**Minutes from the 1-11-2022 GP-CERT Zoom Meeting:**

**Holtby welcomed everyone, wished everyone a Happy New Year, and gave a special welcome to anyone attending their first GP-CERT meeting. He mentioned that tonight’s meeting was originally scheduled to be in-person in the card room, but the Omicron variant necessitated moving it on-line.**

**Holtby noted that we previously did a GP-CERT orientation for all new volunteers, but we had gone away from that since Covid appeared. He would like to get back to a 30-minute orientation prior to our regular meeting on March 8th. In the interim, he recommended the on-line FEMA course IS-317 Introduction to CERT for new volunteers. In addition, all GP-CERT volunteers are welcome to reach out to him or any of the Command Team by telephone, text, or email at any time. All of the Command Team contact information is listed on the GP-CERT.org web-site. He also reminded everyone that we also have a** granparadisocert@gmail.com **email address.**

**First agenda item: ‘The GP Responder’ newsletter, which we started up in September of 2020, has published six issues so far. Holtby thanked those volunteers and contributors who have helped so far, and he gave special thanks to Carole and Jeff Myles who put the newsletter together. The next issue of The GP Responder is scheduled to go out in mid-February – so Holtby wanted everyone to consider contributing an article – we are looking for 100-150 words on anything with a safety or weather focus that would be of interest to the GP community. He noted that we have a couple of volunteers who proofread all submitted articles, so don’t worry if your punctuation or grammar is not perfect.**

**On the web-site front, Holtby noted that when we started up our web-site a few years ago, we were able to “piggy-back” off of IW’s hosting service agreement. IW’s hosting agreement expires on February 22nd of this year, and IW advised us that it will not be renewed – so we have to look at other options (like WordPress.com or other site hosts). We’ve had a “free-ride” compliments of IW for the last couple of years, and we anticipate setting up our own web server account with BlueHost (at a cost of $178 for three years) and then working with Paul Nienaber of IW to transfer our GP-CERT.org domain name back over to us. The final step will be transferring the existing files to the new server (with Paul’s assistance), and there may be a disruption in our account for a day or so when this takes place.**

**Next agenda item - Training and Education (“T&E”): Holtby noted that Kristi Loret, Rich MacCready, and Brian Sheftel did a fantastic job in 2021, and that he was looking for even better things from them in 2022. Kristi, T&E Coordinator and Zone 1 Lead, then gave an update on 2022 Training and Education plans.**

**Kristi advised that the T&E was planning a basic CERT class, with the time frame to be coordinated with Sarasota County so there was no overlap with their planned classes. Rich had reached out to Sarasota County for their class schedule. Kristi also mentioned that another Yellow Box exercise was in the planning stages for May – with a date to be determined – perhaps during National Hurricane Awareness week (May 9-15th). She also advised that T&E was working towards having an “all hands on deck” search and rescue (SAR) event, much like IslandWalk CERT does every year. Other recommendations coming from T&E included having separate/different level meetings for the Zones, Command Team, and all volunteers. Kristi would also like to see team morale boosting activities to get all volunteers involved – cookouts, meet and greet, wine nights, etc. as we get out from under the Covid caution. There was also some discussion about becoming more active with both the Activities Committee and with local events such as the 5K runs here and at Cool Today Park. Rich mentioned having GP-CERT volunteers – together with AEDs – at these events. However, after Mitch Farrah checked with our insurance agency, he confirmed that GP-CERT volunteers have to stay within the guidelines of the CERT program to ensure that the Good Samaritan Act covers us when representing GP-CERT (ie. any time we are in uniform and identify ourselves as CERT members). If we are not representing GP-CERT at these events, we are free to volunteer and are covered by GP POA’s volunteer insurance policy.**

**Holtby also reiterated that we have ample training material for anyone who is interested in getting a leg up on the next CERT basic training course or CERT Train the Trainer guides. He also mentioned the availability of CERT Train-the-Trainer virtual courses K0428. These 24-hr courses are facilitated by FEMA’s Emergency Management Institute and are free. Each individual course offering meets 3 days per week for 4 hours for 2 consecutive weeks. You need to have completed the CERT Basic training to take this course. You’ll also need to get a referral from either Ryan Murphy or Kaylynn Carpenter, our new Sarasota County CERT Program Manager. 2022 course dates are as follows:**

|  |
| --- |
| * **February 8, 9, 10, 15, 16, 17 (1 – 5 p.m.)**
* **March 1, 2, 3, 8, 9, 10 (12 – 4 p.m.)**
* **April 5, 6, 7, 12, 13, 14 (1 – 5 p.m.)**
* **June 7, 8, 9, 14, 15, 16 (12 – 4 p.m.)**
* **July 12, 13, 14, 19, 20, 21 (1 – 5 p.m.)**
* **September 6, 7, 8, 13, 14, 15 (12 – 4 p.m.)**

**\*Class size limited to 20 students and they fill up quickly. Each course offering meets 3 days per week for 4 hours for 2 consecutive weeks.**  |

**Holtby mentioned that he still views communications to be our team’s “weak link” and a key item we need to improve upon in 2022. Tom Porada then provided a brief update on plans for 2022, which include having a monthly net check in, starting in March. Given that this is a test of emergency readiness, Tom advised that we need all of the following areas/functions to participate:**

**Zone Leaders 1-6**

**Incident Commander (or deputy IC)**

**Access Control Officer**

**Triage Team Lead**

**Logistics Officer**

**Recruitment Co-Leads**

**Education & Training**

**Tom proposed that our first monthly communication check-in will be on Tuesday, March 8th between 5:30 and 6:00 pm (just prior to our next GP-CERT meeting).**

**Fourth update – Trent DePersia and Ed Litcher put together a few thoughts on recruitment:**

1. **Continuing to profile GP-CERT is the weekly newsletter from GP;**
2. **Continued participation in GP activities, when appropriate, to share information about GP-CERT and answer any question from the activity-goers;**
3. **Update our trifold marketing materials;**
4. **Ed had several people come over to the GP-CERT info table at the Holiday Market who said they would make contact with us; and**
5. **Holtby noted that overall we all need to do a better job on recruitment – and he asked if anyone is willing to help Trent and Ed on the Recruitment Committee. Recruiting takes “a village”. Holtby threw out a few thoughts: Do we need to get more involved in planning another Family Safety Day once Covid slows down like we had planned to do in 2020? How do we recruit safely in the Covid environment we find ourselves in? Do we need to get more integrated with the Activities Committee to plan a GP-Community Emergency Response Team community “party”?**

**Fifth update item – Zone Leads Kristi Loret and Brian Sheftel shared some additional thoughts on improvement plans for 2022, many of which were mentioned in their T&E presentation.**

**Sixth Update: Bob Browne mentioned that we need additional volunteers willing to help out on the Access Control front, as a minimum of 500 hours will be needed to adequately staff the front gate in the aftermath of a hurricane. We also need to coordinate Access Control with the AC&P changes that are being implemented, and Rich MacCready offered to update Bob on the AC&P changes.**

**Seventh Update Item: Holtby noted that our finances continue to be solid with $10,800 in the bank as of the end of November. We still have 15 white and one charcoal grey GP caps left out of the 158 we started with. As things start to open back up around here, Holtby advised that it would be good to start thinking about how to increase our visibility within the community and also to continue to do some fundraising. There was a suggestion that we piggy-back off of some of the Activities Committee events to increase our visibility, with the SuperBowl Party being an upcoming event. Jean Townly suggested passing out mini-footballs with CERT stenciled on them, and we will discuss with the Activities Committee to see if this would be acceptable.**

**Holtby mentioned that we now need to establish a GP-CERT Treasurer position. He advised that we need to have an annual budget and to track revenues and expenses – which has to date been a “back of the envelope” type of thing. There has been preliminary interest exhibited in the position, but Holtby requested that anyone with an interest let him know ASAP.**

**Eighth update item – As Holtby mentioned at our last meeting, he has been leading GP-CERT for 3 years now. He would still like to step aside to give some “new blood” their opportunity to take GP-CERT to the next level, as he feels there are a lot of talented GP volunteers that could do so. However - if the right person cannot be found, he will not be stepping down. So please let him know if you have an interest in stepping up.**

**Mitch Farrah then covered a few additional items, and the meeting was then opened up for discussion. There was a discussion on whether GP-CERT should be involved in events such as the recent “boil water” advisory from North Port Utilities, and if so, to what extent. It appears that this type of event may be outside our mandate, but it may make sense to ensure that our GP community sign up for any North Port emergency notices. In addition, Rich mentioned that we need an AED trainer & dummy if we really wish to educate our community on properly using an AED. This is something we need to look closely at to ensure we stay within our CERT guidelines.**

**Holtby advised that the date for our next meeting is Tuesday, March 8th at 6 pm in the craft room, so he requested that everyone please put that date on your 2022 calendar.**