



## **CERT ASSOCIATION OF ILLINOIS**

### **CONFERENCE CALL – APRIL 8, 2019 / 1:00PM**

#### **MEETING MINUTES**

#### **WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS, AND OVERVIEW**

Dan Martin called the meeting to order at 1:03pm and welcomed those on the call. Roll call was taken and the following were on the call:

- Dan Martin – Village of New Lenox
- Michelle Hanneken – Serve Illinois Commission
- Jack Stevens – Naperville CERT
- Edgar Rodriguez – McDonough County
- Sheri Drotot – Cumberland County
- Jim Miller – Village of Mt. Prospect
- Charles (“Chuck”) Geraci – Village of Alsip
- Gayle Lundeen – Rock Island County
- Trish Billings – Milton Township CERT
- Latesha Tubbs – City of Chicago
- Andy McKellar – Madison County EMA
- Scott Buziecki – North Aurora Police Department
- Tonya Balla – Mundelein CERT
- Megan Racilla – Huntley Police Department

Michelle Hanneken also welcomed everyone and shared a brief history of her involvement with CERT in Illinois. In addition, Michelle advised that she is supportive of the concept of a CERT Association here in Illinois. Michelle thanked everyone for completing the survey and for those who showed interest in a CERT Association. Michelle is looking forward to playing a supportive role in the development of a CERT Association and is excited about its potential.

Dan advised that from the list that was sent to him by Michelle, he will create a group email. The group email will be one form of communication that will be utilized moving forward. In addition, Dan will create an Excel document with everyone’s information. This way, everyone will know who is in the group and have each other’s contact information.

#### **NETWORKING**

One benefit from a CERT Association would be in the area of **networking**. Examples that were discussed included:

- Email

- Phone
- Web site
- Facebook
- Twitter
- An association newsletter

Everyone agreed that networking would be beneficial for association members and their respective organizations.

Additional benefits of an association would include the **sharing of information and best practices** in the following areas:

- Training (ideas)
- How to utilize volunteers in emergency and non-emergency roles
- Funding (ideas)
- Marketing (ideas)
- Equipment (ideas and sharing if need be)
- Recruitment (ideas)
- Retention of volunteers (ideas)
- Recording keeping (including tracking volunteer hours)
- Volunteer recognition (ideas)
- Standard Operating Guidelines / Standard Operating Policies

It was noted that there were individuals on the call that are (paid) staff, while others are volunteers. In addition, many CERT programs are at different levels. Some are just starting while others have been around for many years. Regardless, there is a tremendous amount of talent that exists within CERT organizations in Illinois and the sharing of information and best practices is beneficial for all of our teams.

Additional benefits of an association would include areas related to **training**. These benefits include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Teams training together
- Sharing ideas for monthly training and / or for the Basic CERT Class
- Sharing equipment (if teams are in close proximity)
- Sharing instructors to facilitate the delivery of the Basic CERT Class
- Additional CERT Train-the-Trainer Classes

With this being a STATE Association, perhaps some of these ideas can be developed by region. Example – North, Central and South.

It was suggested that a Directory of CERT Trainers could be developed so if an organization needed a trainer, they could reference the Directory. Dan mentioned that he believes that this does exist, but he's not sure who maintains it.

Another suggestion was to create a 1-day refresher class for instructors that have not taught for some time. Michelle confirmed that this type of class does not exist; only the full (2-day) CERT Train-the-Trainer exists.

Along the same lines, it was also suggested that CERT trainers (who have not taught in some time) could be invited to another jurisdiction to observe and / or co-instruct a unit. Trish Billings from Milton Township advised the final exercise (mock disaster) for their current Basic CERT Class is on April 25<sup>th</sup>. Trish advised that anyone that would like to come out and observe is more than welcome to.

A short discussion was held regarding the **Prairie State CERT Challenge (PSCC)**. Dan encouraged everyone to consider sending a team to this event, which will be held on a Saturday in mid-to-late September this year. Dan advised that the PSCC Planning Team has had several conference calls and is in the process of identifying a location for this year's event.

It was noted that a CERT Association would help promote the PSCC and it could potentially be held at various locations throughout the State.

It was also noted that holding the event as a "competition" as was done the first six years would be preferable. Dan confirmed that this year's event will be "competition" or "challenge" style, but there may also be a learning component added in the morning.

Dan advised that Michelle will be sending out an email in the near future with additional information.

#### **ANNUAL (TRAINING) CONFERENCE**

A discussion was held regarding hosting an Annual (Training) Conference, IF we were to proceed with a CERT Association in Illinois. A conference might have the following components:

- Featured speakers / presenters
- Breakout sessions
  - Sessions on any components of the Basic CERT Course
- Large scale exercise
- Location
  - By Region (North, Central, South)
  - Held annually at the same location
  - Determined by facility availability or facility uniqueness

The conference could be held on a Saturday and Sunday.

#### **MUTUAL AID**

A discussion was held that a CERT Association COULD help facilitate a more formalized system for (CERT) mutual aid in Illinois. It was noted that law enforcement has ILEAS (Illinois Law Enforcement Alarm System) and the fire service has MABAS (Mutual Aid Box Alarm System). However, CERT does not have a formalized structure.

Currently CERTs are deployed at a local level by the local jurisdiction. Some CERTs receive requests from their County Emergency Management Agency, while others receive information through the Illinois VOAD (Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster). Historically it's been "hit or miss" based on if the CERT Program Manager has (or does not have) outside contacts. It would seem that by working through

Michelle and the Serve Illinois Commission and / or the Illinois Emergency Management Agency, a formalized mutual aid system could be developed.

It was also noted that much of this has to do with marketing and education. In other words, law enforcement, fire service, and emergency management must know that CERT exists and what CERT volunteers are capable of doing. If these entities are made aware that CERT can be an asset for them, then teams will be more likely to be called upon to assist in various capacities.

### **ORGANIZATION OF ASSOCIATION**

A discussion was held regarding what the association might look like in terms of organization. The discussion included the following areas:

- Board of Directors / Executive Board
- Structure of the Board
  - By region – North, Central, and South
- Executive Board Officers
  - President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer
  - Term limit (1-year, 2-year, etc...)
  - Duties and responsibilities
- Dues
  - Team membership – an example COULD be \$50.00 annually
  - Individual membership
- Committees
  - Membership, Audit, By-Laws, Nominations, Training and Communications

It was agreed that the association should in fact have a Board. It was agreed that there would also be a need for Committees.

In terms of office, it was suggested that the limit be two years, but could also be one year for each office. In other words, one year as Treasurer, one year as Secretary, one year as Vice-President and one year as President.

It was noted that this association would not have any paid positions. The dues would be nominal and only enough to sustain the association (hold an annual conference, host a web site, etc...).

### **BY-LAWS AND MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU)**

Dan referenced the CERT Association of Florida's By-Laws, which were attached to the email as a reference. It was agreed that their By-Laws would serve as an excellent example that we could use when it comes time to draft our own. Latesha Tubbs advised that she would be willing to help draft the By-Laws. Dan thanked Latesha for her offer and will communicate with her in the near future.

Dan also referenced the CERT Association of Florida's MOU, which was provided in the form of a link printed in the Agenda. For Illinois, this would likely be something that would be signed with the Serve Illinois Commission and / or the Illinois Emergency Management Agency (IEMA). Michelle also referenced the State's Emergency Operations Plan, noting the Annex that covers volunteers and donations management. This particular Annex was moved to the Serve Illinois Commission when Michelle moved over to that agency from IEMA.

### **NOT-FOR-PROFIT / 501 ( C ) ( 3 ) STATUS**

A discussion was held regarding having the association file for not-for-profit status. The group was asked if anyone had any experience in this area. Gayle Lundeen advised that she was an accountant and would be willing to assist in this area. Dan thanked Gayle for her offer and will communicate with her in the near future.

Some on the call felt that it should be a relatively simple process depending on how much money is changing hands. Again, it was noted that monies taken in would go back out to pay for expenses such as annual conferences.

Since the CERT Association would be very similar to ISARC (Illinois Search and Rescue Council), a suggestion was made to look at their By-Laws and structure as an example. The same holds true for the CERT Association of Florida's By-Laws and structure.

### **NEXT STEPS / NEXT CONFERENCE CALL**

Those on the call agreed that having a CERT Association in Illinois is worth pursuing.

A question was raised regarding future communications and the feasibility of having an in-person meeting. It was agreed that it would in fact be desirable and something that should be considered.

In addition, we will continue to utilize the conference call line that Michelle was kind enough to provide.

It seemed that creating a Doodle Poll was a good way of getting the most people on a call. Dan said that he would do that and would also include evening times. Whatever time (day or evening) that works best for everyone, would be chosen for the next conference call.

For clarification, this group (mostly Program Managers) should have a representative from each team. Having an alternate representative is also desirable if the primary representative cannot participate in a conference call or attend a meeting. It makes no difference if the primary or secondary representative is paid staff or a volunteer. We just need one or two people from each CERT that can consistently participate.

Dan advised that he would type up the Minutes as soon as possible and send them out to the group.

### **GOOD OF THE ORDER**

Alsip CERT is starting a Basic CERT Class on May 1<sup>st</sup>. The final exercise / disaster scenario will be on June 15<sup>th</sup>. If anyone is interested in sitting in and / or helping, please get in touch with Chuck Geraci.

Edgar Rodriguez from McDonough County offered to help out with the establishment of a database for team resources. Edgar advised that he has a form that he can send out for everyone to fill out. The information can then be entered into a GIS database so we will know where resources are located. Michelle Hanneken commended Edgar for his recent work with a flooding event and suggested that we take Edgar up on his offer.

Michelle Hanneken advised that she would look into the use of a message board at the Serve Illinois Commission. This way folks from our group would be able to post things in lieu of numerous emails going back and forth. Michelle advised that the message board has the ability to generate email when something is posted, if the user chooses to be notified. The board also has a function for document

sharing and announcements. Everyone seemed very interested in the idea and thanked Michelle in advance for looking into it.

Michelle also notified everyone on the call that another CERT Train-the-Trainer Class will be held on May 30<sup>th</sup> and May 31<sup>st</sup> in Mt. Prospect. Michelle will be sending an email with additional information, but wanted to share the good news with this group.

Chuck Geraci thanked Dan and Michelle for taking the first steps in getting a CERT Association off the ground. Dan thanked everyone for being on the call and agreeing to help move the idea forward.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The conference call ended at 2:00pm