

Emergency Management Administration Council

June 25, 2024

Capitol Boardroom

09:00 - 10:30

Meeting Minutes

In attendance:

Commissioner Jess L. Anderson
Mike McComb, Park City Municipal
Pat Malan, VOAD/ARRL
Will Lusk, Cache County EM
Thayne Mickelson, Dept of Ag
Annette Newman, Utah Hospital Assoc
Hans Millican, DEQ
Craig Buttars, Dept of Ag & Food

Lt. Governor Deidre M. Henderson
Greg Paras, Workforce Services
Kathryn McMullin, Summit County
Lisa Wilson, UDOT
Jeff King, Jordan Valley Water
Tara Behunin, Salt Lake County EM
Ric Cantrell, Attorney General's Office

Guests:

Glen Merrill, National Weather Service

Marcus Yockey, DPS AG
Max Gruber, Governor's Office
Jerrilyn Appelgate, DPS SIAC
Tanner Jensen, DPS SIAC

Basil Newmerzhycky, Great Basin
Coordination Center
Maddie Taylor, DPS SIAC
Janna Wilkinson, DPS DEM
James Ostergar, Governor's Office

Staff Support:

Judy Watanabe, DPS DEM
Kris Repp, DPS DEM

Kim Hammer, DPS DEM

Welcome, Introduction, & Opening Remarks -

Lt. Governor Deidre M. Henderson
DPS Commissioner Jess L. Anderson

Commissioner Anderson welcomed the group and thanked them for attending on the Primary Election Day.

Lt. Governor Henderson welcomed the group and indicated that we have had a busy spring runoff and the wildfire season is also in process.

Membership Updates

No updates to our membership at this time

Approval of Minutes - January 11, 2023 Meeting

Council

The Council read the minutes of the last meeting. Mike McComb made a motion to approve the minutes, Kathryn McMullin seconded. Motion carried.

Presentations:

Fire Season Outlook

Basil Newmerzhycky, Great Basin Coordination Center

Basil presented an overview of current and projected fire conditions in the state, highlighting the rapid evolution of fire risks. Recent weeks have seen a combination of higher temperatures and significant rainfall—over 200% of the norm in some areas—creating conditions resembling a monsoon.

A key concern is the northwest region, where above-normal snowpack from consecutive winters (2022/2023 and 2023/2024) has helped mitigate drought but may contribute to fine fuel growth as snowpack melts. Southern and northwest Utah have experienced above-average precipitation, fostering denser grass and fuel growth, which could elevate wildfire risks.

Historically, high snowpack and wet winters have preceded active wildfire seasons, particularly in lower elevations, which account for 70% of the state's drought- and fire-prone areas. Current conditions resemble those in previous years with severe fire activity, as indicated by metrics like the Palmer Drought Severity Index and 1000-hour fuel levels.

Looking ahead, predictions suggest above-normal heat and drier conditions over the next three months, with weaker monsoon activity. Storms from the northwest may increase, and the fire danger in northwestern Utah is expected to remain above normal from July through September, signaling a potentially prolonged fire season in that region.

The Commissioner thanked Basil for his presentation.

Open Public Meeting Requirements

Marcus Yockey, AG, DPS

This presentation was given to the EM Admin Council in January. No public meeting requirements presentation is required at this time.

Weather Outlook

Glen Merrill, Senior Hydrologist, National Weather Service

Spring Runoff and Hydrological Outlook - For the first time since 2006, Utah has experienced back-to-back record snowpack seasons. While June 2024 brought excessive heat and normal temperatures over the past 30 days, precipitation levels remain below average. Southeastern Utah is an exception, with some areas receiving 300% of normal precipitation, leading to heavy flooding in Moab.

Temperature fluctuations have played a critical role in snowmelt and water management. Despite these shifts, proactive water movement prevented major flooding and maintained near-average streamflow conditions, according to USGS Water Watch data from January 2023. Reservoirs are in good shape and higher than previous years.

Drought and Future Preparations - While current drought status has seen little change, portions of southwest Tooele County may face emerging drought conditions. Preparing for future drought cycles is essential, with a closer analysis planned for fall.

Precipitation and Fire Risks - June into early July is typically Utah's driest period, though forecasts suggest above-average precipitation in the next two weeks, with up to ¾ inch expected in higher mountain regions. However, July through September is projected to be hot and dry, increasing wildfire risks—a common trend during transitions from La Niña conditions.

Commissioner thanked Glen for his presentation and his knowledge and expertise.

Summer Events Threat Briefing - SIAC

Maddie Taylor, SIAC

The state has many events taking place over the summer: parades, rodeos, marathons, fairs, holiday celebrations, that are being looked at for potential threats.

- Primary Elections Today - there have been hoax bombs, active shooter threats, demonstrations and protests at polling locations, disruptions between election workers and voters, electioneering, voter intimidation, cyber threats, and deep fake activities.
- Lone Violent Extremist - A lone violent extremist plans violent activities on their own.
 - August 2022 at a county fair - anti government individual, following police officers around, tried to disarm an officer. The suspect was apprehended.
 - May 2019 - bomb threat called in to the Ogden City marathon; suspect had previously set fire to his apartment and then went to the marathon. He was apprehended before he could place a device at the marathon.
 - Bountiful City parade - bomb hoax

SIAC is available to assist with monitoring for special events

Suspicious Activity and threat indicators - Maddie will share these with the group if needed.

Be aware of people who are acting suspicious during special events. The SIAC can provide onsite monitoring for special events if needed.

How the SIAC can help:

- Onsite monitoring
- Remote monitoring
- SEAR (Special Event Assessment Rating) In/Out Assessments (venue, threat, event specific)
- Trainings (Response, awareness, etc)
- Threat management unit (TMU) support

Maddie said they are looking at upcoming large events at the Stadium of Fire event next week and the Hill AFB Air Show this weekend.

Mike McComb asked about potential drone usage for attacks, has SIAC heard anything regarding this type of attacks. Maddie said that there is nothing on the radar at this time. The Stadium of Fire has a drone detection unit that is utilized during their event. Mike indicated that the FAA takes a “hands off” approach to many special events.

Will Lusk said that there were a lot of intended disruptions during commencement events. Is there a possibility of these incidents moving to other special events? Maddie indicated that there is a potential for this to happen. The SIAC has had good success in assisting with these events, and creating plans for special events. Mike McComb mentioned that they had a freeway closure on I-80 the weekend after Sundance; they were pro Palestine supporters. SIAC does their best to monitor these types of activities. Maddie Taylor contact info maddieLtaylor@utah.gov

The Commissioner thanked Maddie for her presentation. The Commissioner indicated that DPS is working with the federal delegation to move forward with drone enforcement.

Governor's Preparedness Initiative

Max Gruber, Governor's Office

Max discussed the Governor's Preparedness Initiative that is ongoing and appreciated the great cooperation and coordination with DPS and DEM. The Governor's office and cabinet have been encouraged to take preparedness and Continuity of Operations more seriously. Last November, the Governor's cabinet had had a training activity to help them become more prepared.

This year, all agencies participated in the Great Utah ShakeOut, which included a "surprise" scenario for them to work through. DEM continues to work on these initiatives which includes a checklist guide for executive directors to have in hand during an emergency or disaster (to outline specific actions).

We have also been working on standardized messaging and communications tools with agency PIOs in a collaborative effort. We look forward to continuing our engagement with agency and legislative membership. Max thanked the group for their commitment to emergency preparedness in the state.

The Lt Governor appreciates the hard work and extra steps that have been taken to make sure that we are more prepared.

The Commissioner feels that this administration has been very committed to emergency preparedness.

2023 Flooding Declarations

Janna Wilkinson, Resilience Bureau Chief, DEM

Janna discussed the flood disaster of 2023. The incident period was from early April 9 - June 6, 2023, where active flooding was occurring. Declarations can be made 30 days from the last day of the incident for a federal declaration and can be extended an additional 30 days for damage assessments. FEMA verifies that the state has met the state threshold.

The declaration request was made on August 11, 2023 and we received partial approval on December 23, 2023. The response back from the declaration request shortened the Incident period to May 1st - 27th and approved costs from nine counties: Iron, Morgan, Sanpete, Utah, and Wasatch (originally we submitted for 11 counties). The counties that were denied on this declaration were: Daggett, Grand, Juab, Kane, Salt Lake, and Weber.

On February 26, 2024 we submitted an appeal and additional documentation. On May 3, 2024 the appeal was denied.

We have state funded grants this year to help local communities that were denied support. The new Local Disaster Response, Recovery, and Mitigation Fund is designed to help those counties that suffer damages but do not meet the threshold or are otherwise denied through the declaration process. There is \$10 million allocated to this account. The six counties that were denied are qualified to apply for these funds. It is anticipated that there could be over \$20 million in claims.

Janna shared that we have had four presidential disaster declarations since 2020.

The Lt. Governor asked, with the increase in need, is this due to population growth and more homes are at risk? Janna indicated that it is a combination of all these things. Massive growth,

changing weather patterns, global warming etc. We have seen a lot of requests that come through DEM where flood prone areas are being turned into subdivisions.

Thayne Mickelson asked Janna how we can use grant funds for issues that originate in other states? The landslide in Idaho affected/impacted Utah farmers. Will Lusk indicated that there is a stream gauge on the Bear River, but there are no gauges on irrigation canals which makes it challenging to understand the amount of water in the canal.

Janna indicated that this is a hard question. With FEMA it comes down to who is fiscally responsible for the damages, Farm Lands fall under USDA and Agriculture. It is out of FEMA's jurisdiction. Thayne asked if the irrigation canals are considered infrastructure? Janna indicated that they are considered infrastructure.

Moab recently had flooding, they will most likely apply for disaster assistance. The legislature will help to appropriate these grant funds. Those asking for assistance for multiple projects will be asked to self prioritize.

Lt Governor assumes that the communities ability to pay for damages will play a part in the decision process? Janna said that the size of the community's ability to pay (based on size and economic capacity).

Lt Gov - suggested increasing the funding in the account moving forward to help support more counties.

Thayne Mickelson - how do we make sure that applicants can't double dip and get assistance from the state as well as FEMA? Janna indicated that all of the grant applications will go through the same grant application software. Those that will be funded by the state will be separated out.

Janna reported that there are two types of assistance:

- PA - Public assistance - local governments, some non-profits, no private sector businesses. Parks, recreation areas, government facilities, specific damages
- IA -Individual assistance -primary residence only. Utah has only received two IA declarations, one being COVID19

State of Utah's damage threshold is more than \$5.8 million to qualify for a presidential declaration.

The Commissioner thanked Janna for her presentation.

Roundtable Discussion

Council

Future Topics

Mike McComb - waiting for the International Olympic Committee (IOC) announcements in a few weeks. It might be interesting to hear from Rocky Mountain Power on proactive de-energization of power lines, when there is a wildfire threat.

Pat Malan - Pat said the Oath keepers are looking for a host for their platform. The Commissioner suggested that Pat provide the SIAC with information on this group for follow up.

· **Action Items / Initiatives**

Council

Nothing at this time

· **Closing Remarks and Adjournment**

**Lt. Governor Deidre M. Henderson
DPS Commissioner Jess L. Anderson**

The Commissioner extended his appreciation to everyone attending these meetings. We've seen some crazy weather in the past few days. Due to coordinated efforts we are able to lean forward and keep people safe.

Lt Governor Henderson - We have a busy fire season already this year, it is good to stay informed. Also, if you haven't voted today, please vote.

Motion to Adjourn: Lt Governor Henderson. The meeting adjourned at 10:32 am.