



## CLACKAMAS COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

### Study Session Worksheet

Presentation Date: 10/<sup>20</sup>~~13~~/2009      Time: 1:<sup>30</sup>~~15~~-p.m.      Length: 15 minutes

Presentation Title: Portland Urban Area Regional Emergency Preparedness Organization

Departments:      Emergency Management

Presenters:      Dana Robinson, Emergency Management Director

### POLICY QUESTION

Will the Board actively participate and provide leadership in the new Regional Emergency Preparedness Organization to improve emergency preparedness in the urban area?

### ISSUE & BACKGROUND

There are presently two preparedness related organizations within the five-county Portland urban area (Clackamas, Clark, Columbia, Multnomah, Washington counties) that focus on all-hazards emergency preparedness:

- 1) The Regional Emergency Management Group (REMG), created in 1993 through an intergovernmental agreement, focuses on information sharing and networking among emergency managers from both the public and private sectors. There are 22 signatories to the agreement. The group has a policy body (REMPAC) which meets twice yearly to receive updates on preparedness work in the region, and a technical committee (REMTEC) which meets monthly to share information and coordinate program activities.
- 2) The Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI), an organization created informally in 2003 to manage implementation of the UASI grant program and with that, to develop and implement the Portland Urban Area Homeland Security Strategy. The organization consists of a Points of Contact (POC) Group comprised of the emergency managers for the five urban area counties and the City of Portland, and an Urban Area Working Group (UAWG) comprised of the POC Group and the chairs of eleven discipline-specific working groups (e.g. law enforcement, fire, health, public works).

There are several limitations to the current structure:

1. **Minimal Executive Engagement** – The REMG has semi-annual engagement with elected officials, primarily in an advisory capacity. The UASI does not currently have direct engagement with executives or elected officials beyond their contact with the emergency manager responsible for managing the organization and implementing the homeland security strategy.
2. **Duplication of Effort** – Emergency managers often engage in both groups, for information sharing and to pursue project based funding. This results in duplication for many participants.
3. **Lack of Coordinated Staff Support for Implementation** – Regional preparedness work is typically layered over local responsibilities. Because there is no dedicated staff support for regional project implementation, project outcomes suffer due to the time limitations and capabilities of the local staff who agree to manage projects.

A study was commissioned by the REMG and implemented with UASI funds to evaluate the current organizational structure. The study engaged stakeholders from the existing preparedness organizations, including technical staff, executive staff and elected officials from across the region. Former Commissioner Schrader participated in the study. The project report recommended a merger between the REMG and UASI organizations and a mechanism and structure to include other related organizations.

The new proposed Regional Emergency Preparedness Organization will increase efficiency and accountability between the two previous organizations and other existing groups to define strategy and improve preparedness for the region. Other benefits include a migration away from discipline-specific thinking to greater cross-discipline and multi-agency integration. This will enhance organizational competency, cohesiveness and consistency with a greater ability to affect outcomes.

#### **QUESTION(S) PRESENTED FOR CONSIDERATION**

1. Does the Board endorse the concept of the new Regional Emergency Preparedness Organization?
2. Will the Board participate in the new organization to enhance the visibility and importance of emergency preparedness and public safety as strategic priorities?
3. Will the Board consider sharing the cost of regional staff funded with grant program monies if the grant program expires?

**OPTIONS AVAILABLE**

Active Board participation in the new organization will offer the opportunity to effectively engage regional entities and provide input on emergency preparedness strategies and priorities as decisions are being made. It would however mean an increased time commitment for any commissioner serving on the organization's steering committee.

The Emergency Management Department presently has one full time regional strategic program coordinator position funded 100% by UASI grant monies. Plans for the new Regional Emergency Preparedness Organization will likely include an eventual migration of regional UASI funded staff from local county emergency management offices to a collocated model in support of the new organization. Should grant program funds expire, there may be a future need to share the cost of regional staff for the organization.

**RECOMMENDATION**

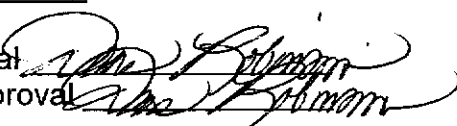
Staff recommends that the Board actively participate in the new Regional Emergency Preparedness Organization to provide valuable oversight of organizational performance and ensure public trust. The new organization will improve the region's ability to respond and recover during major emergencies and disasters based on strengthened relationships and understanding.

**SCHEDULE FOR STUDY SESSION**

Division Director/Head Approval

Department Director/Head Approval

County Administrator Approval \_\_\_\_\_



For information on this issue or copies of attachments, please contact Dana Robinson at 503-655-8371