

Penobscot TIM Group Meeting

June 22, 2021

1130-0100

State Police Barracks, 198 Maine Avenue Bangor and Via Zoom

1. Welcome and Introductions

Sgt Aaron Turcotte started the meeting and introductions were made.

In attendance:

Sgt. Aaron Turcotte -Maine State Police

Dianne Rice-Hansen-BACTS

Steven Thebarger -MaineDOT

Kevin Guimond-CMP

Bruce Mattson-MaineDOT

Eric Pelletier -Bangor Fire

Lt. Michael Johnston-Maine State Police

Joe Lacerda-MaineDOT

Oriana Flemming -Northern Light Medical Transport

Ryan Fish-Versant Power

Jerrod Crouse -Versant Power

Jill King -Versant Power

Jeffery Coon -DPS-Bangor RCC

Michelle Boucher -IBI Group

Paul Nichols-MaineDOT

Steve Landry -MaineDOT

Peter Cusolito -Ranger

Andrew Allen -MaineDOT

2. Versant and CMP discussion - Representatives from Versant Power and CMP will be giving an overview of their procedures and protocols for “blue sky events” i.e. accidents and “long term events” i.e. weather events.

Kevin Guimond began the conversation. CMP has worked with Maine Emergency Management Agencies (EMA) since 2017 for big storm or system wide events. Back in 2017 during the windstorm they had over 1800 broken poles. CMP declared a big incident and then in turn worked with the county EMA assigning a liaison to the county EMA directors who then would reach out to their local municipalities, fire chiefs, and public safety working through the ICS -all incident management system. The county EMA’s then determine which roads are a priority to open. Once a priority list is developed, they then go into what is called “a make safe” operation. and break into strike teams of buckets to go out and cut and clear and make the road safe but not necessarily restore power. We have had really good success with this. CMP works on that list until all the roads are open and safe/passable for EMS however it does not include restoring the power. We also have priority sites such as hospitals. In some circumstances they may prioritize other entities. During the pandemic we had an April storm which took out a lot of power. Because we already had a food shortage and wanted to do the best we could to preserve what food was in the freezers, Hannaford Bros was targeted as a priority site so we did not lose all of the food. In the last few storms of the spring the vaccination clinics were prioritized sites. Of course if a place is really remote you may not be able to get to them even if they should be a prioritized site.

Sagadahoc and Waldo counties are very proactive as is York county. Other counties may not be as organized and therefore it may take longer to get power restored in those areas. Wayne Arsonault from MaineDOT and Kevin speak quite regularly and Kevin always lets Wayne know when he is going to the EOC to staff it and make the MaineDOT connection, as they are responsible for a great number of roads especially in the rural parts of the state.

The best way to get to CMP is through the EMA. Prior to each weather event they discuss what level the event may be and pre plan and put in place contractors from other States and Canada. They have a sister company in Connecticut that they can call on but prior to them being allowed to come to Maine they have to have all the power restored there. There was at one point an issue where they brought the Canadian contractors in prior to a State of Emergency being declared and because of improper tags the State Police had stopped them in Houlton. After having some conversation they were able to resolve the issues. Once crews are deployed they work on a 17/7 hour rotation. They use about 50 crews during night time and then 150 crews during the day as there is more productivity during daylight hours. Typically they would bring in crews around 1 PM to start their rotations.

Ryan Fish, Jerrod Crouse and Jill King went over Versant Power's protocols. After 2017 they created similar protocols as CMP. They now create a priority list of what the need is. They get inundated with calls, but during big storms the CSR's collect additional information regarding what the issue is, a downed power line, is the road blocked, are lines crossing a driveway etc. They also have a subset of office employees to watch for emergency tickets in order to prioritize those better. It is important to determine where they need to send crews. Contractors and company employees in bucket trucks can work on lines down. Other field employees can be on site, and identify and secure the area to protect the public and traffic but they cannot work on the lines. Working with EMA and getting information to Versant Power's emergency manager, Janet Skully, is the best way to report issues.

There are times when it is hard for the line crews to make it safe. They can however verify there is a line down and if it is a power line rather than cable or telephone. Versant and CMP cannot work on other utility lines beyond power. CMP will help out Versant once their systems have been restored and vice versa. Kevin talks to Janet Skully on a regular basis.

Jerrod wanted to also point out that sometimes there are additional utilities involved and although power has been restored the other lines have not and will have to wait for the other utility crews to get there before the area is cleared. In some cases these could include communication lines that have 911 capabilities.

During a car /pole accident they can reset and restore power but not the other utilities. All utilities use some of the same contractors but not always as there are more and more independent communication companies connecting to the poles. Versant noted that each of their poles have a yellow tag, if a person can identify that impacted pole safely or the closest pole number this can be plugged into a GPS and they can find the location immediately.

Versant runs similar hours but a 16/8 hour rotation also putting more crews out during the day and less at night.

The other concern that has come up more in recent years is solar grids and dams. These are not owned by the power companies and in some cases they must take those down since they back feed - similar to a generator hooked to a house.

Both CMP and Versant wanted to also make EMS, Fire, and Public Safety aware that they are training their crews to immediately seek out the person in charge when arriving on site. Communication between all entities is key. They also ask that when a scene is cleared particularly after an accident they may still need to be on site to set a pole or run lines. There have been times when all the other disciplines leave and the power crews are left vulnerable to the moving traffic. They do have their own flagging crews but it could take a while for them to get there and if they could have someone stay with them to protect their zone until the flaggers arrive it would be greatly appreciated.

Lastly if there is an emergency, a person's life is in danger there is a way to dump the grid and remotely kill the power. This however impacts in some cases a very large area. The power cannot be restored until trucks are on site. Neither power company can verify if a line is dead or safe until a truck is on site to verify it has been grounded. If anyone has questions for either CMP or Versant please forward them to Dianne and she will forward them on.

Kevin also wanted to let folks know he has been teaching a safety class at many of the fire departments. If anyone is interested in having him come to their station to teach the class please get a hold of him. @ kevin.guimond@avangrid.com

3. Statewide Updates

IBI Group has been hired by the State to develop a TIM Strategic Plan. Michelle Boucher gave an overview of IBI Group's plan. Their first task is to develop an existing conditions report. Michelle asked if there were any existing documents, policies, procedures (SOPs) currently in existence. Dianne had previously provided the Penobscot County TIM operating guidelines. No one knew of any other documents, but if anyone thinks of anything please send it to Dianne and she will get it to Michelle.

Michelle asked if anyone had any thoughts on the currently adopted objectives below.

- ❖ Increase responder safety by eliminating struck-by incidents, injuries, and fatalities.
- ❖ Minimize impacts to the free flow of traffic
- ❖ Decrease incident clearance time
- ❖ Decrease secondary incident occurrences
- ❖ Improve inter-agency communication during incidents

If anyone has any thoughts, wants to add any additional or change any of the above please send your thoughts to Dianne and she will get them to Michelle.

Peter Cusolito went over the training section and what he has done in other states. He also talked about developing a virtual self paced class. FHWA does currently have a self paced training in place but it has not been updated since 2014 and the complaint is it takes hours to complete the course. If the Maine TIM group were to develop a self paced training platform it would need to have some sort of tracking mechanism to verify participation. He is also looking at live in person and virtual training sessions. He would like to have some feedback from current trainers and Dianne will pull together a meeting of all trainers she is working with to have this discussion offline. If anyone who is not a trainer would like to share anything about training protocols please send those to Dianne

4. Recent Incident Reviews

In Ryan Davis's absence, Dianne shared details about an incident on 1A on June 3rd. Joe Lacerda and Aaron Turcotte were also both on scene in some capacity that day.

There was an accident on Route 1A on June 3rd. The accident was a 2 vehicle accident right in front of the Nutrition shop. A vehicle had stopped to turn into the Nutrition shop and the vehicle behind them did not stop and hit the stopped vehicle, split in half and rested on both sides of the road with tons of debris in the roadway. There were 4 total patients, 2 that were considered serious and 2 that were walking wounded. 1 person was heavily trapped in the vehicle. It took at least 45 mins of full road closure to extricate and remove the patients. Then develop a game plan, and open 1 lane. The traffic plan was formulated by Holden police. Unfortunately, due to the severity of the incident all Holden fire crews were tied to patient care and extrication. Maine DOT was called to assist and state police needed to do an accident investigation and mapping. This actually was really quick but due to the time and location traffic was clogged instantly. Even several hours later the side roads and the main Rd were backed up. Not to mention the school released at the same time and both Holden schools were struggling to move kids and parents around to get kids out.

A few notes and observations by Holden Fire Chief:

1a traffic is busy already and has been very busy for the early summer. The time of day was bad for us. Location was good for detouring but I think we missed the mark. Detours never really got set up well and we tried to detour 1 way creating issues. Communication with us and DOT needs to be better. Radio comms are needed between us and DOT not cell phone calls. (state fire) Detouring could have been west bound 1 A Holden village to Mann Hill and Bagaduce. Eastbound 1A to South Rd to Lower Dedham and back to Village. Then the traffic would have never tried to compete with each other. Our ambulance response was a nightmare. The mapping was fast once Aaron got there.

All in all it went well but traffic was tough. We had the patients extricated within 15 minutes of our arrival. Both patients should make a full recovery.

The group discussed the incident. Both Joe and Aaron agreed the detour plans were not activated soon enough but variable message boards were turned on as soon as they could be and people put in place to direct traffic through the detours. The main issue in the early hour of the detour was people were getting lost. The detour was running people in the same directions causing even more congestion. There was discussion about radio comms but Joe said it would not have done any good because he didn't have his radio. Jeff Coon, noted there are other options for radio contact including one using a cell phone app. It may not work in all areas of the state but it could be a backup. The group also discussed using other methods to get the words out to use alternate routes. A system similar to an Amber Alert could be issued to a targeted geographical area telling drivers to avoid the area and use different routes.

Aaron also noted that when the one lane was reopened they should have allowed eastbound traffic to flow and continue to detour westbound traffic. When he went down to fly the scene traffic was already backed up to I-395 and beyond. The concern was traffic backing up further on 395 and clogging exits.

Andrew Allen wanted to make a notation in the minutes that this area would be good for extending the center turn lane. Those areas that have the center turn lane are not seeing many incidents and the center lanes work very well. At the time of the center lane installation there were areas that did not see as heavy turning traffic so the cost benefit was not there. This has since changed. Maine DOT will revisit this area to see if extending the center lane to RT. 46 is warranted.

Aaron talked about the emergency repair on the stillwater bridge on I-95. He noted that if that area ever has more construction done traffic needs to be tapered into 1 lane much further back than where it was. There were multiple crashes in the area of this construction. Steve Landry asked if Aaron knew how many crashes happened and if he knew the specifics i.e. a cause due to the construction, secondary crashes or other. Aaron will have the reports to him before the end of the week to review.

There was a discussion about the cross overs being left in place after the bridge construction in Hampden is done. As of now Steve Landry did not think that was possible but would look into it and discuss it with Joyce Taylor the Chief Engineer for the State.

5. Department or Agency updates-opportunity to share any Department or Agency information with the group.

Road construction/paving will begin on I-95 - they will be moving to night work. There will be ramp closures from 6/20-6/25 from 8 PM to 6 AM. Tuesday the 22nd exit 183 - Hammond Street Northbound on and off, Wednesday the 23rd, exit 184 -Union Street, northbound on and off and Thursday 6/24 exit 185 Broadway, northbound on and off. In the event operations get cancelled due to weather or breakdown the same ramp will be closed the following shift.

The Waterfront Concert Series plans on hosting the following shows: August 5th, Luke Bryon (likely to sell out approaching 10,000 ticket sales) August 19th Kiss, and August 20th Thomas Rhett. There are a few other dates held in September for other possible concerts but nothing set in stone. We do not anticipate any traffic problems but with the interstate paving happening around that time-frame we are providing this for situational awareness

Route 2, Orono Culvert Replacement. There is a project on Route 2 near the Penobscot County Country Club. Route 2 will be closed during the construction phase of this project. This project's bid was opened last month. I spoke with the project manager and although there was a start date of July 14, he told me that due to fabrication issues with the culvert itself the construction might be delayed until next year. Once the contract has been fully awarded and he talks to the contractor he will provide an update and I will share that information with you all.

6. Training Update

There are two in person responder training sessions planned. July 14, 2021 8:00-12PM in Hancock and July 19, 2021 8:00 AM to 12:00 PM in Bangor. Please see attached flyer for further details. If you know anyone who should attend one of these sessions please share this flyer with them.

7. Next Meeting Dates

- a. September 28, 2021 1130-0100
- b. December 14, 2021 1130-0100

8. Adjourn