

Hazardous Materials Commission

Final Minutes Operations Committee

May 12, 2006

Members and Alternates

Present: Jimmy Rodgers, Don Grant, Sharon Fuller, Henry Clark, Leslie Stewart

(alternate) Howard Adams (alternate)

Absent: Pam Aguilar, Mike Shimansky,

Staff: Michael Kent, Randy Sawyer, Lt. Jeff Hebel, CC OES,
Michael Marchiano, CC OES

Members of the Public: Lee Jones, Gail Garrett, Jannat Muhammad, Luz Gomez, Office of Supervisor John Gioia

1. Call to order, announcements: The meeting was called to order by Commissioner Rodgers at 10:05

- Commissioner Clark announced that he is helping to organize a health summit at Verde Elementary School on June 10th from 9:30 till 4:00.

Michael Kent announced:

- A comment period is open for the Shell refinery permit for burning hazardous waste being renewed by DTSC
- The next meeting of the Community Development-led truck route study for North Richmond is May 31st from 2:00 – 4:00.
- The County's IPM taskforce is giving a presentation to the Board of Supervisors Transportation, Water and Infrastructure committee on June 12th.

2. Public Comments: Lee Jones commented that he was here today because he was concerned about the health disparities in North Richmond and because of his concerns about what would happen in the aftermath of an earthquake. He wants to know if there is a plan, and if the clinic is going to be part of that plan.

3. Approval of Minutes: The April 14, 2006 minutes were approved 3-0.

4. Old Business: Presentation from the Office of Emergency Services, Office of the Sheriff, concerning emergency response to isolated low-income communities following catastrophic incidents involving hazardous materials.

Lt. Jeff Hebel of the Contra Costa County Sheriff's Office of Emergency Services introduced himself. He said he has been with the Sheriff's Office for 17 years, but is new to the Office of Emergency Services. He stressed that he is responsible for the Office and is accountable to the community, passed out his business cards to the Commission members and community members, and encouraged them to contact him with questions or concerns.

He then gave an overview of the Office of Emergency Services. He said the Office was evolving, and that after 9/11 and Katrina, emergency services is a hot button issue. The Federal Government has created many new requirements and guidance. They have also developed a National Response Plan that talks about responding to populations at risk. One of the requirements of the Plan is that the County have an evacuation plan. This was drafted in 1989. The question is, how to move 1.2 million people out of the County in the event of an incident, The environment and threats are constantly changing.

They have just finished updating the Emergency Operations plan for the County. It has specific annexes that they are now prioritizing for completion. However, their staff has been cut 86% in the last five years and they have lost 5 positions. They are currently understaffed.

Commissioner Rodgers interjected that one of the Commission's roles is to advise the Board of Supervisors when they see a need. Is there a plan the Commission can review that to determine if there is recommendations they should be making to the Board of Supervisors.

Lt Hebel responded that they have 15 scenarios they have to plan for, including earthquakes. They hope to have their plan for special needs populations completed in about 6 months.

He went on to say that much of what they do in an emergency will be based on the assessment they make at the time of the event. Plans can only get you so far, and the particulars of the situation dictate the specific actions you take. He also added that an important part of any solution in the event of a catastrophic incident is that people are prepared to take care of themselves for 5-7 days.

Commissioner Rodgers observed that even though much of what you will do when a catastrophic incident occurs will be in response to the particulars of the incident, without plans you will fail. So he wants to know the current level of planning.

Michael Marchiano, a planner with the Office of Emergency Services, clarified that the County has their plan in place, but that they are working on particular annexes. They have done drills to prepare. For example, they conducted a drill to evacuate a public

transportation system. But generally, earthquakes don't require evacuations. And in any case, they don't like to pre-designate evacuation points because those points may be destroyed or damaged in an earthquake. They also don't pre-designate evacuation routes because you won't know if roads will be passable, or in the event of a chemical release, which way the wind will be blowing. He also noted that in the event of a major earthquake when resources are scarce, hospitals, and schools nursing homes will likely be their priority for getting resources, not pockets of residential areas.

Commissioner Rodgers then raised the question of flooding and tidal waves. Are these a concern for North Richmond? Mr. Marchiano said that tidal waves are not a concern. And flooding, if it were to occur, would occur over time, giving them the opportunity to get people out of the affected area. But some people do live in flood-prone areas, and they need to be better educated. Commissioner Rodgers said he would be interested in seeing the models for tidal wave impacts. Lt. Hebel said they also have models for earthquake impacts. Commissioner Clark noted that the last flooding was 7 or 8 years ago on Wildcat Creek, and the future flooding potential needs to be reassessed given global warming changes that are anticipated.

Lt. Hebel went on to explain that one of the biggest problems in Katrina was the lack of coordination between government agencies and the lack of pre-existing mutual aid agreements. In California, these type of agreements have been in place for a long time. They have a mutual aid coordinator who's job it is during a emergency is to work with the State Office of Emergency Services to coordinate mutual aid.

Commissioner Adams asked if they had MOU's in place with private companies, such as bus companies, to use their equipment during emergencies. Lt. Hebel said they did have agreements in place with the bus companies.

Luz Gomez from Supervisor Gioia's office expressed her concern that planning be done to be able to communicate during emergencies with people that don't speak English.

Commissioner Fuller expressed her concern that the general public needs to know what to do in the event of an emergency, and are the mechanisms in place to communicate with the general public. Mr. Marchiano said that the main way they will be getting the word out will be through the radio, KCBS 740 Am, but that they don't have agreements with Spanish-speaking radio stations.

Lee Jones commented that he would like to see Supervisor Gioia's office set up a training for local residents.

Ms. Gomez also asked if they had anything to do with mutual aid for fires. Lt. Hebel said this was the responsibility of the Fire Department. Mr. Marchiano added that since the Oakland Hills fire, communications between emergency response agencies has gotten much better.

Commissioner Rodgers asked if the response to North Richmond after an emergency would be any different than the response to other parts of the County. Lt. Hebel said absolutely not. They put their emphasis on the at-risk areas and at-risk populations first.

Michael Kent asked if they had a plan for a long-term chemical disaster requiring evacuation as a result of an earthquake. Mr. Marchiano said that they didn't have a specific annex for such an event.

Commissioner Clark noted that there have been long-term releases in the past where no evacuation was called, but should have been. And there has never been an equitable distribution of services in the county. Even law enforcement services have been lacking.

Commissioner Rodgers asked how well they coordinate with the Health Department's emergency planners. Lt. Hebel said they work very closely with them in terms of operation of the Community Warning System, funding, and health-related emergencies (such as planning for avian flu outbreaks).

Commissioner Adams asked that they consider developing a long-release/evacuation response scenario.

Commissioner Fuller said she was encouraged that cooperation is happening between agencies behind the scenes, but that the general public needs to know more about these planning efforts. Mr. Marchiano explained that part of the presentation he gives on emergency preparedness talks about agency coordination and emergency response structure.

The committee then talked about next steps. They decided they would be:

1. A presentation on the flooding threats
2. A detail explanation of the earthquake plan
3. An assessment of the evacuation potential and needs

Commissioner Clark said he would like to see these presentations co-hosted with the North Richmond Municipal Advisory Council and Supervisor Gioia's Office.

The committee decided to begin planning these presentations at their next meeting.

5. New Business:

- a) **Review of the emergency response to the May 1, 2006 incident at the ConocoPhillips refinery.**

Due to time constraints, this item will be discussed at the next full Commission meeting.

b) Discussion of committee priorities and attendance .

Michael Kent explained that at the Internal Operations Committee (IOC) of the Board of Supervisors met on May 1st and review the information the Commission had prepared on their attendance record over the last 18 months. The IOC was satisfied with the information and decided to move forward the recommendations on appointments the Commission had previously made. The IOC said they wanted to review attendance again in 3 months.

Michael Kent said that he had spoken with Ralph Sattler about serving as an alternate for Steve Linsely in the environmental seat. Mr. Sattler said that he would be interested. The committee felt that the position should still be advertised for an appropriate period of time to be consistent and fair.

6. **Items of interest to the Committee:** The committee ran out of time to discuss a summary of the meeting with Supervisor Gioia, but will do so at the next meeting.
7. **Adjournment** - The meeting was adjourned at 12:00.