

## CAER Meeting Minutes

September 18, 2024

**Location:** Administration Building to the Steele County Highway building, 3000 Hoffman Drive and Teams

**Call to Order:** Meeting called to order at 3:43pm by Tom Karnauskas.

**Attendees:** Tom Karnauskas, Kristen Sailer, Jerry Ibberson, Thad Rosenberg, Joseph Eichten, Annette Duncan and Rick Hager.

Guests: Lionel Turner and Arturo Rodriguez, with FEMA VALS

**Introductions:** Attendees introduced themselves.

### Routine Approvals:

- 1) **Financial Report** – Approx. \$1800 in the account, no funds have been spent. There is a request for \$10,000 to be added to this budget in 2025. This is contingent on whether we can get a full-scale exercise in Ellendale. Kristen would also like to work with the railroad. Joe is retiring, so agreed to help start it, but may not be able to finish.
- 2) **Secretary's Report** – No changes. Approved.

### Old Business:

- 1) **Multi Hazard Mitigation Plan** – The plan was submitted, and feedback has been received and acted on. The plan has also been reviewed by FEMA. FEMA has requested updates in 7-9 areas, better analyzing the data in the plans. Kristen, Meghan, and Tom are working on those updates. They anticipate they will have the plan back to the state and FEMA within the next month. The state did not have any additional revisions. There is no additional data needed from the cities/county. The flooding did delay the work that was being done to respond.

### New Business:

- 1) **Severe Weather / Flooding June 2024** – June 15 to July 4. Steele County was included in the major disaster declaration. The updates are included in the handouts provided at the meeting. There were 20 counties included with a few additional counties added. There may be additional counties added. The flood affected approx. 40 counties in the state of MN. It included business, residential, and agriculture. There is an individual assistance program that people can access. The flyer provides instructions for how to access this support. FEMA representatives noted that we have 22 registrations in Steele County and 20 went through with \$21,999.59 in funding, approx. \$2,637.44 per individual.

Recovery centers – Waterville, LeSuer County and Waseca, Waseca County; individual residents can speak to FEMA representatives directly. The county may also have additional resources at those centers. Steele County was not selected. The counties surrounding us have been included. A FEMA team did come to the Steele County Fair and staffed a booth to assist families. They assisted 5 families at this event. The DSA locations and applications for individuals are closed as of September 27, 2024. Any type of water damage should apply. Residential can apply for up to \$500,000 loans. 15% can be used for mitigation. Low interest loans are 2.9%. Individual households are eligible for up to \$42,500 for housing assistance/other needs assistance. Repairs to the house, as well as personal care items that were damaged are covered.

September 30, 2024, is the deadline for Small Business Disaster Loans. Up to \$2,000,000. 15% can be used for mitigation. Low interest loans are 2.9%.

Kristen asked that we add this information to our newsletters throughout the county.

**ACTION ITEM:** Kristen asked that we all send out in any way that we can information on the recovery options to community and business.

Disaster Services Team has been door knocking (outreach). Kristen feels that the team did well. Breakdown of DSA interactions in Steele County: 268 interactions, 1943 homes visited, 1 person registered, 1 case inquiry. Also visited 14 community-based organizations, 15 faith-based organizations, 10 government agencies, 73 private sectors, approx. 2,050 people.

Kristen shared that after a disaster that we find that there are unmet needs, that this group would be a good place for us to complete a needs assessment of unmet needs. Owatonna's flood was 1 foot away from flooding Hoffman Drive. Medford was also very close. There were 30 plus homes that had their home damaged due to the floods in Owatonna alone.

- 2) **FEMA Update** - Arturo and Lionel reported that their mission is to find resources for community members once all the funding is gone; faith-based, service organizations, etc. Also is trying to build a collaboration to be able to receive donations for future events. There is a need for case managers/firms in the event of a disaster. United Way may be an option for this. Kristen shared an example of an individual that had damage and was denied all services. This is a case that could have come through a collaboration like this.

FEMA has identified 5 organizations that are interested in long term recovery. They are having a kick-off meeting to continue conversations. Community Pathways, United Way of Steele County, New Life Church, Southern MN Initiative Foundation, Good Shephard Lutheran Church. Kristen would like organizations included in this group for future meetings instead of a separate meeting. FEMA wanted clarification on the role of this

new group, would they join CAER or start a new organization. Kristen envisions that this group would join CAER. FEMA will organize before they leave the community.

Lionel highly recommended that individuals register even if they don't think they qualify for assistance.

**ACTION ITEM:** Before October 18, 2024, when FEMA leaves, we need to coordinate a meeting with the new members to introduce them to CAER.

Kristen asked Jerry if there is support in Ellendale to assist with restoration. Kristen asked Rick about Medford, limited. Volunteers United is a resource for all communities. The city halls in each community would be a good place to set up.

FEMA Specialists are meeting with the cities/county to get all the projects written up. Kristen said if you haven't heard from someone to let her know so that no one is missed.

**Resources:**

FEMA.gov/flood-insurance

Floodsmart.gov

NFIPdirect.FEMA.com

**Steele County Emergency Manager Report:**

- 1) Kristen Sailor – The team has been busy with the disaster response. They are working on the Emergency Operations Plan with the new MCWEOP requirements for 2024/2025. They need to have these updated by 2025 so that they can do outreach to the cities to adopt the updated plan for 2025. September is National Preparedness Month. The Theme is Start a Conversation. Just talking to friends, families, neighbors about being prepared. Public Health is doing a campaign for elderly support. Kristen noted that we also need to have a plan for our pets as well as our family members. There is also a campaign for purchasing flood insurance. Many people don't realize that they may be eligible. Kristen has a list of the insurance providers that write these policies, they can also be identified on NFIP.org.

Kristen is working on the budget. The county is trying to set the levy amount. They are trying to increase the Deputy Director Position hours from .5 FTE to 1.0 FTE.

Tom noted that we have all of our volunteer training for the year.

**Member Reports:**

**CERT**

- Completed new member class in March 2024 with 9 participants.
- Next training scheduled for Spring 2025
- Tom has a certification training tonight for CERT members.

## SKYWARN

- Annual Spotter training completed March 21, 2024.
- Next training is planned for March 2025.

## RACES

- Completed Amateur Radio License class in April 2024.

Tom – Conference session were good. Too many to speak about.

Kristen – Captain Krum did a presentation about being a Vietnam Prisoner of War that she thought was very good.

Jerry – EMT Training (16 individuals). Public Health will host a Flu Clinic Set up for October 2, 2024, at the Fire Hall.

Annette – United Way receives calls from community members in need. Kristen would like to know if there are any homes that had damage that we helped so she can add to her report. United Way continues to recruit

Thad – No update. They are not in a position to do any exercises at this time due to their current workload.

Joe – Caught up with most of the flood work and repair. Things have been quiet.

Rick – Park damage has been repaired to previous conditions, no improvements. There is going to be a separate emergency management position outside of the Fire Department.

**Discussion:** Kristen wanted us to discuss the meetings and how we add value and increase participation. Annette suggested that we meet with the new organizations to start planning for disasters and what our roles will be in advance of the next disaster. Thad was interested in what the role of business is in these meetings. Rick suggested that we have an annual opportunity for businesses to come in and learn about a specific topic of interest.

**Adjournment:** Tom adjourned the meeting at 4:52pm

**Next Introduction Meeting: TBD**

**Next Meeting:** November 20, 2025, at the Administration Building to the Steele County Highway building, 3000 Hoffman Drive and Teams.