

MONROE COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

January 21, 2026

In Attendance:

EMC

At Large - Tom Dooley; EMC Chair
At Large – Haines Lockhart
At Large – Deb Muratore
Town of Brighton – David Briden
Town of Gates - Charles Johnson
Village of Honeoye Falls - Andy Less
Town of Ogden – Bill Parkhurst
Town of Penfield – Cynette Cavaliere
Town of Perinton - Mark Gaul
Town of Pittsford – Caroline Kilmer
City of Rochester – Rosemary Jonientz
Town of Rush – Beth Hoak
Town of Webster - Charles Zlotkus
Monroe County Legislature Majority – Sue Hughes Smith
Monroe County Legislature Minority – Virginia McIntyre
Ex Officio Alternate – Madison Quinn; MCDES
Ex Officio Alternate - Steve Olufsen; MC Planning & Development
Ex Officio Alternate – Starr O’Neil; MCDPH
Recording Secretary – Liz Kaptein

Guests

Sally Howard – FMCE
Nate Jones - MCDES
Lashana Boose – City of Rochester
Theodore Maxey- City of Rochester
Dan David- MC RAC
Jeff Meyers – Cascade Recovery, RAC
Nicole Fornof- MCDES/RAC
Isabel Stowel- SunnKing
Nicole Simonetti- WM
Karen St. Aubin- City of Rochester
Nancy Pickering – MC School Board Association
Tom Conelly – RIT, RAC
Mike Burke – Town of Mendon
Septimus Scott

Meeting location:

- Monroe County Public Safety Training Facility
- 1190 Scottsville Road

Call to Order:

- Meeting was called to order at 4:03pm by Chairman Tom Dooley.

Introductions:

- Introductions were made from all present

Review of Minutes:

- Review of December Minutes will take place in February

Meeting Topic(s):

Monroe County Hazard Mitigation Plan

Tim Henry, Deputy Director Public Safety / Emergency Manager

- The intention of the Public Safety Building and the Office of Emergency Management (OEM) program is to protect life and property. This includes preparing for emergencies and responding to them after they occur. The more we can train our fellow citizens to respond and prepare for those first 72 hours after a disaster, the better equipped our communities can be.
- Monroe County is a “radiological county”, this means that we have a statutory obligation through the federal government to be prepared for a disaster related to the Ginna Nuclear power plant and conduct annual exercises for safety.
- The phases of Emergency Management are Mitigation, Preparedness, Recovery, and Response.
- Significant Events:
 - Wind Storms during multiple seasons have increased significantly, aged infrastructure (35 years) is not prioritized like it used to be once again. We’re experiencing power outages for what would otherwise be routine windstorms.
 - 2020-2025- Civil Unrest
 - Covid 19 -Conducting mass testing, vaccination, mobile units.
 - Multi Patient Bus Crashes
 - Snow Storms
 - Active Shooter Threats
 - Complex Coordination Terrorist Threats
 - Ginna Drills & Response
 - Buffalo Blizzard Response
 - Eclipse Planning from 2024
 - Opioid Crisis Response
- Weather-related disasters are a primary concern, currently there is a heightened awareness of weather conditions and response for snow squalls due to low visibility.
 - The Buffalo snowstorm was extremely well forecasted and predicted accurately, but it still impacted in ways that caused significant accidents.
 - 35 people died in Buffalo – one of the largest cities in the largest states
- [Monroe Alert Application](#) – Available in Apple and Android versions
 - App provides information on weather, evacuation, ice storms, warming centers, hazmat incidents, all available from a trusted source.
 - Monroe Alerts also allows us to be sensitive to the unique needs of the community with a self-reporting mechanism on the app. For example, if mobility or transportation needs are limited. This allows for safer real-time responses.
- Monroe County Emergency Operations Center (EOC) is accredited by NYS DHS.
 - The EOC incident management focus is:

- Activation – Bringing knowledge and expertise together to deal with events that threaten the community.
 - Situational Analysis – Gathering information to determine what is happening and identify potential impacts.
 - Incident briefing – Efficiently sharing information among team members, agencies and municipalities.
 - Law enforcement and 911 experiencing staffing shortages – allowing for remote/virtual work. This gives the flexibility to make decisions based on circumstances, as some circumstances benefit from the use of virtual applications, while others are better suited for in-person.
- Pre-planning for incidents – Internal vs External: It’s important to engage key county leaders, communications, DHS, the Health Department, Parks and Rec, DES/Pure waters, DOT, MCSO prior to disasters. Focus areas on safety, security, food and shelter, medical needs, energy needs, hazardous materials, water systems, and transportation are critical.
- Creating community lifelines is also key. One lesson learned from Buffalo was that Erie County is not equipped the same as Monroe County – we have one central 911 system, 1 EOC and all fire, EMS, law enforcement come through the same center. This helps us establish community lifelines in an emergency. Monroe County Law/Fire/EMS can all communicate with one another on the same radio system as well and we have good public transportation that has allowed us to evacuate residences in the past.
- How can you survive the first 72 hours after a disaster?
 - Sign up for alerts and warnings, make a safety plan, have savings on hand, practice for emergency drills, test family communication plans, safeguard important documents, take photos and insure property.
 - Make a plan with neighbors (and know how to contact them!), make your home safer, know evacuation routes, assemble and update emergency supplies and get involved in your community.
- Questions?
 - What is the connection between municipalities and County during incident?
 - Used Pittsford Train Derailment as example. Incident starts at local level. OEM would reach out to top municipal official (in this case, Pittsford Town Supervisor) to see if they need/offer resources (supplies, staff, etc). Also, certain types of incidents already have plans in place – for train derailment, Pittsford Fire Chief would be incident commander and would communicate needs. Monroe County HAZ-MAT would be requested as part of response.
 - How is OEM involved with Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Services (DHSES)?
 - When we reach capacity, we ask for additional resources. Sometimes those resources are manpower, sometimes resources may be material items such as cots and blankets. Resources could also be needs such as additional foam for a hazmat situation. State fire responds for hazmat, and DEC responds for all hazmat. Life safety is the priority. Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) systems help with this.

- How to get information to the public?
 - Use targeted approach – OEM is small office
 - Social media, libraries, trusted sources for communication - churches, fellow community members, government agencies.
 - Using the Monroe Alerts App, individuals can now receive messages in top 12-13 languages spoken in Monroe County.

Environmental Management Council (EMC) Overview

Tom Dooley, EMC Chair

- EMC established in 1971
- In 4th year of rebuild. Have had solid membership and attendance
- Working on developing a GIS inventory of natural resources for members. Looking to provide an overview in May
- Stood up the Youth Environmental Management Committee (YEMC) in October
 - Have about ¼ of the County’s 60 high schools participating
 - Had a snow day for January’s meeting – holding leadership elections in February
- EMC Executive Committee is working on updating EMC mission and vision; then to develop long range plan

Recycling Advisory Committee (RAC) Overview

Jeff Meyers, RAC Chair; Cascades Recovery

- We’ve been doing these combined meetings between the RAC and EMC for several years and have alternated hosting, which has been a great benefit for both organizations. There’s a good comfort level that creates important conversation and good energy between the groups and that helps both grow and learn.
- During 2025 –
 - The RAC explored the viability of organics management. The city of Rochester and the county have the organic waste pilot programs and organics management plan in place now.
 - Informed on DEC and SWANNA regulation changes.
 - There will be several landfill closures in the next few years.
- There are emerging technologies on plastic recycling because of the many serious problems coming up with microplastics and nano plastics. Alfred University also presented on glass recovery technologies. The common theme across these technologies is that problems and solutions are both changing, for example, how we handle plastics, textiles, etc. is changing and makes the committees relevant. Our goal is to explore what can we do to make our communities better prepared.

Committee Reports:

- **Program and Presentations**
 - February – Hundred Acre Nature Park in Rush - Beth Hoak & Jacob Kearney
- **Nominating and Community Liaison**
 - February 25 will be the next meeting.
- **Natural Resources**
 - Committee members will be getting access to the GIS tools requested, and will be testing functionality and access.
- **YEMC**
 - Discussed in EMC Overview

Monroe County Staff Reports:

- Steve Olufsen (Planning & Dvpt)
 - working on standard “beginning of year” things and many environmental reviews (both state and county)
 - there will be land use decision training upcoming this spring.
- Madison Quinn, MCDES Sustainability
 - Climate Adaptation and Resiliency Plan
 - Currently in climate vulnerability assessment phase
 - Survey www.monroecountyclimateaction.com
 - looking at experiences and to gain input from the community
 - the survey will close once we have broader geographic representation, likely sometime in February
 - The municipal working group and equity and social impact working group are working to advise on the process. The next round of public meetings will be several pop-up presentations at community centers and libraries
 - Available to table at events – invite us to your events!
- Starr O’Neil (Public Health)
 - Renewal season for permitting, slammed with permits, staff outages. No one’s been closed down but placarding will start in February. This would be an administrative close. We permit 3,000 brick and mortar facilities every year, not including festivals.
 - For the Lead Program – Rental Registry just got rolled out coincides the city for risk areas. State has adopted based off Rochester model.
 - Water Systems – notification went out for lead and copper rule. Childhood lead poisoning that we see locally is from paint, not water contamination.

Other Business/Announcements

- None

Privilege of the Floor

- Cynette Cavaliere (EMC Penfield) - The Penfield robotics team was given permission to be part of the organics management project.
- David Briden (EMC Brighton) – We live in a sweet spot – no hurricanes, wild fires, earthquakes, etc.
- Jeff Meyers (RAC Chair) Monroe County expanded recycling to include disposable drinking cups.
- Charles Johnson (EMC Gates) – keep gates clean final numbers are in: picked up a grand total of 726 bags of litter.

Adjourn: Meeting was adjourned at 5:22.