

Montgomery County CERT Steering Committee Meeting Minutes

June 3, 2013

Steering Committee Members in Attendance

Steve Peterson, President	Jay Wilson, Outreach Coordinator	Tom Smith, Dep Ops Coordinator
Tricia Laut, Treasurer	Ken Ow, Logistics Coordinator	Carl Brill, Comms Coordinator
Marcy Fine, Secretary	Denise Gilmore, HR Coordinator	
Tricia Laut, Treasurer	Jay KapLon, IT Coordinator	

Steering Committee Members not in Attendance

Greg St. James, Program Manager	Kathee Henning, Training Coordinator	Patrick Benko, Social Media Coordinator
Rick Dunn, Vice President	Ben Koshy, Operations Coordinator	Cynthia Halota, CPR Coordinator

CERT Members in Attendance

David Contois	Todd Jasper
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Prior to the start of the steering committee meeting, CERT member, Katelyn Keegan, visited to sign for and pick up her County ID and CERT t-shirt

Meeting began at 7:00pm and adjourned at 9:05pm

Program Manager Updates

There were no program manager updates as Greg was not in attendance.

Officer Updates

Steve provided updates on the following:

- New grant funding procurement and documentation process
- Progress of the April/May training class survey
- Individual and Community Preparedness Award deadline approaching
- CERTCON Planning meeting update
- Necessity to reach out to trainees who recently graduated that are interested in joining MCCERT

MCCERT has received guidance from MCOEMHS on a new grant funding procurement and documentation process to help effectively streamline and track purchases through grants. The new process requires a legitimate, but substantial, amount of writing which is delaying Steve from completing the task that requires the completed information be returned to MCOEMHS. On a good note, the requests for funding for 2013 for MCCERT have been approved. The business justification communicated verbally to MCOEMHS in a recent meeting. It is a matter of capturing the information down on paper, addressing the gaps in the program that will be filled with the purchase(s), and consolidating price quotes into one central repository.

Rick has completed capturing the data from the surveys received from the April/May 2013 training class – which was the largest graduating class in MCCERT history. The results have been provided to Greg, Steve, and Kathee for initial review and discussion before being presented to the general membership. This meeting had not taken place by the time of the steering committee meeting, therefore, no details on the results were shared; however, Steve did note, from his initial look at the information, that nothing appeared to stick out as a major problem. It was positive to observe that more people wrote comments vs. writing “N/A”. Next steps with surveys will include reevaluating the content of what is desired to be assessed and also automating the process (e.g., Survey Monkey).

The FEMA Individual & Community Preparedness Awards deadline is fast approaching and it appears as though we will not be submitting an application as the deadline is Wednesday and there have been no volunteers to step up and assist with the application process. There were many accomplishments over the past year that were worthy of submission (e.g., shelter operations support during Hurricane Sandy and the social media monitoring initiative [and SITREP generation] during the March snow storm). Ken suggested instead of submitting an application covering all MCCERT accomplishments, focus on one. Steve agreed that was a good strategy; however, reiterated that there was a need for support from anyone in CERT to assist with the process. *(June 5th Update to Steering Committee Minutes – MCCERT was able to submit an application to the FEMA Individual & Community Preparedness Award before the deadline. MCCERT has been nominated for the Outstanding Community Emergency Response Team Initiatives for its efforts associated to social media monitoring during a disaster and SITREP generation utilizing advancing technologies. For more information, email president@montgomerycert.org)*

CERTCON is scheduled for June 29 – 30 in Virginia. Steve represented MCCERT at today's CERTCON coordination meeting (teleconference) with neighboring CERTs. As of today, MCCERT has 19 members registered, Prince Georges CERT has 22, and Fairfax CERT has 48. Those were the highest numbers among the area CERTs. In total, 122 people have signed up. The registration is being capped at 200 participants and no deadline for signing up was reported. Fairfax CERT is finalizing the agenda for the two-day event and will email it to Greg and Steve once completed.

Steve is concerned over poor responsiveness to recent training graduates whom had proactively communicated interest in joining Montgomery County CERT. Steve stated this issue is his number one priority to resolve and feels a large portion of the issues will be resolved with CERVIS as several manual steps will be eliminated, but acknowledged that a large contributor to the issue has been the challenge of transition HR coordinators, the lack of PIMS access for Denise, and inconsistent communications between coordinators and/or coordinators to CERT leadership. Denise was just recently granted her PIMS login credentials in mid-May however the request for access to PIMS had been stalled in the Volunteer Services Division of MCFRS for a while before May. In an effort to identify where the gap in communications has been occurring, Greg instituted a policy (in April) for HR, Training, and Registrar coordinators to cc him and Steve on all correspondence with members/registrants. Steve stated he has not been cc'd nor had been forwarded apparent email communications with the 16 graduates who wish to become members. Steve will be directly contacting the 16 individuals to congratulate them on graduating, welcoming them to join, and explaining what MCCERT's next steps are to get them on board, as well as to invite them to the general meetings and potluck party scheduled for August. He concluded it is imperative that we maintain new member enthusiasm in MCCERT as they are potentially our future coordinators and officers.

Coordinator Updates:

Outreach

Jay reported on the following:

May 9 - Paula Sind-Prunier presented to the Boy Scouts on the topic of emergency preparedness and it was well received

May 13 - Jay met with Montgomery County Public Schools Office of Community Engagement & Partnerships' Director and will follow up with potential collaborative efforts between the two organizations.

May 20 – Jay met with Western Montgomery Citizens Advisory Committee

May 22 – Jay provided a CERT Presentation to Choice Hotels and reported that there is a potential for future presentations.

May 23 – The meeting with the City of Takoma Park Emergency Preparedness Committee was postponed

May 29 – Paula Sind-Prunier presented to Boy Scouts Troop 291 in cooperation with OEMHS. This effort was a success for the many agencies that participated in the event and was publicized on the OEMHS social media sites, with mention of Montgomery County CERT and Paula.

May – Jay reported that CERT was mentioned in the Silver Spring e-Blast Newsletter that is received by thousands of residents of the city.

June 3 – Steve reported that Jeff Alderdice and Georgianne Mitchell were representing MCCERT at the Montgomery County Public Schools Career Day at Arcola Elementary School.

Jay seeks work with non-profit Montgomery to get visibility for MCCERT. Steve asked what was the purpose of having such an aggressive outreach campaign. He asked whether it was solely for visibility, solely for membership recruitment, for grant opportunities or a combination. Jay and several others in the meeting replied it was a combination.

Jay reported that he and Steve will be meeting the MCPD District Community Services Chief McSwain on Friday to discuss future collaborative efforts between MCPD and MCCERT. Steve stated that MCCERT could potentially service MCPD as mock victims in their exercises. Todd voiced concern that there is a national issue with Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs) and officially asking for resources during an emergency. Steve clarified that the potential collaboration with MCPD had nothing to do with deployments during emergencies and that the protocol for MCCERT activation comes directly from MCFRS only.

Jay plans to meet on June 11th with the Wheaton Urban District Advisory Committee.

Jay reported that the June 12th NARA Health and Safety Fair, in which MCCERT was invited to participate, has no volunteers. One of the biggest challenges in the lack of volunteers is assumed to be that it is during a weekday when the majority of MCCERT members work. (10am-2pm). Steve said another call out for volunteers will be posted to Facebook and IAR, so as to avoid having to cancel and potentially impact our reputation.

Jay is working on transitioning the coordination efforts with the Bethesda Urban Partnership (BUP) over to Kathee (training) who will lead the effort to identify dates and instructors for the training they are seeking.

Jay briefly mentioned that the Silver Spring Regional Service Center wants a “Storm Camp” training whenever we can coordinate such an effort. This will need to be discussed when Greg returns and lead by Kathee.

Also, there are discussions underway to potentially offer training to employees of Discovery Communications; however, only initial talks have taken place, and again, we will see the transition of outreach to training will take place.

Jay emphasized his need for assistance by any fellow MCCERT member as his workload is full. He is seeking assistance with speaking/presentation/administration and is willing to help train fellow members on his strategies used in speaking. He is also willing to create a template/slide presentation for anyone that may be considering assisting. Steve acknowledged Jay has been tremendously busy for the benefit of MCCERT and sees the same issue (lack of volunteers) to be impeding other areas within the organization (e.g., no volunteers to assist in the FEMA award). Denise asked whether CERT Leadership wanted there to be a minimum CERT membership length before allowing members to represent the organization at outreach events. Steve responded that we are almost desperate in the since that by turning away eager volunteers wanting to help out MCCERT we may be jeopardizing our number of members’ involved; however, does agree there needs to be a period of time (to be defined) where an assessment of the individual takes place. Given Greg and other Officers were not present at the steering committee meeting, no decision was made. Marcy discussed the effectiveness of having outreach teams/buddies and that Jay may have a better chance of getting volunteers to sign up to speak if he/she knows that they will have someone else with them at the event.

Training

Kathee contacted Steve in advance of the steering committee meeting. She unexpectedly would not be able to attend the meeting. She did, however, provide the following training report:

General Mtgs- June mtg speaker will be from Montgomery County Police Crisis Intervention Center. Several requests have gone out to PEPCo for July speaker, but they have not confirmed yet. Our September speaker will be from Mid-Atlantic DOGS to discuss how search dogs works, partnerships with new Police unit for SAR, etc. Police have expressed interest in doing joint training with us for SAR.

Fall CERT Class- We will not be able to confirm the dates until the rooms have been confirmed by the County. Greg is working on this. However, for our first choice, we are looking at a 30 hr Tues/Sat Enhanced CERT class to start September 17th-October 19th which would avoid the Jewish holiday. Please do not advertise the dates until we get the building confirmation; we may have to choose other dates if PSHQ or EOB are not available. We will stay off the Thursday night so there is no conflict with the General Mtg night for the fall class.

Fall Teen CERT Class- We are exploring the idea of a separate Teen CERT class for the fall. There would only be 4 eligible new JFB who have not taken the class, so we would need to aggressively advertise this class at the high schools.

Urban District CERT Class- The Bethesda Urban District has requested a closed weekday class for its employees for this summer, and Greg is negotiating with them. In the past they have paid for the instructor and expenses.

CERT Certificates- certificates were prepared for the April-May CERT class. As noted before, we were able to successfully work out a procedure with Robert Ward from MEMA to electronically produce his signature for FEMA/MEMA authorization. We are waiting for confirmation from HR on completion of the IS courses to issue final certificates. Reissued one certificate with full name as requested. Cost of mailing certificates is 0.92 postage plus cost of envelope. So we should continue to encourage members to come to meetings to pick up the certificates.

Thanks- President sent out thank you notices to CERT instructors and also to Boy Scouts for participation as mock victims.

GWGVFD -K.Henning wrote up brief articles for GWGVFD monthly House Siren on Teen CERT volunteering as mock victims, and also about topics covered in CERT to recruit additional adults for fall class.

Evaluations- Rick Dunn completed statistical summary of April/May class evaluations and Training is reviewing these for improvements.

Other Topics:

Citizen Corps Council- Kathee Henning attended the May MC Citizen Corps Council meeting. The meeting was mostly about 2013-2014 strategic planning for MC Citizen Corps Council. Neighborhood Ready and CERT Training remain priorities for the CCC, as well as Shelter Training. Becky Zorn is the new liaison since Michael Goldfarb has moved on to other OEM duties.

Teen CERT Named as Scholarship Recipient- I am pleased to report that Rohini Manickam was the Region II Maryland Emergency Management Association 2013 Scholarship winner as reported at the MEMA conference last week. Miss Manickam is an honors student and recent graduate at Poolesville High School. A Gaithersburg resident, she is currently working on getting her EMT certification through GWGVFD as a member of the Junior Fire Brigade. Rohini successfully graduated from the Montgomery County FRS Teen CERT program. She also volunteers at the Wilson Health Care Center. She will be going to Wayne State University in Detroit Michigan as a pre-medicine student. We all are very proud of her, and offer her our congratulations for winning this competitive award.

Kathee has lined up our June 13th General Meeting Guest Speaker. They will be representing the MCP Crisis Intervention Team.

Steve had planned to discuss a possible November/December 2013 Teen CERT training offering; however, given Kathee was not in attendance, it was best to table the discussion to a later date.

Logistics

Ken provided Steve a set of his own keys to Room 220 at the COB. The keys used to be held by a member who is no longer active in the organization. It was agreed that the President should have access to this facility which currently stores CERT material. Steve stated that by the next training class, in the September timeframe, Greg should have completed locating a permanent storage location at 100 Edison Park Drive (the PSHQ) which is MCCERT's official location. Room 220 at the COB was instructed to be vacated several months ago; however, no one has pressed anyone in MCCERT to remove its material so far. Concerns of accessibility of CERT material at the PSHQ were raised by Denise. Steve acknowledged there are currently challenges of storage of CERT material within secured areas of PSHQ in which no members of CERT, other than Greg, have access to; however, the issue is known is being addressed but in the interim, Greg is the central point person to contact should something currently in the building needs to be checked out. Denise raised the concern that having one contact creates a bottleneck risk. Steve believed that knowing these issues now helps in discovering a resolution. He said he will talk to Greg when he returns to see if a locked location on an unsecured floor of the PSHQ may be a solution for the bottleneck and security issues. Steve stated that he wants to begin migrating everything from the COB over to Greg's area of the PSHQ because there is no certainty as to what date/time Room 220 will be cleaned out and there is no certainty during that clean out that CERT would be contacted to retrieve their items "left behind". Both Ken and Denise believe that we can have in a matter of two hours maximum have vehicles loaded with all the material from Room 220 when an announcement comes that MCCERT must remove them.

The above lead into discussion of CERT gear and when it should be done. Denise suggested that CERT gear, one's certificate, etc. be handed out at the General meeting during a ceremony where kudos and photos can be taken. Several members concurred with the suggestion, but, seeing several other members were not present at the steering committee meeting, especially Greg, no decision was reached. Steve is concerned that until the current challenges of lack of communications between coordinators and other impediments identified in the Officer Update are resolved, it may be impossible to accomplish the excellent suggestion. He wants to stay focused on going live with the volunteer management software solution – CERVIS, first.

Ken inquired into logistical support for CERTCON and Steve indicated that this year's CERTCON is a little unique in comparison to the past two year CERTCONs in that MCCERT is neither the host nor the direct co-host (e.g., CERTCON at Georgetown). This year's CERTCON is hosted by Fairfax CERT and has involvement from area CERTs; however, no specific logistical assignment has been given to MCCERT.

Communications:

Carl reported that he is working on developing the communications plan from an all-hazards perspective (i.e., catastrophic event where area loses all standard communications). Steve requested he also look at the communications plan from the perspective of how we (MCCERT) communicate with one another – on a daily basis and during an actual deployment.

Steve reported to Carl that the next item on the grant funding list to be procured are the 10 MURS radios in which Carl had researched and received a price quote from a local vendor in Beltsville. Over the past month, there has been email dialogue to determine whether or not to have ear pieces be issued with the radios. As a result of those email conversations, and discussion during the steering committee, it was decided to get the earpiece. Steve asked that Carl revise the price quote accordingly and resend to Steve so he can add it into the new grant funding procurement and documentation process.

Human Resources:

Denise reported she has access to PIMS. She inquired into how to handle the MCPD personnel (who graduated in the Apr/May class) who had previous background checks through the Police Department. The MCFRS would allow this background check to suffice if completed within 18 months; however, 6 of the 7 background checks were performed later than 18 months. Steve said he will bring the issue to the attention of Janis Froehlich – MCPD Volunteer Services Division Director first and then will escalate to Chief Hinde, and then provide her the results of the meeting(s).

Steve asked for all paperwork for all trainees dating back to 2012 in an effort to try and diagnose, from start to finish, where hiccups occur with the onboarding of new members. Denise was able to provide the Apr/May 2013 class (as well as the 16 trainees who represented differing training classes); however, all other papers are in the possession of Kathee and Carol. Steve will contact them.

Information Tech

Jay KapLon reported that MCCERT is moving its website from iPage support (which expires on June 12th) to GoDaddy support. The backend of the website was developed using WordPress by Todd. By the end of this week, MCCERT will go live with using the website developed by WordPress and hosted by GoDaddy. Jay pointed out that the site will have some different looks to it given it was designed with WordPress but for the most part it looks the same. David C. inquired into whether his input into Google iCalendar is still required for events. Steve said it would not be necessary because by the time MCCERT goes live with CERVIS (which has a calendar of events functionality), it can be embedded onto the home page of MCCERT, thus rendering Google calendar unnecessary. During the transition over to GoDaddy, there may be a 24-48 period of time where officer and coordinator forwarding addresses do not work. Todd asked whether the transition could wait until the weekend; however, Jay explained that with the delays caused in developing the new website using WordPress, combined with other matters that impeded progress, we have no time to wait until the weekend to try and transition over and then effectively validate and test the new site before losing our account with iPage.

Jay reported that he and Steve attended a 2-hour training webinar on May 24th on administration of CERVIS. They are both scheduled to receive the remaining 2-hour training webinar this Friday, June 7th.

Based off the input from end users over the course of the past couple years, combined with the knowledge gained from the training, he and Steve will have a clearer understanding of what will most effectively work as fields in the system. MCCERT has the ability to customize 16 fields based off the contract signed with CERVIS. Denise would like to make a middle name field mandatory for CERVIS because of PIMS.

Operations:

Ben contacted Steve in advance of the steering committee meeting to say he would not be able to attend the meeting. He reported that the Deputy Coordinator, Tom Smith, will take the lead in developing the operational procedures. Through email communications between Ben and Steve, 4 individuals have been identified to collaborate on the procedures development – Ben, Tom Smith, Carl Brill, and David Dejewski. Steve requested Tom reach out to David Dejewski as he is awaiting feedback from the group. Tom will contact Steve offline for David's contact information.

Social Media:

Patrick contacted Steve in advance of the steering committee meeting to report he would be able to attend the meeting. Steve reported that MCCERT's social media presence continues to grow.

Meeting adjourned at 9:05pm

Appendix A: Steering Committee Meeting Action Items

June 2013

- Begin development of Operational procedures for incorporation into the P&P (Tom)
- Begin development of Communication procedures for incorporation into the P&P (Carl)
- Identify volunteers to assist with potluck party coordination (Steve)
- Provide revised price quote for radios (to include ear piece) to Steve (Carl)
- Discuss November/December 2013 Teen CERT training offering with Officers and Greg (Kathee)

May 2013

- Find Jay W. a deputy Outreach Coordinator (Greg and Steve)
- Discuss with Kathee whether or not MCCERT could begin signing their own certificates like they use to (Greg and Steve)
- Volunteer Management Software Solution by CERVIS (Steve and Jay)
 - Determine categories of members (trained, deployable, in training, etc.)
 - Ensure CERVIS becomes the primary membership database for storing member data
 - Determine statuses for trainees and members (e.g., in training, active, inactive, etc.)
 - Determine all the various sources for member data and consolidate into CERVIS (Google docs, Activ, IAR, Excel spreadsheets, etc)
 - President and IT Coordinator need access to Activ and ALL other sources prior to CERVIS deployment

April 2013

- Request organizers for the MCCERT 10 Year Anniversary Party at the General Meeting – Steve Peterson
- Identify photos and re-write brochure and submit to MCOEMHS for printing – Greg St. James
- Identify dates/times to train hand-selected MCCERT members on green screen usage – Greg St. James
- Develop the role and responsibilities for the new Social Media Coordinator position – Steve Peterson
- Contact Carol to identify when the Activ system stopped being used – Steve Peterson and Rick Dunn