

1 **Vashon Island Fire & Rescue**
2 **BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**
3 **Station 55 - Commissioner Room**
4 Special Meeting December 20, 2006

5
6 Commissioner Turner called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM. Commissioners present
7 were Sommers, Hoffmann, Nielsen, Turner, and Jennings.

8
9 Briefing on Wind Storm Response

10
11 Captain Kranjceovich reported on the Fire District's response to the recent wind storm.
12 There were a total of 50 calls. The break down of calls was as follows;

- 13
14 13 electrical problems
15 3 tree blocking
16 2 water problems
17 15 EMS
18 2 fire (one structure fire)
19 2 motor vehicle accidents
20 1 welfare check
21 3 service
22 6 automatic fire alarms
23 2 smoke/odor investigations
24 1 false alarm

25
26 The paid staff was held over and others were called back after the storm.

27
28 Commissioner Turner asked Captain Kranjceovich if there was adequate personnel and
29 equipment. Captain Kranjceovich responded that there was adequate personnel and
30 equipment and that he was in consistent communication with Assistant Chief Kirk, Puget
31 Sound Energy, Valley Communications and King County Roads. Captain Bob Larsen
32 was at Station 55 with Assistant Chief Kirk and Battalion Chief Coll making operation
33 decisions.

34
35 Commissioner Nielsen asked for feed back from others at the meeting.

36
37 Commissioner Jennings said that when he drove around Vashon Friday he had never seen
38 anything like the destruction from the wind storm. It looked like a hurricane. One reason
39 Commissioner Jennings wanted this meeting was to see how the response went with all
40 the groups involved in this real emergency situation.

41
42 Commissioner Sommers reported that many land line phones and cell phones were not
43 working after the storm.

44
45 Ward Silver from the ham the radio club activated radio communications Friday morning
46 from Station 55. After activating they went on hourly personnel rotation.

1 Commissioner Jennings asked if the District should have activated the EOC earlier.

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3 Captain Larsen responded that he, Assistant Chief Kirk and Battalion Chief Coll
4 discussed this in depth. At present the only criteria in place to activate the EOC are mass
5 evacuations, mass land slides, or mass casualties which would be when the Fire District is
6 overwhelmed.

7
8 Commissioner Jennings wanted to review the criteria for activating the EOC.

9
10 Rick Wallace, president of the VDPC, reported that there was a meeting between the
11 Vashon Disaster Preparedness Committee and Vashon Island Fire & Rescue evaluating
12 the response to the storm. Currently seven utility crews are working on Vashon and as of
13 9:00 this morning there were 1200 customers without power. Power has been coming on
14 for people all day, so the present number of customers without power would be less than
15 that.

16
17 Chief Yamane reported that there will be ten additional PSE crews coming on the island
18 tomorrow.

19
20 Mr. Wallace reported that Vashon's weather forecast for tonight included 39 mph winds
21 gusting to 51 mph. Chief Yamane and Mr. Wallace met and they are ready to activate the
22 EOC if the Island experiences severe weather.

23
24 Commissioner Jennings said that this was a learning experience and put the District
25 through a drill that could not be simulated. Looking around Friday morning
26 Commissioner Jennings thought it would take months before roads were cleared and
27 electricity back up and running.

28
29 Mr. Wallace said that there is another function of the EOC and that is community
30 communication. People wanted to know what the situation was and where they could go
31 to help or get help.

32
33 Commissioner Sommers called PSE Friday. PSE had no information on Friday to tell
34 anybody.

35
36 Mr. Wallace said that the information he is talking about that would have been helpful
37 were things like do not use a barbeque in you're their living room, where do you go for
38 debris removal and how gas was being rationed.

39
40 John Richards, a private citizen, did not understand why it takes the Governor's word to
41 deploy the EOC. He asked why CERT activation was delayed. He wanted to know why
42 this was not classified as a CERT emergency. There were plenty of people out there who
43 did not know where to get information about what was going on. CERT could provide
44 generators, distribute hot meals, and provide technical support on equipment. There
45 should be at least one island wide phone to call in to get information. The shelters could

1 have been opened earlier. Mr. Richards believes that we need dispatch back on the
2 island.

3
4 Commissioner Turner said that Linda Hamilton stayed Friday night until 10:00 PM to
5 answer the phones.

6
7 Linda Hamilton reported that most people know that if they get in trouble they can call
8 463-2405 and that usually is not answered after 5 PM. She stayed until 10:00 PM to
9 answer 463-2405 because she was worried that after dark that number would be ringing.
10 The last call she took was at 8:15PM. 95% of the callers only wanted to know when the
11 power was going to back on. She asked every single person who called if they needed to
12 come up for a warm place to stay or food and in assessing these phone calls the shelter
13 was not needed earlier. She joined the department in 1980 and has seen that most of the
14 senior citizens on the island will not leave their home when an emergency hits.

15
16 Mr. Wallace said that if they had activated the EOC on Friday the Voice of Vashon
17 (VOV) could have broadcasted. VOV cannot broadcast if the EOC is not activated. The
18 EOC's most important function for this incident would have been communication. Let's
19 work together to come up with protocols for activating the EOC.

20
21 Michael Cochrane, CERT manager, stated that CERT would be activated only when the
22 fire district was overwhelmed. When CERT was partially activated they were only able
23 to get hold of 65 volunteers. He would hesitate to activate CERT when the primary
24 problem was electrical wires down and trees over the road. CERT is not a chain saw
25 brigade. CERT had ten people out doing road checks and they did not have anybody ask
26 for assistance or see anybody who needed assistance. It did not make sense to have more
27 CERT people driving around than this because gasoline was being rationed on the island.

28
29
30 Catherine Cochrane, CERT manager, said that there was a grass roots response because
31 CERT members went out into their communities and checked out their neighbors.

32
33 Commissioner Sommers said that the important thing was that neighbors were out
34 checking on neighbors.

35
36 Commissioner Hoffmann reported that he worked 20 hours for King County roads and
37 it's real important that if people are on the roads the roads need to safe.

38
39 Commissioner Jennings talked about an intermediate protocol to partially activate the
40 EOC. The EOC does not need to activate to have NERO and others report on the
41 situation in their neighborhoods.

42
43 Ward Silver said we have focused on the response mode of a disaster and have not
44 planned on the recovery period. In this situation the Fire District met the response mode
45 and the recovery period started immediately. Our plans don't account for the recovery
46 phase; we did real well in the response phase.

1 Commissioner Nielsen said that phones and other communication devices will not be
2 available in this kind of emergency.

3
4 Captain Larsen addressed whether to activate or not activate the EOC and recommended
5 setting up a committee to establish protocols for activating the EOC.

6
7 Captain Kranjceovich said the Fire District has responded to wind storms before. Valley
8 Communication dispatched well during the storm and they were busy.

9
10 Commissioner Jennings wanted to talk about minimal activation of the EOC and
11 escalating the activation level as needed.

12
13 Rick Frye said that in King County the fire department does not activate the EOC.
14 People who activate the EOC don't do anything else except run the EOC. CERT can be
15 activated from the bottom and does need to be activated from the top.

16
17 Jim Copitzky of Morningside Farms said that the fundamental issue is that you make
18 good decisions by having good information. The people in his church were assigned to
19 people in their neighborhood to check on and they checked on all of them. Mr. Copitzky
20 offered the utility workers a place to stay at Morningside Farms.

21
22 Ward Silver said what we learned from this was that organizations such as the ham radio
23 group, NERO and CERT could self activate. We should look at some intermediate step
24 where Vashon would activate with grassroots people out in the community. We need a
25 disaster plan that will cover different levels of emergencies.

26
27 Catherine Cochrane said that on Thursday night she was in contact with Mike Kirk and
28 people were put on alert. She believes that all the decisions were good decisions and
29 what was missing was a central point of communication.

30
31 Michael Cochrane suggested helping VOV to get their license to be able to broadcast
32 over the air. Alice Larson and Rick Wallace concurred.

33
34 Cathy Rogers from the American Red Cross, said that a shelter was setup Friday,
35 Saturday and Sunday nights in the Firefighter's Association. On Monday night the
36 Presbyterian Church's shelter was open. Tonight the shelter will be open on an on call
37 basis. The shelter served two people the first night, none the second night and three
38 people the third night.

39
40 Commissioner Nielsen said that we are much further along on disaster response than we
41 were just a year ago. He felt that all the feed back was positive.

42
43 Commissioner Turner listened to all the calls and wanted to complement the Fire District
44 personnel.

45

1 Commissioner Nielsen moved to adjourn to executive session pursuant to RCW
2 42.30.110 to evaluate the qualifications of an applicant for public employment or to
3 review the performance of a public employee. The executive session will last thirty
4 minutes and no decision will be made after the executive session concludes.
5 Commissioner Hoffmann seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted in favor. The
6 executive session started at 8:55 PM.
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8 Commissioner Turner called the regular session back to order at 9:18 PM.
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10 Commissioner Nielsen moved to adjourn. Commissioner Sommers seconded the motion.
11 All Commissioners voted in favor.
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13 The meeting ended at 9:20 PM.
14
15 Maridee BonaDea
16 District Secretary
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