**Tuesday, November 9, 2021 GP-CERT Meeting Minutes:**

**Holtby welcomed everyone and offered a special welcome to anyone attending their first GP-CERT meeting – of which there were several.  He advised  that tonight’s meeting would run about 75 minutes – as we have a little training exercise planned at the tail end of the meeting put together by Rich MacCready.**

**Holtby reiterated that 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. All attendees then introduced themselves, as it had been some time since we had had an in-person meeting and there were a number of new volunteers in attendance.**

**Holtby noted that we are in day 161 of the 2021 hurricane season, with 22 days to go. By storm energy, the season is 96% complete as a whole, and over 98% complete for Florida.  Factoring in now post-tropical Wanda, the 2021 season will finish up more active than 80% of the hurricane seasons in terms of overall activity since tracking began. The good news – there are no tropical threats to Florida or the continental U.S. in the week ahead.  Holtby noted that we have been fortunate so far this season – but the recent Tornado warming for Sarasota County on October 21st means that we always need to stay vigilant.**

**Before getting into the agenda, Holtby mentioned that Paul Nienaber of IslandWalk CERT was admitted to Venice Regional Hospital last Monday, he then got married to his best friend, Patty, on Tuesday, and on Thursday he had a triple bypass.  After a rough first few days, his wife advised us that Paul is being released today [Tuesday] to go home.  Its been quite a week for Paul and his new wife, and Holtby advised that he would like to send the newlyweds flowers and best wishes on behalf of GP-CERT – and would like to use GP-CERT funds to do so.  A vote was taken on this motion and all attendees voted in favor of sending the flowers. [Flowers from Venetian Florist are scheduled to be delivered on Thursday].**

**Holtby noted that once November 30 arrives, everyone with a GP-CERT Basic backpack or Zone box needs to check them back in through our Logistics Officer – Priscilla Leishman. Please “customize” your backpack so you will be able to check out the same backpack next year prior to the June 1 start of hurricane season. Priscilla will come out with some return dates and times – and hopefully we will be able to find space to store all of our equipment.**

**Moving to our Agenda updates, Holtby started off with Training and Education and he reiterated that Rich MacCready and Kristi Loret have done an incredible job putting everything together, and he thanked them for all of their work. He also thanked Brian Sheftel for helping out with the recent training. Training was made more difficult when co-lead instructor Paul Nienaber was taken the hospital the first day of training – and co-lead Kristi Loret had to step up to cover for Paul.  Kristi, our own Education and Training Coordinator and Zone 1 Lead, then provided an update on the skills training that took place September 25/26 and the in-person classes that were held October 1/2/3.**

**Stay tuned for announcements on future training opportunities, as Kristy is working to coordinate additional training with Sarasota County.  Holtby then recognized all of the GP-CERT volunteers who took either the virtual or the in-person CERT basic training – thanking them for their commitment to helping out our community!**

**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.  We also have CERT Train-the-Trainer instructor guides available for anyone who wants to take this course and help out Kristi with training our volunteers in the future. There was a question on introductory material – and newcomers were referred to the on-line FEMA course IS-317 Introduction to CERT.**

**Holtby noted that GP-CERT did another “desktop hurricane simulation exercise” on Thursday, September 30th.  David Elwart was instrumental in putting our last two desktop exercises together.  The exercise David put together was excellent, but unfortunately, attendance was not what Holtby had hoped for.**

**Upcoming training – hopefully everyone received Holtby’s**

**email on FEMA’s webinar being held on Wednesday, November 17th from 1:00pm - 2:00pm on disaster response actions that support people with access and functional needs, as well as those with disabilities. The Activities Committee will also be sending out an email blast to our community on this webinar so that anyone who would like to listen in or ask questions can do so.**

**GP-CERT also had a 45-minute AED training session on October 15th, and it was both useful and informative. Additional AED and hands-only CPR training sessions are being planned in conjunction with the Activities Committee. There was a question on the AED lease and how it was handled. Holtby noted that it did not go exactly as we had anticipated – and there was some debate as to whether a purchase would have been more prudent. Mitch Farrah advised that the lease can be terminated early if desired.**

**Final item on the training side, communications – in Holtby’s view the most important thing we need to improve upon. Tom Porada is on vacation at the moment, but he will be planning something in this area shortly.  Holtby noted that we did have a little practice when the tornado warning was in effect – and thanked the Zone leads who checked in.**

**Second update – Holtby announced that Bob Browne has agreed to take on the Access Control lead position. Holtby thanked Browne for stepping up and noted his security and military training – which Browne advised was with “nukes”.**

**Third update - ‘The GP Responder’ newsletter, which we started up in September of last year, has published five issues so far. Thanks to all those volunteers and contributors who have helped so far, and a special thanks to Carole and Jeff Myles. Holtby noted that we will be publishing our next issue in the next week to ten days – it was just awaiting some content from him.  Holtby requested that all volunteers 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. Holtby mentioned that we have a couple of volunteers who proofread all submitted articles, so don’t worry if you are not the “world’s best writer”.**

**Fourth update – Finances. The GP cap fundraiser worked out extremely well – we started with 158 Core 365 Adult Pitch Performance caps and we have 17 white and one dark grey cap left.  Once we sell off the remaining caps, we will have made just over $1,800 in profit from this fundraiser.  Holtby noted that we have $10,800 in our CERT bank account, and that we had spent roughly $100 since our last meeting on training materials. As things start to open back up around here, Holtby noted that we would like to continue to do some fundraising, so any suggestions would be welcomed.**

**Fifth update item – GP-CERT has been asked to help out with safety for those volunteers who will be putting up and taking down flags for Veteran’s Day. Holtby noted that we have a few volunteers to help out each day, but we could use a few more – the weather should be nice and cool – and you can meet some of your neighbors – there are usually about 30-35 volunteers (non-CERT) who help out with the roughly 1,500 flags. [A couple of volunteers noted at our meeting that the 6 pm start would be after sundown due to daylight savings time – so we let the Activities Committee know and the event was held at 5 pm. Eight GP-CERT volunteers assisted with safety putting up the flags, and we are happy to announce that everyone did so safely due to our assistance.  In addition to helping put up some of the flags – what we did was help keep the flag volunteers safe from all the traffic zipping by the volunteers – we put up traffic cones and had our CERT safety vests on].  Holtby noted that he would like to continue to support this endeavor - as he believes that our team is all about helping out our community and keeping them safe.**

**Sixth update item was recruitment – we have 93 volunteers on GP-CERT as of today – but not that many are active – so we need to continually recruit.  We lost five volunteers this past week and gained one.  There is a Holiday Market on Saturday, December 4th from 1-4 pm and the Activities Committee has asked if we want to set up a table to promote GP-CERT – and possibly sell our remaining caps for last minute Christmas gifts.  Ed Litcher offered  to coordinate a table for this event, so please let him know if you are available to assist.  In addition, to help out on the recruiting front – Holtby challenged everyone attending tonight to “bring a neighbor” to our next meeting on Tuesday, January 11th at 6 pm.**

**Holtby mentioned at our last meeting that he had been leading GP-CERT for 34 months now.  At the end of this hurricane season he would like to step aside to give some “new blood” their opportunity to take GP-CERT to the next level. Holtby  feels that there are a lot of talented GP volunteers that could take our program from here. However - if the right person cannot be found, and he noted that he has spoken to a few, he will not be stepping down immediately.  He mentioned to please let him know if you have an interest in stepping up.**

**Rich MacCready, Kristi Loret and Brian Sheftel then  walked all attendees through the night’s training exercise, which involved a triage based assessment of some “hypothetical” patients – with names like “Minnie Mouse”. Attendees were divided up into two person teams, and they rotated from table to table, reading the “blue medical information tag” attached to each “patient” and making a determination whether the patient should receive a Green, Yellow, Red, or Black triage tag. A lot of fun was had by all – with no perfect scores attained!**

**Holtby noted that the dates for our next two meetings are Tuesday, January 11th at 6 pm in the craft room and Tuesday, March 8th at 6 pm, so he requested that everyone put those dates on their 2022 calendars.**