SANTA CRUZ COUNTY OFFICE OF RESPONSE, RECOVERY & RESILIENCE

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

Meeting Minutes

Date: September 10, 2026, 1:00–3:00 pm
Location: EOC, 5200 Soquel Ave., Santa Cruz

1. Call to Order / Instructions for Participation

- Patsy Gasca called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm; room introductions conducted.

2. Roll Call

- Emergency Management Council Appointed Members, Districts 1–5.
- Quorum established.

3. Changes to the Agenda

- Public Comment omitted from the agenda, today will be added prior to new business and permanently featured moving forward
- Under NGO's, Liz Selling -> Liz Taylor-Selling
- Joe Christy so moved, Liz Taylor Selling Second

4. Public Comment

- **Becky Steinburner. KE6AFE** will be missed by many. Regarding BESS for 90 Minto Road, change in ownership. Invenergy, Chicago-based; still plan on same lithium-ion battery technology and still following the state permitting process. Encouraged EMC to file comment to the docket. If approved, will pose a disaster for evacuation in the surrounding area. Local fire agencies are not prepared to handle a thermal runaway event for a project at this scale. 300 metal storage containers. RING system – concerned about this, how it will work, especially in a disaster. Please watch this project carefully; small fire districts simply can't afford this cost.

5. Approval of Minutes (Attachment A)

- **Motion:** Rob Oatey. **Second:** Tom Avila. **Abstention:** Nancy Yellin. Motion carried.

6. Old Business

- None.

7. New Business

- **Amanda Gullings –** OR3 is applying for a $10 million CRC grant to upgrade the Santa Cruz County Fairgrounds. If awarded, requires a governance body which we would like to utilize EMC and embed this governance body. Would require County Code amendment to include a Fairgrounds' representative (for consideration today), current CEO. Will hear back in Spring 2027.
  - **Motion to approve application for Fairgrounds grant.**
    - **Meredith Albert** first, Jennifer Wills Second.

- **Discussion** – question by Becky about MOU impacts and battery storage facility nearby. Amanda – does not impact existing MOU effective through 2030 and would likely extend.
- **Liz** - Will any of these services be available countywide? Open to the entire county? Would be nice to see some of these funds utilized, using existing structures, to advocate for south county.
- **Jenni Gomez** – these disadvantaged metrics are controlled by the state and feds, out of the County's control.
- **Meredith Motion**, Jennifer D4 second. Motion passes unanimously.

- **Brian Garcia.** with National Weather Service will present on October 7th @EOC.
  - Every El Nino since forever, California has suffered dramatic coastal erosion and beach loss. Lots of cliffs. Climate Change! If you want to know what winters will look like in 30-40 years, look to this winter.

8. Informational Reports

- **OR3** –
  - CIRP
    - Standby contracts – working on RFP for a menu of disaster services that cover services including shelter and feeding, support for unhoused, translation
    - Looking to have in place prior to winter.
    - Outreach and Education – ENSO creating an uptick in outreach requests from new partners
    - October 20th OR3 presentation to BOS to review winter preparations
    - Recently closed a recruitment for ESA vacancy, 46 applicants, 23 meet minimum qualifications
    - Hosting EOC section trainings for every single section ahead of winter storm season
    - Discussion – can we backfill sessions with CERT folks? Possibly operations and logistics
    - **Clare Peabody-** Measuer Q advisory board meets at Simpkins on Wednesdays, next is November 18th. 2nd year of Measure Q. Priorities are wildfire resilience, watershed, and open spaces. 14 awards for community investments, one of them is community fuel break maintenance funding. Cal fire will be installing 2 high vis message boards along non-Hwy. 1 main roads. LTR Zone 0 regulations grant, to assist community in complying with new regulations for defensible space. Please find more details on the Measure Q website. In the future the updates and overview will be easiest found here and at the Measure Q meetings.
    - **Discussion:**
    - Liz question- who is administrating the Zone 0 funding? - answer is LTR.
    - +1 from Public Health for EOC trainings, also supportive of inclusion of HCC in NWS briefings
    - Becky asked about Standby contract – is there someone to come to mass shelter and cook. There are good industrial kitchens at that facility.
    - Amanda's response being that yes, once the kitchens are updated the intention is to partner with Second Harvest or other community partners to provide fresh meals during activations.
- **City of Scotts Valley** – absent
- **City of Santa Cruz** – Robert Oatey / Meredith Albert:
  - Downtown open house Saturday 9/19 from 7-3
  - Race the Flame October 17th – evacuation exercise / race plus a preparedness fair
  - SCF Hired a new deputy fire marshal and 5 firefighters.
  - Fire season – assignments out of county and state. Still one line medic in Plaskett (Monterey County)
  - ¼ acre fire in De Laveaga today, no human activity determined

  - In July, we partnered with OR3 and Red Cross and got 20% of city DSW's trained
  - Working in the City on building COOP and critical operations in the form of pre-disaster contracts with regional benefits in mind
  - Discussion Question – what is the status of shared agreements with fire agencies (City, Central, Scotts Valley)?- Answer is SV and Central not interested
- **City of Capitola** – Leo Moreno: No report.
- **City of Watsonville** – absent, no report.
- **County Office of Education** – Rishi Lal: School site administrators are interested in RING. County Student Emergency Response Network – all County sup's have an MOU in formation, would like to discuss SEMS integration. SC SAFE – unifying law enforcement and school site administrators, would like to loop into quarterly meetings and build relationships. eFire setting behaviors – reach out to respective jurisdiction, trying to resurrect program. A few updates to their comprehensive school safety plan – HFSZ / VHFSZ wildfire safety plan, refuge locations, extreme weather safety. E Bike safety.
- **Santa Cruz County Sheriff** – Dee Baldwin:. Continuing monthly town hall meetings. About 20% attending have never heard of CruzAware, good time to re-advertise. Group that we are seeing not registered are not on social media. Doesn't seem like community knows where to access information. Challenges with offline mapping. Tragic homicide at Capitola Mall; community wanted a reverse 911 even with absence of threat, just highlights importance of business registration for CruzAware for business land line and employees phones.
  - Comment from John Selling – +1 for CERT
  - Gaps for opt in alert registration – City of Santa Cruz, just got a grant for weather radios. Ensure PGE critical facilities list are updated
  - Continuing concern about CruzAware
- **County Fire** – Sam Filson and Scott Weese: absent
- **Central Fire** – Nigel Miller: absent

8a. Non-Governmental Organizations

- **VOAD Report-Out** – currently 30 partner organizations, have Slack communications. Bench of CBO Liasons to support resource requests and fulfillments. Have distributed 300 weather radios, working with ARES to get some MURS and HAM radios trained. In the process of recruiting a program manager starting September 1st. National VOAD members, chainsaw training.
- **CERT Council** – Amanda Gullings:
- **CERT Auxiliary** – Activated for "knock and talk" for flood areas in repetitive flood hazard areas. OR3 have requested a schedule of what they do between September and October. 2 basic trainings in September and October, including a bilingual training in Watsonville. Also public trainings in earthquake preparedness, Stop the Bleed, and traffic control
- **Medical Reserve Corps (MRC)** – 6 minutes to live training for all Santa Cruz County high schools
- **Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES)** – Dan Selling: supported CERT with active shooter exercise, fouth of July parade. Working with CERT and Firewise on Neighborhood Emergency Preparedness exercise to establish communications chains between EOC and neighborhoods without cell infrastructure. Supporting Santa Cruz triathlon this weekend, and Santa Cruz marathon, and trunk or treat, starting a technician level class
- **American Red Cross** – Patsy Gasca: working the Timber/Plaskett fires, reaching out to two individuals who lost their homes. Had two shelters set up. 1 person heading up to Washington, some support in Guam. About 68 members in the area trained in sheltering and feeding to support County partners. May have 1 trailer available, liquidated 4.

- **Watsonville Emergency Airlift Command Team (WEACT)** – Tom Hail / Bob Weiser: May 30th CAL DART exercise; mostly food delivery missions. For Watsonville, two flights in from San Martin which we gave to food banks. We flew food to Paso Robles from Watsonville. Limited individuals with insurance requirements for exercise purposes but the same isn't needed during disasters. Used Starlink in low data mode, with no delays.
- **UC Santa Cruz** – absent

9. OR3 Grant Updates

- **FY 2022 State Homeland Security Grant Program (SHSGP)** – Closing 5/31/26
- **FY 2023 State Homeland Security Grant Program (SHSGP)** – Closing 5/31/26
- **FY 2024 State Homeland Security Grant Program (SHSGP)** – In Progress
- **FY 2025 State Homeland Security Grant Program (SHSGP)** – Submitted
- **FY 2026 State Homeland Security Grant Program (SHSGP)** – Submitted
- **FY 2024 Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG)** – Closing 6/30/26
- **FY 2025 Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG)** – Submitted
- **California Fire Safe Council – County Coordinator Grant, Round 2** – Approved; leveraging as match for BRIC / HMGP
- **FEMA Building Resilient Infrastructure & Community (BRIC) Grant** – Beginning scope development; environmental permit scope development underway
- **NRCS Emergency Watershed Protection Program** – In construction

10. Announcements

- None recorded.

11. Adjournment

- Motion to adjourn at 1:57 pm. **Second:** Nancy Yellin. Motion carried.