

**CENTRAL TEXAS VOAD  
MINUTES OF MEETING  
June 13, 2013**

A meeting of the Central Texas VOAD was held June 13, 2013 at the offices of the United Way at 2000 MLK Blvd., Austin, Texas.

Present were: Anita Strychalski and Anastasia Lee with Shoreline Church, Kevin Christianson with the LDS Church, Amelia Erickson with the Society of St. Vincent DePaul, Heather Michel Riddle with the Volunteer Center Round Rock, Josh Jackson, Bill Dorman, and Toni Silver with the American Red Cross, Daniel Geraci with ADRN, George Barnette with Blanco County Volunteers, Emmett Eary with United Methodist/UMCOR, Bill Brock with Shepard of the Hill Presbyterian Church and ADRN, Betty Learned with HAND, Natasha Rosofsky with United Way 211 Greater Austin, Michelle Acevedo with TEXSAR, Cathy Norman with Church of Scientology Disaster Response, Linda Haynie with Austin CERT, William Degnan and Cheryl Lassiter with VMERU, and Chris Bugbee with the One Star Foundation.

Toni Silver conducted the meeting. She gave a welcome, and introductions were made.

The minutes from Feb 14 and May 9 were accepted as written by those present.

Committee reports:

**Communication:**

We don't have a web site and need money to create and maintain one. Cheryl Lassiter and ADRN both offered to assist with funding this. It was mentioned that the Information School at the University of Texas or the community college could be a resource – one student as part of their thesis put together a website for a non-profit. Austin Freenet, a non profit that helps community groups set up web sites, is also a resource.

On the subject of Twitter, George Barnett looked into Twitter as used in disaster. He presented his data and there was discussion. Key points raised and ideas mentioned:

We can become a source of information or a relay point for information in disaster but this is very labor intensive and someone with time would have to be doing it.

Chris Bugbee could possibly provide an intern for this function. Since money is needed for the website, Chris could develop a proposal for a website that would include social media, and would bring this back to the communications committee.

We should contact Ed Shaeffer from CAPCOG and have him talk to us about communication and the communication mechanisms they are using.

We need to be clear about whether the goal is to communicate with each other, or the public or both.

It would be important on the website and on social media not to create a bottleneck at the point of the technical person for the site. RSS (Real Simple Syndication) is a resource.

We could build on the type of data that Toni is sending out, and post some of this to Facebook, tweet some information, and link or coordinate them.

At the TDEM Conference in San Antonio recently there was a presentation on social media, and we could contact those presenters and get them to talk to us.

### **Membership:**

The local LDS Church, represented by Kevin Christianson, has applied as a Partner member. The LDS Church is a member of NVOAD. Locally in Central Texas, the LDS Church can put 20,000 “feet on the street” and want to become more active. A motion was made, seconded and passed by those Partner members present that the LDS Church be accepted as a Partner member.

We have prepared a Code of Conduct that is a mirror of the TX VOAD Code of Conduct which was in turn based on an NVOAD document. All members of the Central Texas VOAD are being asked to sign this as part of their membership. We are asking everyone to take this back to their agencies as needed, and to sign and turn in this form. Forms should be returned to the Membership officer, Anita Strychalski, [Anita.Strychalski@shoreline.net](mailto:Anita.Strychalski@shoreline.net).

### **Education:**

Anna Tangredi was not able to be present but sent a written report which included an update on West, and information on upcoming education opportunities. The education opportunities included:

Sign up at [www.preparingtexas.org](http://www.preparingtexas.org) for a donations class Anna will be teaching in Austin in September.

The Citizen Corps and Texas VOAD Conference will be held October 21-23 in Galveston. More info to come.

The quarterly Texas VOAD meeting was announced for June 24 in Waco.

Bill Dorman gave an update on the Capital Area Shelter Hub Plan. We are part of a statewide shelter hub plan. This is a partnership between government, schools, and the Red Cross. The plan involves Travis, Williamson, and Hays counties and 18 school districts. In large scale evacuations, we need over 1000 people to help. During Rita, there were over 40 shelters opened. We need shelter workers and shelter managers. In order to do handle the additional shelter workers needed, we open volunteer centers to train and qualify shelter workers. People are needed to help in these volunteer centers. Volunteers would join the Red Cross. On line self scheduling software allows people to schedule themselves for shelter and shift. At the volunteer center people will get passwords, badges, and will be shown how to use the system. Red Cross plans to have a big exercise about opening a volunteer center.

Shelter workers will listed for the volunteer center to open, show up, and train.

Shelter managers will take ICS 100, (can be done on line,) print out the cert, and bring it to the class for shelter managers, which will be an approximately 6 hours and will be the training for the Red Cross, government, and school representatives acting as shelter managers. This will start in July. Shelter managers can have but don't have to have 2 trainings – shelter fundamentals (3-3 ½ hours) and shelter manager training (6 ½ hours.)

### **Long Term Recovery**

Betty reports that case management is done in Spicewood. In Bastrop they are still working to restore the environment.

Josh gave a presentation about the American Red Cross Long Term Recovery Exercise. The discussion for today was about managing spontaneous volunteers. Here are some of the comments and issues raised:

You can put on a web site and send out press releases that say “stay where you are, don't deploy, send cash” but people will still show up, and so the problem is what to do with them when they do.

In West, American Youth Works helped deal with spontaneous volunteers. Team Rubicon set up the VRC and its systems and American Youth Works manned it. The Team Rubicon/American Youth Works will respond when requested by the local government.

Key questions are, how do you set up personnel and software for a VRC, and then what agencies can accept volunteers and put them to work.

There is software that exists where a group can say what volunteers they need and volunteers can connect. 211 provides the vehicle for this, but not a person who can

actively connect volunteers and groups. Do let 211 know if your organization can accept volunteers. 211 will collect data about what agencies need and connects the volunteers names with needs but the agency will have to contact them.

It is important for all of us to understand what groups do and this is an important part of what the VOAD facilitates.

It would be good to have a tool kit that includes press releases that let volunteers know it is not time to come and they should stay away, stay out. For the recent North Texas tornadoes, the State provided a script that basically said “please don’t come.” Media could be the best way to get out this message.

Linda Haynie suggested that CAPCOG would be involved in determining needs and perhaps Linda could propose a suggested process or message.

The San Antonio VOAD has a volunteer operation center they set up, which is a sort of “volunteer operation center in a box.” This function was assigned to the VOAD by their local emergency management. This is set up away from any shelter or disaster site. The volunteers check in and go through a process, which includes background check, etc. Volunteers are matched up with needs per volunteer requests from organizations. Volunteers are badged for one person one event one location.

In Austin, the Red Cross is set up to do a VRC only for the hurricane events but might be brought into play for other events if it comes up.

Josh suggested that dealing with volunteers could be set up as a committee. Possible members might include 211, One Star, Anna, Red Cross. There is free volunteer management software called “meet the need.”

## **New Business**

The next Austin CERT class begins September 3. Contact Linda Haynie: [linda.haynie@austintexas.gov](mailto:linda.haynie@austintexas.gov)

We have talked before about meeting in other parts of our are (such as Bastrop or Hays Counties.) We should schedule this discussion for a future meeting.

We will also need to address at some point getting people trained so we can man a chair at the EOC. This has to be coordinated with the EOC.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Cathy Norman Sullivan, Secretary