

TOWNSHIP OF O'CONNOR – NOTES –
TABLETOP CALL OUT EXERCISE JUNE 26, 2008

Notes of the tabletop call out exercise held on June 26, 2008 in the municipal building.

Present: Mayor Nelson
Councillors: Garbutt, Nygard, Racicot, Vezina
Clerk-Treasurer Buob
Deputy Clerk-Treasurer Racicot
John Coupland, EMO
Fire Chief Mattas, Fire Department and First Response members – Ian Hamilton, Mike Styles, Willie Coderre, Leanne Coderre, Vicki Wassenaar, David Wassenaar, John Heckley,
Road Department – Kelly Johnson, Brent Dennhardt, Catriona Earl
Ontario Provincial Police – Staff Sergeant Ken Mantey and Sergeant Cam Howard

The tabletop exercise began at 6:30 p.m. when Clerk-Treasurer Buob and Deputy Clerk-Treasurer Racicot were given the details of the emergency exercise by John Coupland, EMO. The emergency plan was retrieved and the list of call outs was divided amongst the three. The contacts were informed it was a test and what the emergency situation was. The participants met at the municipal building to further discuss the emergency. A record was kept of the arrival times.

Once most of the participants had arrived at the hall at approximately 7:00 p.m. Mayor Nelson welcomed everyone and introductions were made. He then turned the exercise over to Mr. Coupland. The exercise was read through and each organization or department explained what they would be doing in this situation. Mr. Coupland also explained the reason for the call back exercise, as one had never actually been done before.

Some concerns with regard to the exercise and the real flooding emergency which happened on June 6th, 2008 were discussed. The Emergency Operations Centre is currently the same as the Emergency Evacuation Centre. This would not work if people were brought to the hall. The office currently has the three phone lines but only one is located in the hall. During the flood the office was used as the EOC however it was crowded at times.

It was noted that the Teleconference used on June 6 and 7, 2008 worked well as far as communications with other municipalities and agencies. All agencies could communicate with everyone at the same time. It was recommended by the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) that a local emergency teleconference be considered in a similar situation when more than one local township is affected. Mr. Coupland will look into this.

There was also a concern with the teleconference held during the flood, that the OPP were never invited to participate, Staff Sergeant Mantey just happened to arrive at the Township of O'Connor office when it began and participated through our office. It was also noted that the Lakehead Region Conservation Authority was not notified of the call. The Ministry of Transportation was represented by someone in their head office rather than someone local who would be more aware of what is happening in the area. As well the local Ministry of Education were not included.

It was suggested that an independent phone line into each municipal building be considered and requested for a reduced rate. Councillor Racicot reported that there is a Centrix system through Thunder Bay Telephone that we may qualify for. This will have to be looked into further.

Communications seems to be the biggest problem during an emergency and it was noted that this proved to be true in the recent case. It was recommended that the media be made aware of the situation as soon as possible to keep the residents updated and aware of the situation. The OPP do contact the media and keep them up to date on the information they have.

The exercise was again discussed with each group again stating what they would be doing at this point.

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Clerk-Treasurer Buob left the meeting at 8:05 p.m.

Mr. Coupland informed those present that there will be a meeting held on July 14, 2008 at 2:00 p.m. at the Oliver Paipoonge Municipal office for Ministry of Transportation, School Bus Companies, Police, Fire Chiefs, Road superintendents and various other emergency response agencies to discuss the lack of communications regarding bussing for area schools during the recent emergency situations.

A concern was noted with regard to the First Response vehicle being out of the township on June 6. It was felt that our equipment should be in the township. The vehicle was relocated to the OPP roadblock in Kakabeka Falls on Highway 11/17.

It was also suggested that a map of the washout areas should have been placed in the emergency vehicles in case there was a call. It was noted that Fire Chief Mattas, Deputy Fire Chief Groop were aware of the closures and would have communicated this information should a call have come in.

Mayor Nelson thanked everyone for coming and the meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Mayor

Clerk-Treasurer