

**DARE COUNTY
NORTH CAROLINA**

**THE DARE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MINUTES
January 13, 2004**

The Dare County Board of Commissioners met in a post-hurricane Isabel "Lessons Learned" Workshop at 3:00 p.m. on January 13, 2004, in the Dare County Administrative Annex in Manteo. Commissioners present were: Warren Judge, Renée Cahoon, and Cheryl Byrd. Stan White, Virginia Tillett, Richard Johnson and John Robert Hooper were absent. Also present were Manager Terry Wheeler and Attorney Norma Mills. Department Heads were present.

ITEM 1 – PRE-PLANNING / PRE-POSITIONING

- A. Discussion of current planning / preparation programs
Commissioner Cahoon said Dare County is ahead of a lot of our counties. She identified essential personnel and support group. Dare County is fortunate to have been declared a disaster area and to be eligible for federal funds. The Board needs to look at the line item for the Emergency Management Department.

The Board felt the Control Group would benefit more if they replaced the National Park Service with the Department of Transportation on the Control Group. The NPS would benefit more in the Support Group since their mission is more important during hurricane recovery.

Attorney Mills could not understand why the state was still holding FEMA money, since Senator Basnight has requested the release of those funds. She recommended that a resolution be drafted and forwarded to the state as well as sent to other counties for their support.

Sandy Sanderson, Emergency Management Director would like for each Department Head to prepare his own hurricane plan with key personnel listed and to kept the list updated at the Emergency Operations Center.

Ray Sturza, Planner, liked the idea of having pre-existing contracts with some of the vendors such as PBS&J and Crowder-Gulf in the event a storm hovers the whole east coast.

- B. Debris Issues – suggested action items
1. Review Current procedures – put out
Review procedures on an annual basis
 2. Temporary disposal site – pre-event permits; consider sites in Currituck County. This will be a political decision and will be talked with Currituck County. Dare County needs a joint venture with

Currituck County since Dare County has no land. A meeting needs to be set with Currituck Commissioners with a formal request to ask if they are interested in a joint venture to lease land for a year. Chairman Judge will write a letter to Chairman Paul O'Neal in Currituck.

3. Right-of-way cleanup discussions

Clean up seems to be growing down in Frisco with abandoned cars and other things that are not hurricane related. The county needs to strengthen their ordinances for cleanups and to work on the clean up year round. There are 95 miles of non-system roads and staff hopes to get 1/3 of the county roads clean up in reimbursement. Chairman Judge felt they needed to develop a policy. Edward Mann recommended more funding so Public Works can pick up debris and not wait for FEMA. If they could start at the hardest hit areas so the power and phone companies, etc. can begin work.

C. Equipment / Supplies – suggested action items

1. Encourage State to pre-position equipment/supplies in eastern NC – Sandy Sanderson reported that the state has decided to move to a central warehousing location in Badin (near Charlotte). Also there is on-going discussion for the state to reconsider and develop a warehouse in all three of the areas – Eastern – Piedmont – Mountain. He recommended drafting a resolution in support of the three locations. Another thing is to emphasize the “72 hour take care of yourself”, which means you are on your own to get assistance. We should not embrace that at all. We need to be able to prepare ourselves to respond immediately to the needs of our citizens. He recommended that the County start their own warehousing capability (food, water, generators, personal essentials) enough to support a community until they can get back on their feet knowing that resources are on the way. The Board concurred to have a resolution regarding the warehousing location the first meeting in February.
2. Expand County warehousing capability

II ALERT / ACTIVATION

A. Discussion of current policies and procedures

Commissioner Cahoon noted the biggest issue was the 5 day forecast. It creates more time for people to panic. Dare County Control Group does not plan by using the 5-day forecast. After the event has occurred is when Dare County has issues. Evacuation procedures work pretty well.

B. Evacuation

Commissioner Byrd questioned how they could convince people that they could lose their lives. One problem is they are concerned about getting back into the county and they do not know where to go or may not be financially able to leave. How can we better encourage them to leave? We need to increase the level of alarm. Dorothy Toolan explained that she deals with that and there is a balance. Anne Thomas noted some cannot afford to stay in a motel, some have no family, some know they cannot get medical

care and there are not enough shelters. One suggestion was public education to send a signal of hurricane awareness by the students to their parents. There is a need for a broader band of shelters and the option to get them to open earlier. There is also a need for pet shelters. The state does not have a good Shelter Management Plan in place.

Ray Sturza felt they needed to eliminate the phrase, "if you choose to stay." Dorothy Toolan is working on tailoring messages and having stronger messages. She has made notes and if there is a way to tailor messages for those who stay and for those messages to be from someone they trust.

Sandy Sanderson said that another way to demonstrate the seriousness of the event is to give the same graphics as they give to the Control Group and Support Group and to use Channel 20. Anne Thomas suggested asking the people who stayed on Hatteras Village if they would stay again. Chairman Judge felt the schools would be a good idea and to interview some people on Channel 20. This topic deserves a lot of attention.

III. RESPONSE / REENTRY

- A. Discussion of current policies and procedures - Commissioner Cahoon noted there were more problems over re-entry. The Control Group will have a meeting next week and a committee will be working on a tiered level of reentry before opening up to the general public. She remarked on the Control Group's faux pas of opening up too soon on northern beaches. Overall there was a lot of concern in the northern beaches about the closing and control of highways. This will be brought forward at the next Control Group meeting. Chairman Judge commended the Control Group for an excellent job. Sheriff Midgett noted one problem was that the North Carolina Highway Patrol had a lot of resources but needed more patrolmen in Dare County. Commissioner Cahoon will see an agreement to come forward to work on housing and feeding the patrolmen in the northern county. And if they close, they will close the gate at Alligator Bridge and not Manns Harbor. She wants to make sure that assets are in place before opening the county. Commissioner Byrd noted that when the roads seemed to be clear, the desire to reopen was pressured by Currituck County and Dare County learned a lesson.

IV. RECOVERY

- A. Discussion of issues that have surfaced
1. Need updated flood maps – Commissioner Cahoon expressed the need to update the flood maps and look at height limitation – build above 6 1/2 feet. This storm created an issue with the 35' height. Ray Sturza urged the need to change the ordinance and adjust the height. They have the real data now to support that. The Board concurred to begin looking at the ordinance. They did not have the right notices for affixed structures that were damaged by the storm but were not worthy of condemnation and will have them the next hurricane season.

2. Issues related to rebuilding nonconforming structures – Commissioner Cahoon noted the claims were not being paid. Ray Sturza noted they are letting people build back to what it used to be if they can come into compliance. Those trying to take advantage of the system are being stopped. We are trying to get everything back to what it was. In Hatteras the CAMA line will be different by 60'. He will encourage people as they get permits to plant grass to reestablish the vegetation lines. It will impact the residential vs. commercial designation. What will hurt Dare County the most are the loss of hotels. We may need to create a hotel zone. We will have to take steps to make it more viable and will have to build up and not out – two or three stories. Commissioner Cahoon noted they needed to change the Department of Interior's position on beach nourishment. It is an allowable thing to occur on their beaches because HWY 12 is USFWS or NPS. We need agreements in place. The NPS gave us permit as a disposal site and what we really need is the ability to put sand and nourish the beaches. It will happen on the national level or regional level and not on the local level. Commissioner Cahoon's biggest problem was the system with the peat system. Hatteras Village lost about 80% of their inventory. Everyone is waiting to see how that will impact the village. Property will end up changing hands and what the property might become.
3. Water transportation needs – Chairman Judge noted they learned a lesson that we had to move school kids from Hatteras Village to Buxton. We may want to have a contract with people that can provide transportation or ferry services. Commissioner Cahoon stated they may need to identify other places and put out RFP's for water transportation and need to have more things in place and need to identify where dredging needs to occur when this happens.

Chairman Judge thanked the Department Heads for their hard work.

Attorney Mills noted that Dare County has been asked to make a presentation at the Hurricane Conference on April 5-9 on how they dealt with Hatteras Village.

She and the Emergency Management Director will attend.

The Board thanked Commissioner Cahoon for her good job.

AT 5:20 P.M., THE DARE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
RECESSED UNTIL 3:00 P.M. ON JANUARY 20, 2004.

Respectfully submitted,

By: _____
Fran Harris, Clerk

APPROVED:

By: _____
Warren Judge, Chairman
Dare County Board of Commissioners

