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EMA director releases report he intended to present at county session

Apr 30, 2020

(Editor's note: Piatt County Emergency Management Agency Director Mike Holmes said he intended on delivering this report to the county board EMA committee on April 28, but opted not to after he felt the session took a confrontational tone. We share it, as it contains information Holmes wished to relay to the public.)

– “The hyper-reach mass notification system should be operational within two weeks. They notified me yesterday that they've received all of the 911 data and shapefiles. I had already sent them my federal integrated and public alert warning system (IPAWS) credentials a few weeks ago. All of this information has been turned over to the software engineering team and they will develop our county specific application. This will greatly enhance our capability to communicate and collaborate with the citizens of Piatt County.”

– “Personal protective equipment has been arriving from the state rather sporadically, but this is starting to change with deliveries coming more regularly. So far, I've been able to keep up with the resource requests from our nine fire departments and four law enforcement agencies as well as corrections, the nursing home, Maple point, the mental health center, the courthouse and Piattran. As more supplies become available I will look into accommodating more departments or agencies.”

– “I'm currently filling all positions of command and general staff for this emergency by myself. As a member of the state incident management team, this is something I'm uniquely qualified to do, but if I had a Finance/Admin Section Chief that could process the purchases and county claims it would be a big help.

“The problem is that during a declared emergency or disaster there are local and state laws that allow for the suspending of normal formalities in regards to financial processes (Piatt County 32.23(G) and 20 ILCS 3305/10 (j)). This has not been done in Piatt County. This forces me to spend an inordinate amount of time on formal claims processes that take away from

operations, logistics and/or planning during the incident. Not having the formalities suspended or being assigned a finance/admin individual is becoming an issue.

“Another detriment of not having a finance/administration section chief is we are not monitoring all county purchases for grant reimbursement opportunities. We currently qualify for FEMA public assistance grant reimbursements for covid-19 related response and prevention. This is a 75/25 grant opportunity. If we're not recording purchases throughout every county government department and labeling them as COVID authorized purchases we are missing out on reimbursement benefits. This is not the best use of taxpayer resources.

“There is a reason all Piatt County officials are required to be National Incident Management System compliant. Nims and ICS (Incident Command System) work, when you utilize the processes and procedures articulated within them.”

– Mike Holmes, Director

Piatt County EMA

Little action at tense EMA committee session