

A special meeting of the Board of Aldermen was held Tuesday, June 8, 2021, at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom teleconference.

President Lori Wilshire presided; City Clerk Susan K. Lovering recorded.

Prayer was offered by City Clerk Susan K. Lovering; Alderman Thomas Lopez led in the Pledge to the Flag.

### President Wilshire

As President of the Board of Aldermen, I find that due to the State of Emergency declared by the Governor as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and in accordance with the Governor's Emergency Order #12 pursuant to Executive Order 2020-04, this public body is authorized to meet electronically.

Please note that there is no physical location to observe and listen contemporaneously to this meeting, which was authorized pursuant to the Governor's Emergency Order. However, in accordance with the Emergency Order, I am confirming that we are:

Providing public access to the meeting by telephone, with additional access possibilities by video or other electronic means:

*To access Zoom, please refer to the agenda or the City's website for the meeting link.*

*To join by phone dial: 1-929-205-6099      Meeting ID: 856 5276 5191      Passcode: 319715*

*The public may also view the meeting via Channel 16.*

We previously gave notice to the public of the necessary information for accessing the meeting, through public postings. Instructions have also been provided on the City of Nashua's website and publicly noticed at City Hall and the Nashua Public Library.

If anyone has a problem accessing the meeting via phone or Channel 16, please call 603-589-3329 and they will help you connect.

In the event the public is unable to access the meeting via the methods mentioned above, the meeting will be adjourned and rescheduled. Please note that all votes that are taken during this meeting shall be done by roll call vote.

Let's start the meeting by taking a roll call attendance. When each member states their presence, please also state whether there is anyone in the room with you during this meeting, which is required under the Right-To-Know Law.

City Clerk Lovering called the roll and asked them to state the reason he or she could not attend, confirmed that they could hear the proceedings, and stated who was present with him or her.

The roll call was taken with 14 members of the Board of Aldermen present: Alderman Michael B. O'Brien, Sr., Alderman Patricia Klee, Alderman Richard A. Dowd, Alderman June M. Caron, Alderman Benjamin Clemons, Alderman Thomas Lopez, Alderman David C. Tencza, Alderwoman Elizabeth Lu, Alderman Ernest Jette, Alderman Jan Schmidt, Alderman Brandon Michael Laws, Alderman Skip Cleaver, Alderman Linda Harriott-Gathright, Alderman Wilshire.

Alderwoman Shoshanna Kelly was recorded absent.

Mayor James W. Donchess, Corporation Counsel Steven A. Bolton, and Emergency Management Director Justin Kates were also in attendance.

## PRESENTATION

### Emergency Operations Plan

#### President Wilshire

Tonight's special meeting is for an emergency operations plan presentation by Director Kates so I'm going to turn it over to him.

#### Emergency Management Director Justin Kates

Thank you very much President Wilshire. I'm going to share my screen here. Okay does everybody see the screen okay?

#### President Wilshire

Yes.

#### Emergency Management Director Justin Kates

Perfect. All right. So the purpose of tonight's meeting is to do an overview of the 2021 emergency operations plan update and this is something we actually planned to have this as the 2020 emergency operations plan update. It was planned to be released last year around the same time and unfortunately due to COVID, it put us a year behind. So there were some challenges with that but there's also some benefits that we'll talk about a little bit later. The goal here is just to give everybody an overview of what this document is and offer an opportunity for you to ask questions about the city's emergency plans, the processes that we use for a variety of sizes of types of emergencies, and where we're headed in the future.

So what is the emergency operations plan? There's a couple of key things that it's really meant to do. The first being getting a high level overview of what the responsibilities are of the various city divisions and departments and what they're required to do during an emergency response or long-term recovery. So as an example, it identifies what key activities the Fire Department would be responsible for during an emergency, or the Public Works Division, so it goes through those types of things and I'll go into more specifics about how that is outlined in this plan.

The second thing that it does is it talks about we receive assistance from others whether it be from the State, or whether it be from the federal government, and how that assistance is... (internet connection lost) let me just move to another spot. I think my WIFI isn't in a great spot here. Stand by one second. All right, let's try this again and hopefully in a better spot with WIFI. It looks like my signal looks good. I'll share my screen again here. I apologize for that internet connectivity is a critical thing in remote meetings. So the second bullet here we talk about emergency assistance and the idea there is how do we receive assistance from the State or how do we receive assistance from the federal government, and what's the process for receiving that assistance, what's the trigger for us requesting assistance when we're in a situation where we need additional assistance beyond what we're capable of doing within the City.

The plan also covers the procedures and processes that we use to manage emergencies of all sizes within the city. One of the key things that this does is it talks about the difference between what we would say is routine operations – the way that we operate in the city day-to-day. When people call 911, they get assistance from the Fire Department, or the Police Department, or emergency medical services, or in other cases they might receive some sort of assistance from Public Works. Those are routine operations. We provide service every day here within the city but what does that shift to an emergency operations type of

scenario when there's additional coordination that's necessary between city departments, when there's coordination needed between other entities outside of this city whether it be the State, local business, the nonprofits within the community, and it also talks about how we will engage the rest of the population during that type of emergency situation as well. Primarily through two areas – first being emergency notifications – how do we let others know that there's some sort of an emergency situation but also public information. How do we keep people informed during an emergency with information as to what they should be doing, what we want them to do during an emergency, and all of that?

The next time that it covers is coordinating instructions from mutual aid. Mutual aid you might be familiar with the term from the perspective fire and police. They provide mutual aid on a very routine basis going to neighboring communities to provide assistance. The same concept applies in emergency management as well where we may share resources with neighboring communities or other communities may share resources with us. Primarily it's been really the other way around. We've primarily shared resources with other communities just because of the amount of equipment, supplies, and staff that we have here in the city.

The final key area that it goes through is what we call "logistical support". So for every type of emergency action that we do whether it be putting out a fire, or opening up a shelter, or calling for an evacuation, each one of those things requires a substantial amount of logistical support whether it be supplies and equipment, staffing, communications, feeding, all the things that are necessary for our personnel to be able to do whatever the action is that we're asking them to do.

So our office in Nashua it uses a process called "comprehensive emergency management" and this emergency operations plan that we're referring to here is it follows this model of comprehensive emergency management. It originated in 1979 through a report that the National Governor's Association created which reorganized a way that our emergency management was done within the country. Prior to that, it had been historically done as what was called "civil defense" and much more focused towards some sort of an attack from the USSR at the time and it didn't really cover the types of hazards that we see primarily today. Things like flooding and weather related hazards. So comprehensive emergency management focuses on three areas. The first being all phases of emergency management so as an example you'll see in the chart on the screen there's four phases of emergency management – mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery. Mitigation being the reduction of risk within a community. Things like infrastructure projects, building codes, things to try and reduce the impacts of emergencies. Preparedness which is getting all of our city departments but also our citizens, businesses prepared for emergency situations. Then we consider sort of that break between pre-disaster situations, and post disaster situations, and we move into the response phase which is what people think about typically when it comes to emergency management. Getting everybody together, coordinating that emergency response, and trying to save lives and property, and the environment. Finally long-term recovery which is trying to get the community back up and running too as best as possible hopefully better than it was before and we're sort of in that phase right now when it comes to COVID.

The other thing that comprehensive emergency management does is it focuses on something called "all actors". So historically emergency management prior to it becoming emergency management was very much focused on government being the lead. Predominantly the federal government being a lead on emergency situations. That's why unfortunately today we have kind of this misperception of whose really going to come and save the day during an emergency and people think oh well FEMA is just going to show up and save the day. Well that's not really the case. All emergencies start locally and there's a responsibility of those local communities to have some capabilities to be able to handle whatever the emergency situation is. So all actors refers to working to engage all levels of government, the nonprofit sector organizations like your local faith based communities, your Red Cross, Salvation Army, many of the other social organizations within a community but also businesses both large and small that have capabilities to provide. We've seen in large scale disasters where local businesses, small downtown businesses can help get the community back up and running after a crisis. We've also seen the same for large big box retailers which provide lots of resources into a jurisdiction during a crisis as well. Those are all the types of folks that need to be involved in an emergency management plan like this.

The final section is all hazards/all threats. Again, we don't want to focus around one specific hazard or threat in our program. Historically we've done a really poor job of that as a country. We originally were concerned about an attack from the USSR and then that focused towards natural hazards, and then we had 911 which focused us towards terrorism, and then Hurricane Katrina happened, and we shifted back towards hurricanes as our primary concern. Every time we shift like that, we leave other hazards and threats behind where we need to actually be paying attention to them as well.

So how does this emergency operations plan align to other plans in that the city or that the State have? Well the first I think important connection is to the city's hazard mitigation plan. As I mentioned in our last slide, there are four phases. One being mitigation which is the reduction of risk within the community. The Board of Aldermen and the Mayor had approved the updated Hazard Mitigation Plan two years ago so we're currently with an up to date Hazard Mitigation Plan within the community. The key connection here is that that plan focuses on those risk reduction and pre-disaster recovery types of plan whereas the emergency operations plan focuses really on the short-term recovery as well as the emergency response phases. Ultimately we have to ensure that both of them kind of work together and are align so that our whole emergency management program is effective.

There are also plans that the State that this coordinates with predominately the state emergency operations plans. One of the things that you'll see is the connection between our request for emergency assistance from the State and how that aligns to the processes that the State emergency operation center has established as well. Finally, there's a very similar plan as well at the federal level called "the National Response Framework". That's about FEMA's role as well as other federal agencies role within the emergency management program. How we would request assistance from them as well.

So "Updated Considerations". So some of the things that we look at when it comes to the update of the emergency operations plan are 1) we want to review this document yearly and identify if there's any changes that are needed. We also want to ensure that we review it and make any updates after an incident. So COVID being a good example of this, we really want to make sure that we incorporate any necessary changes as we move into future updates of this document. If there's no updates that happen on a yearly basis because there hasn't been an incident or no significant changes, the goal is to really go through a comprehensive process every four years. That's what we were doing last year and what we've continued on with this year.

There's a guidance that's been created by the federal emergency management agency called "CPG 101" the Comprehensive Preparedness Guide and it has a methodology for how you're supposed to go through this planning process and ensure that it's inclusive and that it covers all the necessary components that are necessary during an emergency. Then when the plan is completed, it's called "Promulgated by the Mayor". The Mayor signs off on this as a completed and approved plan for the city. It's essential that it's been signed off by the Chief Executive of the City because most homeland security funding really requires this plan to be approved by the city and up to date. As an example if the Police Department is going after some homeland security funding, or the Fire Department is doing the same, one of the things that they'll be asked as they go through the application process is when was the last time that this emergency operation plan was updated.

The National Incident Management System is another key topic that we want to include tonight and the reason for this is this was implemented significantly after 911 based on the sort of the failures that we saw and how our emergency management and public safety works within this country and what the country decided to bring all of those different disciplines together – Fire, Police, Public Health, Public Works, all those different organizations together in a standard framework for how incidents are managed. It was 1) required for the city to say that they've adopted the National Incident Management System back post 911 and to ensure that any of our documents like this city Emergency Operations Plan is using the National Incident Management System as its approach for coordinating different departments and other non-city partners. There are a couple of key aspects to NIMS. One being something called "the Incident Command System. It's essentially the way that we establish an organizational structure or hierarchy as to which agencies and departments are doing what and who's responsible for leading those incidents. It also

requires us to coordinate with the variety of agencies both here within the city but also at the State level. It incorporates a concept called "Emergency Operations Centers" which are the location. Sort of the nerve center of all emergency activities during a major emergency at any level of government. It also covers some of the key requirements for public information. So information out to the public and businesses, how we coordinate with other agencies that are pushing information out to the public, and how we work with the news media and also social media now to get information out to the community.

It also covers Resource Management. So what's the process for requesting resources from other agencies whether they be at the State or the federal level? How do we track resources? How do we know when resources are out of service, need to be repaired, need to be rehabilitated, or when we can demobilize them and send them home? It also covers the requirement for training and credentialing responders and staff. The things that are necessary to ensure that our leadership – the people who are responsible for supervising emergency responders are qualified to do so and that they've had the appropriate training that's needed for that.

Then the final thing that it covers in NIMS that's applicable to this specific plan is interoperability and communication systems. Making sure that all of our systems that we have that are used to allow public safety to communicate, Public Health, Public Works are able to communicate with each other and not siloed within specific departments or agencies. So this national doctrine really serves as kind of a required effort to try to resolve the issues that were found during 911. You'll see in this emergency operations plan update that there's a lot of language that refers back to our adoption of NIMS.

Now one of the things I had mentioned in one of the earlier slides was that this plan talks about the responsibilities and requirements of different departments. What we've done is we've used a framework that the federal government has developed called "Core Capabilities" and you'll see there are 15 on here ranging from public information and warning, to law enforcement, to mass care services which is sheltering and feeding, and what it does is it covers which department are responsible for these different types of activities, which partners that they will bring in to assist them with this and that includes businesses and other nonprofit entities, and what essentially are the things that are needed in order to provide these types of services during an emergency. So this is kind of a good way to understand how those things are organized and our plan covers each one of these.

It's also important to note that the plan covers how we activate our city's emergency operations center. So for many of you, you're probably familiar that that's over at the police department in the classroom. That's where we bring all the city departments together typically during emergency situations. Again I say "typically because during COVID we actually completely threw this concept out the window and decided to do a virtual emergency operation center instead.

Another important thing that this plan talks about is the coordination between Public Health and Emergency Management. So many of you probably are aware that the Public Health Division also has emergency management responsibilities. Their focus is on public health emergencies. Much like COVID, or a bioterrorism incident, or some sort of environmental health emergency. What we've done in this plan is outlined the responsibilities both for the emergencies that are non-public health in nature as well as those that are public health lead incidents. So in those types of situations where Public Health takes the lead, Emergency Management we provide support to them and the same goes in the inverse where those emergencies that are major storms and those types of things, Emergency Management takes the lead and Public Health provides support to us.

So the next steps with this specific plan, again, the Promulgation by the Mayor is the next critical step where the Mayor will sign off on the document to say that the city has adopted it. But also we use some grant funding from the State as well as FEMA to update this document for 2021. So we'll do a grant close out and get our reimbursement for the time that was dedicated to updating this document.

The other key thing that is going to take place as part of this process is incorporating all of the lessons learned and analysis that we've done from the COVID response. We had been doing that over the last

probably six or so months where we've been capturing all of the things that we've learned from this incident and identify what significant changes are needed in order to update this document moving forward. I wanted to provide kind of a quick overview of some of the key things that we've found and what we expect to make significant changes to in our document. The first one being Virtual Emergency Operations. As I discussed rather than having our team members meet at the Police Department, instead we used a variety of interactive tools to allow people to share information and manage this incident virtually. We're going to incorporate more of that into our plan.

We're also going to further simplify the document. As we found during COVID, many of the things that were outlined in the documents essentially were thrown out the window by the federal government or by another agency. So much of the stuff we had to develop sort of on the fly. So those are things that we'll also look to do is cut out the very specific procedural information that is likely to shift in the middle of an incident anyway.

We're also going to review the types of capabilities the city is not well suited for. Those are the types of activities that would look at things that would be better regionalized. Things like sheltering, or large scale operations that the city wouldn't really need to do their own process for. That also ties into public health as well as we look to see what types of capabilities the State would be responsible for in public health versus the city.

We also found during COVID that our resource management processes that were within our plan were also not really leveraged. We had kind of a traditional approach where the city departments would reach out to the emergency operations center to request a resource and then if we didn't have it internally within the city, we would make that request to the State, and then the State would make that request to the federal government. What we found during COVID is everybody was just requesting everything from everybody. That was not just the City of Nashua thing. That was across the country. IT was because of shortages, and resources, and the massive amount of involvement that the private sector had in trying to get the right resources during COVID. So that's another thing that will be likely shifting in this next update after the one that we're discussing now.

The authorities of the State we found during the COVID response that there were a lot of emergency orders, Executive Orders that were implemented that we really never even expected we'd have to get to but those are things that we will want to incorporate as well into our document. We'll want to work with Bobbie and the team over at Public Health to ensure that the integration between Emergency Management and Public Health is correct as referenced in the plan.

In the final thing that we'll look at is making sure that our continuity of operations planning for the city is sort of the focus and emphasis of our work moving forward. What we've found is that the State really stepped in as well as the federal government to manage the COVID response making a lot of what our office and what Public Health did really supplemental and very specialized towards what the city was doing. However, the State and the federal government didn't really provide any support in planning for continuity of operations for our city departments. So we will have to moving forward really emphasize our work to ensure that everybody from the Fire Department, to Information Technology, to the Library have really strong abilities to withstand any sort of a crisis that comes our way.

I'd be happy to answer any questions about the 2021 Emergency Operations Plan update and I look forward to working with you on getting this thing completed.

President Wilshire

Questions? Alderman Dowd.

Alderman Dowd

Yes Justin one thing we talked about about a year ago was as we went through the pandemic developing a

play book if and when it ever happens again and I think you had said that that's part of your plans. I just want to make sure that that is and the other thing one of the big things that sort of crippled us at the beginning of the pandemic as I recall our emergency supply of PPE was out of date and basically not good. I think we talked way back much like you did in the military if you had a revolving supply – if you worked a thing with the hospitals and Public Health to supply them with PPE, you keep a major supply here somewhere in Nashua for emergencies but you give them on a regular basis you supply it them and then replace it so you always have a viable supply of equipment on emergency basis. So you basically set up a supply center to the degree we need for the city. While I would work with the State, I wouldn't rely on them but I think that we need to safeguard our own city. SO working with Bobbie Bagley would be good on that and seeing what we need based on what happened over the past year how much we need in supply and how to keep it current. Thanks.

Emergency Management Director Justin Kates

Sure and so regarding the first question about the continuous improvements, that's sort of what I was referring to on that last slide. What you saw on that last slide was really the interim findings, the key areas that we realize needed to shift based on the COVID response and what we're going to include as part of the Emergency Operations Plan.

For the second question, that is something I will have to work Bobbie on. The reason for that is the cash of supplies that the city had for a public health emergency, it's a public health function. So we need to work with Bobbie's team obviously but also she has to work closely with the Department of Health and Human Services at the State as well as the Health and Human Services at the federal level who provides a lot of the funding for supplies like that. SO that will be on the radar and we're going to have to work with her partners on that.

Alderman Dowd

Okay.

President Wilshire

Any other questions for Director Kates? Alderman Lopez.

Alderman Lopez

Yeah. So can you speak a little bit to the mitigation of avoiding unnecessarily large vulnerable populations? I know we have been working on improving our approaches to local crises meaning more like block level if a building starts to burn that turns multiple houses, who is in charge in making sure that that is communicated to the houses nearby? Who is in charge of making sure that when there are multiple families displaced that they're being tracked, their situations are being address? I see that as valuable because having worked with the homeless for years – like probably over a decade, two decades now, Nashua has a large population of people who are more vulnerable to some circumstances than others whether they're displaced in terms of housing, with their newly housed, whether they're lacking financial means, members of economic minorities. Some people are able to handle something like a city-wide disaster event with more resilience than others based on economic needs. Other people are more able to handle it because they are in physical shape and physical condition, or because they have more connections. So what about preventing the City of Nashua from having an unnecessarily large vulnerable population that would create a liability in the event of a major catastrophe?

Emergency Management Director Justin Kates

Yeah so there's a lot to unpack on that one. So I'll only hit a couple of the things. The first item is kind of the mitigation aspect you had mentioned – trying to identify those vulnerable populations within the community and identifying ways to try to reduce risk from them being impacted from the start. That's been

identified as part of the Hazard Mitigation Plan the city had done two years ago. However I'm going to note this, many of the recommendations and strategies that were identified in that document to deal with sort of reduction of vulnerability for populations, there are social programs and infrastructure investments that are beyond the scope of like my specific office. Things like trying to promote financial literacy within populations that don't have savings accounts and can't withstand some sort of a crisis situation. So all the things you had mentioned are right on. Those are the things that create emergencies. The storm itself doesn't create the emergency, it's the impact to society that really most concerned about.

Specifically referencing the plan that we're talking about tonight – the Emergency Operations Plan – there's a section in that document which talks about what we call "access and functional needs". These are populations that may require some additional accommodations or assistance during a crisis. There's a couple of things that we've done. Number one, we've identified the access and function needs that we're concerned about within the city regarding emergency operations; and number two, we've looked at areas within the city that may have higher levels of population that fall within one of the categories of access functional needs that we would need to consider and things like sheltering, and evacuation, or things like that. It's not perfect because we don't have literal addresses for every single person that meets one of those kind of those criteria but what we do is we can at least look at I think the census block group level and say okay well this area maybe in the downtown a scenario with there might be an economic challenge of a certain area or lack of access to transportation. So we know that our strategies for an evacuation in that area need to shift differently than we might in another part of the city. So that's how we deal with the response phase on how to ensure that vulnerable populations are provided accommodations as needed. I think the key thing that is essential as part of this plan is that as you had mentioned in most cases it's going to be the vulnerable populations that need the assistance and not the rest of the community. We need to focus our efforts on those populations for any sort of a large scale emergency.

Alderman Lopez

If I could just follow up.

President Wilshire

Alderman Lopez.

Alderman Lopez

This is the seven year anniversary of the fire on West Hollis that took out a pretty significant building and that impacted this community particularly because it's so densely populated. An emergency in one part of the city isn't necessarily going to be as acute an emergency as it would be having it in another area. For example if there was a flood – we had a flash flood warning today, if there was a flood in the downtown area, we probably would see a number of the social services that would be activating in an emergency compromised themselves like the Soup Kitchen and the Rescue Mission. All those kind of things would be in the flood zone.

That's part of it but I was also pointing out as Director Kates acknowledged that there are also large populations that could themselves become an element of the emergency. He had brought up Hurricane Katrina. That was characterized by a large number of people who could not be easily evacuated and were not evacuated until it was somewhat late in the game. Then overcrowding in the evacuation rezone created a secondary impact. So my comments were necessarily directed towards Director Kates but more to give him an opportunity to remind the rest of on the Board that caring for the needy in Nashua, focusing on those in need of things like city welfare, and these nonprofit organizations that support them isn't just an act of charity. It is hazard mitigation. It is making sure we're not too vulnerable to a catastrophe by making sure that our residents have some sort of capabilities of their own stockpiled independently that they can use in an emergency. Thank you.

President Wilshire

Does anyone else have a question for Director Kates? Seeing no one. Thank you Director Kates, appreciate your presentation this evening.

Emergency Management Director Justin Kates

Absolutely. Thank you.

ADJOURNMENT

**MOTION BY ALDERMAN O'BRIEN THAT THE JUNE 8, 2021, SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF ALDERMEN BE ADJOURNED BY ROLL CALL**

A viva voce roll call was taken to adjourn the Board of Aldermen meeting which resulted as follows:

Yea: Alderman O'Brien, Alderman Klee, Alderman Dowd, Alderman Caron,  
Alderman Clemons, Alderman Lopez, Alderman Tencza,  
Alderwoman Lu, Alderman Jette, Alderman Schmidt, Alderman Laws,  
Alderman Cleaver, Alderman Harriott-Gathright, Alderman Wilshire

14

Nay:

0

**MOTION CARRIED**

The meeting was declared adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

Attest: Susan K. Lovering, City Clerk