are it would seem like the spirit of the participation clause would be at the local level. Aaron Hankins proposed potentially imposing a surcharge or tax to fund some programs
   5. Amanda Loach, Anchorage, commented that other states have precedence for that and some language regarding that research was included in the letter that we wrote, regarding the LEPC funding.
2. Homeland Security and Emergency Management (DHS&EM)
   1. Bryan Fisher provided the following updates:
      1. Reviewed requirements for representation on committees.
      2. Meet once a month to talk about disaster declarations (have met 6 times since the last LEPC meeting).
      3. Have been dealing with utility disruptions all over the state.
      4. Working with the Department of Environmental Conservation, Division of Drink Water and Village Safe Water Programs, Alaska Energy Authority, to find ways to get ahead of disruptions.
      5. Have come to the conclusion that there is a long term issue that needs to be solved that includes aging infrastructure, lack of maintenance, and lack of workforce to maintain infrastructure appropriately.
      6. This time of year the state is coming up on potential fuel shortages for communities.
      7. Wildfire threat is imminent and potentially substantial in Southcentral Alaska.
      8. Focusing on critical infrastructure resilience and cybersecurity. Partnering with Department of Homeland Security and the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) on a project called Critical infrastructure Resilience Planning Areas to look at critical infrastructure in the state, particularly utilities, that support the military mission in Alaska.
      9. Discussion of national conversation to provide homeland defense activities to support the military in case there is potential to mobilize - specifically referring to China and Russia.
      10. Discussed the Trump Administration FEMA review council and what that means for the State of Alaska. Director Fisher has been working with Governor Dunleavy and the Department of Homeland Security to discuss the repercussions if FEMA disbands.
      11. Since Jan 2025, DHS&EM has not received any federal reimbursements from FEMA for any of the grant programs.
      12. Working with the Office of Management and Budget to rework the state budget to make sure people can continue to work however, there have been some lay offs and some furloughs due to lack of funding.
      13. Some projects that were approved in 2020 - 2023 have had their funding removed / programs placed on indefinite holds.
      14. Discussed what congress’s roles will be in approving and denying funding for some of these projects and programs that are no longer able to be funded.
      15. Lost 10% of all grants last summer
      16. The president would like to transfer the risk and the responsibility and the financial burden back to state and local.
      17. Will need to have a significant conversation about what programs and disaster relief funding the state or local govs will be able to support with budget cuts.
      18. Brought up that the World Cup is coming to the US in 2026 and how that may affect funding.
   2. Tom Vaden, Nome, opened the floor for discussion and questions for Bryan Fisher.
      1. Steve Rydeen - Have you reached out to the Alaska State Fire chiefs or anybody for letters of support or working with them to move this forward?
         1. Bryan Fisher Answer - No, have not reached out.
      2. Aaron Hankins - “Speaking of the legislature, do you have any, current scheduled meetings with, public hearings with the legislature to speak on these issues? And is there anything that we can do to help support you on that coming up?”
         1. Bryan Fisher - No, nothing scheduled.
      3. Amanda Loach - “So, you said you didn't hear anything about the LEPC funding being reinstated. What are the other discussions about funding related to emergency management that you're hearing?”
         1. Bryan Fisher - I didn't hear much other than the regular funding in the governor's proposed budget for us.
         2. Gov fast tracked supplemental funding to replenish the disaster relief fund for existing obligations and provide funding for the state fiscal year 26 starting in July. Funding also includes fire suppression fund.
   3. Mark Roberts, Chief of Operations for the Division, to provide update on operations and EOC activities
      1. Tragedies in Ketchikan, Juneau, Kotzebue, Kiana, and more.
      2. After action reports have been submitted to the state and trying to be more effective in use of resources.
      3. Lanita Copeland is now the response manager for the division.
      4. Jim Wallace is the new State Emergency Operations Center manager.
      5. Janet Drake, Willis Longa, Julie Bain, Laura Haven Meistser handling mass care.
      6. State Emergency Operations Center is available all the time for people to call.
      7. Prepping for River Watch Operations by working with FEMA Region 10, National Weather Service Hydrologist, and more for flooding season.
      8. Prepping for fire season with the state Division of Forestry and Fire Protection.
      9. Prepping for Mount Spurr although it has started to quiet down. Still a chance of eruption.
      10. Reports of travel disruptions based on false information about the volcano.
      11. Willing to provide technical assistance on a declaration of give an assessment.
      12. Recommend to reach out to mass care group to assist with emergency items outside of a disaster, as they have strong partnerships with the Salvation Army, the red Cross, Samaritan’s Purse, etc.
   4. Jeff Lafferty, preparedness program manager, to provide an update on what they are doing.
      1. Outreach update, led by Michelle Torres, has been working with local communities and local businesses, private entities, and have given presentations from groups ranging from assisted living, to elderly, to private businesses.
      2. Has been active in CERT. Some communities are too small to have CERT be effective for their community but good to have them in the know.
      3. Exercise update, led by Tom Riley, last exercise of the Rock series rehearsal concept series with FEMA. This one was held. The last series was held about three weeks ago at the Dena’ina Center with participants from state, federal - including FEMA, and private businesses. Regional partners couldn’t attend in person so they attended virtually.
      4. Training update, led by Jeffrey McKenzie and Jonathan Nichols, in collaboration with Alaska Interstate Mutual Aid System, coordinating courses here in the state and coordinated training for folks to go outside the state.
      5. Led virtual training courses.
      6. Alaska All Hazards Qualification guide has been updated.
         1. Rich Hildreth provided an update - 3 hazard mitigation team, a community planning team, and an all hazard resilience.
         2. Under the hazard mitigation program, 17 federal disasters have an inventory of 110 hazard mitigation projects within the HMGP program.
         3. Started temporary housing for the village of Mertarvik to assist from moving from old site of Newtok to the new site in the winter of 2024.
         4. BRIC funding as a grant mechanism to facilitate hazard mitigation planning. Chatting with FEMA on how to conduct planning for future years with the current funding cuts.
         5. Submitted the stakeholder preparedness report and jurisdictions are looking to get feedback on the submissions.
         6. Co-facilitated the rehearsal of a concept exercise completed last month at the Dena’ina and facilitation the statewide cybersecurity strategic plan update.
         7. All hazards resilience team. We are nearly finished with the 2024 APIP season. Our last meeting is going to be next month on the 15th of May, and will have the D.O.T. coordinator talking about drones, skills and the utilization of drones, and looking at hazards and impacts.
         8. Recently completed a rural research workshop out in Bethel. Bethel, a huge region, has 48 occupied communities. So we're going to go back to Bethel in the fall to do another series of workshops for the coastal communities around the Bethel region.
         9. Received interest from Bristol Bay in getting workshops there and working with Deborah Jones.
         10. Final planning phase of a tsunami operations workshop to be held in Ketchikan.
         11. Working on installing tsunami sirens and producing tsunami brochures for the city of Cordova.
         12. Question Brenda Ahlberg - Do you collaborate with the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium?
             1. Rich Hildreth - yes, quite a bit. Working with them to understand priorities, get maximum coverage on mitigation plan and activities in the future.
             2. Bryan Fisher - also work with the Alaska Municipal League to provide workshops and trainings in smaller communities.
   5. Dave Reilly update
      1. Spill in Ketchikan and Anchorage Spill regarding EPA region.
      2. Recommend Brenda Ahlberg to request companies to report spills to the LEPC.
      3. Went to Western States SERC Conference and similar conversations were had there as this meeting.
   6. Kathy Shay, Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation, update
      1. Confirming what Dave Reilly said about Spills and organization having funding challenges
3. Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), Spill Prevention and Response (SPAR)
   1. Kathy Shay submitted written report that is included in binders.
   2. Updates that are not in the written report include, since the last meeting, the team has been busy reviewing plans, providing technical assistance and planning for the upcoming drill and inspection season. This week, the entire prevention, preparedness and response program team missed the conference here in this building because we were all meeting as an, as a staff meeting here in Anchorage, for three days of professional development.
   3. Continuing to collaborate with state and federal agencies in the area and regional planning efforts and during exercises and responses, and we are grateful for the support from the EPA and the Coast Guard and others and all of these planning activities. Our written brief now includes meeting information for upcoming area committee meetings. This is my little adlib here off the notes.
   4. Area committee meetings are an opportunity for you to talk about how you want to respond to or how we respond to oil and hazardous materials releases when they occur. So it's an opportunity for you to participate in that. The next meeting we have is Arctic and Western Alaska, which I think is on May 7th. It's virtual, so all of you could attend if you are interested.
   5. We had regional stakeholder committee job aids that we've been working on for the last couple of years, since August 2022. These job aids or regional stakeholder communities are opportunities for communities to participate. And oil spill responses. And potentially, if you were to have a big spill in your community at some point in the future, this would be an opportunity for you to have a kind of an end to the unified command, and participate maybe more.

VI. Public Comments

1. No Public Comments

VII. New Business

1. The LEPC handbook was last updated in 2018. So it's getting a little old. The chair will entertain a motion to form a working group to update the LEPC handbook. And you know this is really, really handy for new members when they come in and say, this is what we do, this is how we do it. And it kind of explains everything. How it works. Instead of just trying to learn as you go.
2. Aaron Hankins moved the motion
3. Steve Rydeen seconded the motion
4. Discussion
   1. Call for volunteers?
      1. Brenda Ahlbert
      2. Ryan O’Shaughnesey
      3. Aaron Hankins
      4. Kara Cahill
   2. Target completion date for the revision of handbook?
      1. Working on an update.
      2. Reasonable to make your own annotations within the copies that you have and send comments via email to make those updates.
      3. Will discuss the updated handbook at the October meeting.
5. Vote?
   1. Motion passes.

VIII. LEPC Verbal Status Reports - see above.

IX. Members Closing Comments

1. Thanking the state for hosting the Emergency Management Conference this week.
2. Looking forward to virtual meeting in Oct.

***Next meeting: Friday, October 24, 2025 - Virtual***