

November 28, 2023

Re: Item No. 4.1

HALIFAX

Upper Tantallon Wildfire Lessons Learned

After-Action Report

Legislative Responsibility

- Nova Scotia Emergency Management Act (S.N.S. 1990, c.8, as amended)
- Halifax Regional Municipality Emergency Management By-Law (E-100)
- Administrative Order Number One, the Procedures of the Council Administrative Order (AO-01)
- Municipal Emergency Plan (MEP)

Emergency Management By-Law E-100

- Not all items in the By-Law are being adhered to or completed
 - BCP amongst all BU's
 - Further training and exercising
 - EM Staff
 - EOC staffing
- Duties of Council (Sect 8 (1) – (3))
 - Improved engagement with Executive Standing Committee and Council on EM issues, programs, and planning

Incident Overview and Event Timeline

- May 28, 2023
 - 16,000 Residents displaced – no loss of human life
 - 151 Homes lost – more than 200 structures
 - May 28, 2023 – 11:00 pm Local State of Emergency declared
 - Four (4) Emergency Alerts issued - initial 5:13 pm

Response

- Coordinated response by both Municipal and Provincial Resources
 - DNRR led for fire response on Day 2
 - HRM lead for all support and response to citizens and community

Recommendations

- **HRM Emergency Management Plan**
 - The HRVA will form the backbone for the MEP and provide fulsome planning for all areas of HRM
- **Business Continuity Plan**
 - Establish a BCP Coord and provide templates to each BU with exercise and training plans
- **Staffing**
 - HRM should enhance EM capabilities to enable an organic response to all areas in HRM
 - HRM should enhance staff EOC training for all BUs to ensure a three-deep contingency of trained personnel that can be called upon to staff the EOC when activated
- **Coordination with Outside Partners**
 - Document the capabilities of outside partners to understand their role, activation method, capacity, and operational durations in a public safety emergency
 - Debrief with the Province on access to their programs to understand their role, activation method, capacity, and operational durations in a public safety emergency

Recommendations

- **Procurement**
 - Create an emergency response procurement list. This central repository would contain details about the operational point of contact, the company providing the service, and other relevant information to ensure that invoices, payments, and approvals are processed without confusion.
 - Create procurement capabilities in rural areas.
- **Technology**
 - Develop an internal working group to examine the current protocols for the Alert Ready System and propose recommendations to increase this program's effectiveness and timeliness.
 - Explore the broader usage of hfxALERT to assist in information sharing to more targeted groups, i.e., evacuees.
- **Elected Officials**
 - Provide all Halifax Regional Council Members with emergency management orientation training, including a guide on their roles during emergencies
- **Evacuations**
 - Identify communities with single or limited egress options and prioritize mitigation efforts.

Recommendations

- **Communications**

- Create emergency management materials in various languages that reflect the community and explore the ability to utilize translation tools during the response and recovery.
- Establish a crisis communications plan that preformatted for quick use and establish authorities for release to improve timelines and effectiveness.

- **Preparedness and Mitigation**

- HRM continues with the Hazard Risk Vulnerability Assessment to identify and prioritize risks within HRM and create mitigation strategies with those communities.
- Increase public education on emergency preparedness and community preparedness.

Next Steps

- HRVA project ongoing
 - Increase staffing for EM

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Questions