**GP-CERT GoToMeeting Minutes**

**Tuesday, August 4th, 2020 @ 6:00 pm:**

**Holtby welcomed everyone on the call, as the team had not met since February 5th. COVID-19 has made doing things more difficult, although we all saw Isais approach the east coast of Florida this past weekend, and then head up the coast and it was noted that it could just as easily have impacted our area. Holtby also noted that we are now getting into the teeth of hurricane season, which in our area he regards as August 15th through October 31st. The CERT leadership team has been discussing ways that we can "meet" remotely to keep everyone updated on what has been going on. We used GoToMeeting for this virtual meeting, and feedback appeared to be positive.**

**The meeting agenda had been sent out previously, and prior to getting into updates, thanks were given to all the volunteers who came out for the mask distribution event in late June. There were 46 volunteer hours worth $520 credited against our grant match requirement. Mitch Farrah and Ed Litcher were recognized for organizing and coordinating the event. Thanks were also provided to those that took the Basic SKYWARN Spotter Training Course put on by the Tampa Bay Area Weather Forecast Office earlier in the day. Cheryl Heeren advise that it was a very good presentation and very beneficial for CERT members.  A lot of good information and the information is all available for download after the fact. Holtby reminded everyone that if you take a course like this, please send him a copy of the Certificate of Completion, which he can add to our volunteer hours file.**

**Updates were then provided:**

1. **To date we have spent $9,054.69 (or 93%) of the $9,761.92 Sarasota County Neighborhood Initiative Grant maximum allowable. Holtby advised that COVID-19 has caused problems for us in several ways:**
	1. **As GP-CERT is not a legal entity, we have to work through ICON and the HOA to order all of the equipment we specified under our grant which under COVID has been more challenging.**
	2. **Many equipment items that we submitted to Sarasota County for approval (such as N95 masks and lithium battery solar generators amongst others) have been out of stock for months due to COVID and the apparent disruption of the Chinese supply chain. We had to go back to Sarasota County to request approval for substitutes, and nothing moves quickly with government agencies these days. Tom Porada has been very involved and can attest to the difficulties in getting what we actually ordered – at one point we received an Amazon box filled with dog toys – not sure who may ordered them for the team’s “canine brigade”. We also have changed some of the equipment – things like touch-less thermometers so that we can ensure the safety of our volunteers in this COVID environment.**
	3. **Holtby provided an idea of what equipment we have used the grant funds for: On the medical equipment side, we used grant funds for items such as splints, gloves, masks, bandages, blood pressure monitors, triage tape, gauze pads, tourniquets, touchless thermometers, and thermal blankets. Other equipment included items such as the large green tent that was put up for the mask event, orange safety vests and traffic cones, tarps, radios, rolling trunks, headlamps, rope, flashlights, box fans, torchlights, CERT backpacks, and even clipboards. Priscilla Leishman was recognized for her diligence in ordering and keeping track of everything, and distributing boxes out to the Zone leads.**

**The “big” dollar items were spent in the communications area. Tom Porada’s antenna proposal survey passed with a 94% approval rate. Tom’s efforts were recognized, and then he went through all of the equipment that is going up on the garbabe enclosure adjacent to the clubhouse parking lot. Tom went through a schematic diagram and explained the antenna, repeater, solar panels, and associated hardware. Tom recommended taking a look the next time any of our volunteers are in the clubhouse parking lot area. He also noted that we will be doing a communications exercise once everything is connected, which should be shortly.**

* 1. **Sarasota County Neighborhood Initiative grant volunteer hours (we need 489 volunteer hours by the end of October for our matching of the Sarasota County Neighborhood Initiative grant @ $20/hour) as of noon today were at 436 hours or 89% of our requirement – so we are 53 hours short. Holtby noted that tonight’s meeting counts for one hour per participant, so everyone’s attendance tonight put us very close to our grant volunteer match requirement. However, Holtby requested that everyone continue to submit volunteer pledge forms, as we would like to exceed our requirement by at least 100 hours, as Sarasota County may reject some hours if we do not have signatures for them on the “appropriate forms”.**
	2. **Final Report must be submitted to Sarasota County not later than November 6, 2020 to “close out the grant”. Photos of on-site signage or news articles or other stories on the project are something that they recommend, so we may have to think up a creative way to ‘thank’ Sarasota County, such as a picture of the team with equipment purchased.**
1. **On the cap fundraiser side, we had purchased 158 Core 365 Adult Pitch Performance caps with Gran Paradiso embroidery (88 white caps and 70 charcoal grey caps). The coronovirus has impacted us here as well as cap sales have stalled, although to date we have sold 104 caps, covering our initial outlay by over $250. The remaining proceeds from the future sale of the 35 white caps and 19 charcoal grey caps will provide GP-CERT with an additional (minimum) $945 profit, which will go into our bank account (which has $746 in it as of today).**

**Subsequent to our meeting, one of our volunteers suggested selling “Gran Paradiso-themed” masks as a fundraiser, and Priscilla will look into this possibility. Any other ideas would be appreciated.**

1. **A challenge that GP-CERT is faced with today is our readiness. We now have the supplies and equipment to support our operations in the aftermath of a disaster; but our individual readiness might be another question. There are a lot of new people in new roles, and our world has changed with COVID. To help bolster our training, the leadership team has been exploring novel ways in which we can keep our GP-CERT members engaged, as well as identifying programs that can help prepare us for the 2020 hurricane session, while at the same time dealing with the COVID situation.**

**A couple of ways that we plan to bolster our training:**

* **Tom Porada will be headlining a GP-CERT Communications exercise as soon as we get our new antennae set-up completed – which he expects to be in a couple of weeks time. Stay tuned for date and time for this communications exercise, which will involve everyone.**
* **Second, David Elwart put a considerable amount of time into putting together a GP-CERT Hurricane Desktop Exercise. This exercise involves all team members, and it is scheduled to be run at 6:30 pm on Tuesday, August 18th. A GoToMeeting link will be set up and emailed to all volunteers shortly, so please hold the date and time.**
* **Joe Wyatt of IslandWalk CERT has advised that they are planning on conducting a CERT Basic training program on January 7, 16, 23, 30, 2021 at Island Walk. In conjunction with the CERT Basic training, they will also be conducting a CERT Basic Refresher program during this same time period. At this point, the programs are tentative pending any further developments of COVID.  If you are interested, would please contact Joe Wyatt by e-mail at   jtwyatt@comcast.net or by phone at 856-981-8509, and please copy me as well or let me know.**
* **Holtby advised that he sent out an email earlier this week on two on-line courses that CERT members can take – IS-317A, which is for CERT team volunteers who have yet to take the CERT Basic course. The course includes three lessons: Introduction to CERT; What CERTs Do; and, Becoming Involved.**

**The other updated course is IS-315A, entitled “CERT and the Incident Command System (ICS)”, which is geared to all those in CERT leadership roles, or those who would like to take on leadership role.**

**With respect to the next agenda item, Holtby advised that three of our volunteers have graciously consented to taking on leadership roles within GP-CERT:**

1. **Jason Alvord is the new Zone 4 Lead;**
2. **Pete Sargent is the new Zone 5 Lead; and**
3. **Chris Moen is the new Access Control Officer.**

**Please join me in thanking these three gentlemen for stepping up the next time you see any one of them.**

**Jo Holtby has updated the GP-CERT roster, so it will be sent out to all volunteers in the next few days. Please let Jo or Gordon Holtby know if the roles that you are assigned to are not where your talents lie and you wish to be assigned elsewhere. We have some very talented volunteers within our ranks, and we want to ensure that those talents are utilized.**

**4. Ed Litcher and Trent DePersia have also agreed to head up probably the most critical and challenging area for us – recruitment. Thank you both! Please contact either Ed or Trent if you would like to assist them on this committee, or have ideas for the committee.**

**Action Items:**

1. **We talked about having a newsletter on a monthly or bi-monthly basis. Since our GoToMeeting virtual call, Carole Myles has spoken with her husband, and he has some experience with Publisher and is willing to help us get up and running. Please let Holtby or Cheryl Heeren know if this is something that you may be willing to assist on.**
2. **Carole Myles and Robert Spong put together a fabulous web-site for our organization, so please give them any ideas that you may have for improvement of it. Someone suggested that we put hurricane shutter installation contacts on the web-site, as that is one of the top questions that I get asked.**
3. **We are pushing North Port Fire Department to hold virtual hurricane preparedness presentations but no success to date.**
4. **Mitch and Ed suggested that we ask our volunteers whether anyone might be willing to fill a “Marketing Manager” role to coordinate the newsletter and to work with the recruitment committee on finding ways to increase GP-CERT’s visibility.**

**There were a few comments and questions in the final 10 minutes, and the virtual meeting was adjourned at just before 7 pm.**