

AHC BOARD MEETING TRANSCRIPT

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Tom Moran:

Yeah, we just got to a quorum.

I know that Kelly's landing so he'll join when he can. And Chris Eisenbrey's running a workshop. He will try to jump on. Mike Ambrosio is on travel, will not be able to get on.

So Chris, we can go ahead and we can go ahead and start. So we do have a quorum and we did have a separate board meeting to approve the minutes from December. Action item for that was to add John Molnar and Tom Hyatt as board signatories for the Bank of America account for the All Hazards Consortium. John has been added and Tom Hyatt is pending. So I think we got that moving along. So next up on our agenda is to, well Chris, I'll give you opening remarks and then our first agenda item is our new board member. Go ahead, Chris.

Chris Geldart:

I appreciate Tom. Thanks, everybody for jumping on. I'll keep quick. Appreciate everybody's time and continued support, focus on the stuff we got going on. Looking forward to hearing from Mike today. So Tom, let's get going.

Tom Moran:

Okay. Mike, before you introduce yourself. Why don't we go, if we have camera on, if you go camera on, just introduce yourself and your background. So Mike kind of knows everybody's background. And then Mike, we'll turn it over to you to introduce yourself and a couple discussion items and off we go. So I'll just go around the horn first. Tom Hyatt, I'll start with you. You're in my Hollywood Squares upper left corner.

Tom Hyatt:

Yeah, thanks for that Tom. Hi, all. Tom Hyatt here. I'm an attorney in private practice. I've been with Tom Moran since the get-go, since we gave birth to this baby all those many years ago. And I serve as general counsel for the consortium.

Tom Moran:

Okay, thank you. Jim Sheehan?

Jim Sheehan:

Hi. Jim Sheehan, Mike. Retired cop, been involved with the consortium for a long time. Been on the board I guess about maybe six years and kind of just kind of hanging out here.

Tom Moran:

And Jim, you're in what part of Jersey?

Jim Sheehan:

Northern New Jersey. Just outside New York City.

Tom Moran:

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Okay. All right, very good. Bud Mertz?

Roland 'Bud' Mertz:

Hi and welcome. Bud Mertz, past Pennsylvania Homeland Security, past Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency and hopefully wanted to retire. But now currently the director of public safety for Westmoreland County here in Pennsylvania, Southwest Corner. And I've been with the All Hazards Consortium I think since about day three. Maybe not day one, but day three. So welcome aboard.

Tom Moran:

Okay, very good. Thank you. Carlos?

Carlos Torres:

Sure. Good afternoon everybody. Carlos Torres. I am currently a consultant independent and working on really the utility and emergency management space. But prior to that I worked for Con Edison for 30 plus years and spent the last 10 as the vice president of Emergency Preparedness Business Resilience. Then I decided to retire to do the consulting, but I ended up for almost a year down in Puerto Rico during the storm response.

Been involved with the consortium, probably kind of really started right at after Sandy when I started working with Tom and the other folks and been involved with the All Hazards and the fleet response working group. Been involved in EEI for years, was part of the whole NRE effort and then engaging again with Tom and the team. And since retiring, I've been involved with the All Hazards Consortium in a number of initiatives and looking to do more. And I've been on the board say probably six months or so. So glad to be part of the board.

Tom Moran:

Okay, thank you, Carlos. Ira Tannenbaum. Ira?

Ira Tannenbaum:

Sorry, I'm in the car. I'm Ira Tannenbaum. I'm an assistant commissioner in New York City in New York City Emergency Management. I've been with the agency for about 19 years and happily involved in the All Hazardous Consortium for a little while now. And I'm convinced that Carlos really retired so he can continue his job as a Phil Jackson body double. So other than that, looking forward to the conversation. Thanks.

Tom Moran:

Okay, very good. John Molnar? John?

John Molnar:

Yeah. Hi, Mike. I'm John Molnar. I'm the director of the program management office working with Tom probably for the last 17 years, I think. But basically work a lot of the various projects, the grants that we have, whether that's federal initiatives that we're working on, the state initiatives, some of the private sector organizations and projects that we work through. That operations aspect is basically my role, making sure we have the subject matter expertise on the projects and making sure that the deliverables and everything are in queue.

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Tom Moran:

Okay. And Chris Geldart, I think... Go ahead, Chris.

Chris Geldart:

Yeah, I'm Ira Tannenbaum, his body double. Doppelganger. Mike, we've known each other a while brother, but I'll just say, really glad to have you here, get started with all of this with you and get you on the board here, adding to the brain trust that we have. Because we have some really good thoughtful folks on what we're doing. That's it.

Mike Sprayberry:

[inaudible 00:22:03]

Tom Moran:

Okay. Mike, go ahead. You got Mike for a little bit of your background and why you were obviously taking some time to be on the board here and we got some questions for you afterwards, but go ahead.

Mike Sprayberry:

Sure thing. Thanks, Tom. And thanks for the welcome everybody. It means a lot to me. I'm here in Raleigh, North Carolina, but I don't spend most of my time here. I actually spend most of my time at my beach house at Oak Island, North Carolina. But currently I'm a consultant like Carlos and I'm the senior advisor for emergency management for Haggerty Consulting. But I do have a couple of other clients. One of them is in emergency fuel provision and the other in communications. So a little bit about my background, I was in the Marine Corps when I got out of high school. When I got out of the Corps, I joined the Army National Guard in the active duty program. So I retired off of active duty after 25 years. I was both enlisted, senior enlisted, and then went to officer candidate school. And so I really enjoyed my time in the military, but I will tell you that once I got out, I joined North Carolina Emergency Management as the deputy director slash operations chief.

And after several years of that, I was hired by Republican governor to be his director of emergency management and Deputy Homeland Security Advisor. And then when he lost the election, I was hired by the Democrat governor. And so I've worked for two different kinds of both Republicans and Democrats. And for me the meaningful part of that was that their top priority was public safety. And they were good gentlemen, both of them. And I enjoyed working with both of them. And so I will tell you that when I became director of emergency management, my top priority was to become an enhanced plan state for hazard mitigation. And so we did that, it took us about 13 months and then right after we were awarded that designation, we got a federal disaster deck. And so we got really millions of extra dollars to be used for hazard mitigation.

My other priority that I had was to expand the portfolio of affordable housing for the state of North Carolina. I believe that really that's the most meaningful thing to me because you don't have to rescue as many people if they're in affordable housing that are out of the flood plain. And usually if people are in affordable housing and you can get them a halfway decent job and are close to schools and grocery stores and stuff like that, crime's lower. I know I'm sounding like a bleeding heart here, but it really makes a difference. And I mean, I can tell you that the need for affordable housing isn't just for one minority group or whatever. It's like in North Carolina we got a ton of poor white people. And so it's something that we really need to focus on. That's a little bit about me. I can tell you that we had all kinds of disasters while I was in North Carolina.

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Our two storms of record, well we thought we had a storm of record. Then two years later we had another, the next one was even bigger. But when you look at, you got to keep everything in context. So it wasn't a Maria, I mean it wasn't that. Although it was bad. And so I would just say that I've worked with Tom, I've known Chris for a long time. I've already got us hooked up to talk about our project. How do you like to refer to it, Tom? Do you go by the acronym GPODS or something like that?

Tom Moran:

Yeah, we're calling it just the GPODS project for now. Yeah.

Mike Sprayberry:

Okay. So we're meeting up with Kim Stinson in South Carolina in early April. And I can tell you hopefully what I bring to you guys is that I want you to weaponize me and point me in a direction and give me a task.

I do have good ideas sometimes, my wife says. Not every time. But I will say this, just shoot straight with me. If you think I've got a bad idea, I need to hear about it. That's exactly what I told my team when I was the director. I mean, I'm not looking for yes folks. And so I'm going to close this out by telling you what my five top priorities were for my team at emergency management. By the way, also, I led two agencies. I was also the leader of the Office of Recovery and Resiliency. So had a little bit over a thousand employees. But my first priority was to ask yourself every day, "What have you done for the counties today?" Because the counties were our customer, and whoever your customers are, you need to make sure you're focusing on them. The second priority was to treat others the way you want to be treated.

And so golden rule, we all learned it from our parents. It's sometimes hard to do, but I believe in it. The third one is use good judgment. Don't do anything that you couldn't defend to me. Don't go drinking in a state car or anything like that or do something crude with one of your teammates. The fourth one is if you got a good idea, share it. Don't sit on it. So many people have great ideas and they may not be at the senior ranks in your agency or company. They could be an executive assistant or something, but listen to them. And the fifth one is, my dad always told me this, is to work hard. Nobody ever died from working hard. And so that's who I am. And I look forward to meeting with you guys. I'm really honored and to be asked and to be voted in. So again, please use me like you think I need to be used in order to further the cause and to make our nation more prepared. Thanks.

Tom Moran:

Very good. Thank you, Mike. Any questions for Mike at the moment?

Carlos Torres:

No, this is Carlos. I'll just say I'm looking forward to working with you, Mike, and if I can help you in any way, please just don't hesitate to reach out to me.

Mike Sprayberry:

Thanks, Carlos. Roger that.

Tom Moran:

Yeah, I was Mike as you were talking, I was thinking at the types of people that the consortium has, not just on the board but the 30 to 50 others that are involved in work groups or initiatives, things like that.

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Very similar core values. I think that's a birds of a feather kind of thing, which is great. So Chris Geldart, question. When we first talked about the board and potential candidates, we were talking about mitigation and you had some thoughts about the way the consortium started, maybe how we could do that around the mitigation topic for infrastructure type of stuff. That was the hard lift as we all know. And to do that you got to have industry and states working together.

And Chris, I thought maybe you take a minute, since were around when that first started, I think we had nine or 10 states working together during that one. Maybe you could speak to that vision of how it might apply here with mitigation. And by the way, Chris, just to let you know, the Maryland Hazard Mitigation Officer would love to be part of a select committee or whatever we put together for hazard mitigation folks to look at infrastructure stuff. So anyway, Chris, any thoughts you want to share on that?

Chris, you back? He must have dropped.

Ira Tannenbaum:

He's channeling his inner Ira.

Mike Sprayberry:

Looks like he's trying to get back in, he's connecting to audio.

Chris Geldart:

I'm back. I apologize.

Tom Moran:

Yeah. That's okay. So Chris, I thought it'd be good for the board to hear your thoughts about how we might, as the consortium, how we might help organize infrastructure mitigation like we did with interoperability when we first started, right? With states working together. Not every state. And I think I would be helpful because I think Mike could play a big role in that. And the long-term vision around that is to build a community of people, industry and states that are focused on a specific part of mitigation, which could be infrastructure related. But anyway, I thought Mike might enjoy hearing how that started way back when, when you were at Maryland's Homeland Security office.

Chris Geldart:

Yeah, so Mike, and for those that weren't around in the very beginning, one of the things that we found with the consortium in the very beginning was bringing together, I mean you got to remember, this is 2003, 2004? Right there in the beginning of all of the Homeland Security grant money coming out, the cottage industry being built around all that, everybody coming in and wanting to invent the next greatest homeland security pen. And I didn't know if I need a pen, a crayon, or a pencil at the time. So we got a bunch of the states together with some of the private sector folks and really talked about all the things that we were doing that we were finding success with around the Homeland Security funding, how each of the states were looking at things that they were doing. And just that exchange of information, and then the bringing in of the private sector to hear that from the states, what they were looking at, what was finding success, what did not find success, was a huge help.

So playing off of that theme a little bit and looking at mitigation and like you and I have talked about this, there's some folks that know mitigation really well and that do it and do it well. And there's lots of reasons why. And then there's some folks that in emergency management that couldn't spell 504 and

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how to actually get the benefit and how to actually get mitigation projects moving, especially when it comes to infrastructure side of things. So looking at this and thinking through the BRIC grant being out, a lot of the things that are going on electric sector wise and other things, areas where the consortium has connectivity, thought it'd be really helpful to get together.

Whether it's the state hazard mitigation officers with a couple of the regional folks, some of the directors talk about where, especially in the projects we're working on now in Virginia and other places that we're talking to that are starting to really look at how do they get the bang for their buck out of mitigation and all the infrastructure dollars that are coming in with power, water, things like that, that have mass impact in the states or in the larger metropolitan areas. So the thought process being, get folks together, talk about what they're doing in mitigation, even with those that may not be doing a lot in mitigation, but to hear from those that are being successful with BRIC, those that are being successful with 504, having infrastructure money being fed in to that as well. And really just kind of start build a base of folks to get a better understanding of how to do that. Hear from folks on what they're looking at there and where they've found success and how we could move this ball forward more as we should as emergency managers with all this infrastructure money flowing.

Those of you that worked in government long enough know as well as I do, there may be that 300, 400, \$1 billion whatever projects that the Departments of Transportation are putting out there and economic development are putting out there for this infrastructure dollars. But we know that those projects aren't going to come through with all the dollars they have out there. There's always dollars left over. There's always reprogrammings and things like that that happen. And the better position we are around mitigation for those dollars, if they don't have them already, the better off we're going to be. So that's the thought process. I think I got it there, Tom, did I cover it?

Tom Moran:

Yeah, no, it was great. I think we have a unique opportunity because one of the big things that, and Mike maybe you could share your thoughts about this, is how do we identify and train up the next generation of emergency managers, of mitigation folks in government? We get the same issue going on in the private sector, right? So yeah, maybe-

Mike Sprayberry:

Yeah, I can, let me jump in here right quick. So I'm on the board of the National Hazard Mitigation Association and I'm also on the committee of the Operations and Plans committee. And we were meeting every week. We decided maybe that was a bit too much, but here's a few things that we've been talking about. So in order to increase the number of practitioners for hazard mitigation in both the private sector and for state and federal and local government, EMI has got to update their curriculum. So we've been working with Jeff and folks up there to do exactly that. There's a couple of people on our team, PhDs that are helping out to make sure that all of that gets updated so people can actually go take courses and then go out to the field and be more prepared to work through these cumbersome programs.

And they are cumbersome. And last time I looked, it took about five years to dadgum buy out a house in the Hazard Mitigation Program. And BRIC, I got to say, BRIC's, the theory of it is wonderful. But by the time you get the money, it takes so long for the money to get out there and to get on the ground and actually get implemented, it's tough. And so really I think that for BRIC, the states that are successful at BRIC are the ones that are using management cost to hire vendors that was authorized. They authorized a higher amount of management cost in the Disaster Recovery Reform Act of 2018, which created BRIC. It also increased the amount of management cost that you could get so that you wouldn't have to hire

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full-time people that, I mean, I know in North Carolina, I mean the General Assembly's not going to give me additional full-time folks.

The only way I can get them is through that management cost. But I think that so many states are afraid of vendors and hiring folks because they think they're probably contractors. I used to be the same way. I felt like, why would I want to give my money to a contractor? Well, the fact of the matter is, if you don't use those management costs that are awarded to you as part of the award, you have to turn it in to the federal government at the end of the project. So I think that more understanding needs to be, we need to make sure that our partners at the state and local level understand that. So anyway, back to my original point.

I'm connected with the National Hazard Mitigation Association. I'm on the board of directors. We meet every other week. We have tomorrow is our quarterly board of directors meeting. But there's something going on all the time. For instance, we have a panel at the National Hurricane Conference. I'll be going to the American Flood Plain Managers Association Conference here in Raleigh, I think it's in May. And so we'll have a panel there. I'm going to NEMA next week. Anybody here going to NEMA? Are you going to NEMA, Tom?

Tom Moran:

Yeah, I'm going to be down there on Tuesday.

Mike Sprayberry:

Okay. That means you're going to buy me a beer?

Tom Moran:

Probably.

Mike Sprayberry:

Okay. All right.

Chris Geldart:

Mike, I'll be there. I'll let you buy me a beer, buddy.

Mike Sprayberry:

Okay. So anyway, you can see a lot of interconnects here. And so again, if we want to do something relative to the hazard mitigation, think about leveraging two organizations. And you've already talked to me about maybe asking the firm that I work for, Haggerty, to get involved. We've got some really phenomenal folks. And so I'm just not how sure all that works. I have to talk to my boss about that. But I think we have some great opportunities and I think it's incumbent upon us. I mean, the country is awash with all this money. IJA money, the Infrastructure Reduction Act money, ARPA money, BRIC money. I'm just worried that so many states and municipalities are going to miss the boat because they just don't have the capacity to manage all that money or they don't know how to apply for it. I'll be quiet now.

Chris Geldart:

Yeah, no, that's it, Mike. You hit it right on the head. And I learned as emergency manager for DC just how valuable that could be when I brought in finally a state hazard mitigation officer that got in, redid

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our plan, re-looked at the stuff and took us from, I think we were doing maybe a million dollars a year to almost 12. And so I mean it made all the difference in the world in some of the things that we did. So that's what we're trying to do. There's no real set thought process of how to get all that together yet. But the desire to do it and with your connections, Mike, and everything you're talking about here, that's the problem I think we'd like to try to get into with the consortium, just based on some of the projects we're doing now, to be a part of that process of bringing folks together at a kind of larger level.

Mike Sprayberry:

Roger that.

Tom Moran:

And this, I know Tom Hyatt had to drop at five to another commitment. I'm just getting ready to ask him a question, but that's all right. I'll get back to him.

Carlos Torres:

Yeah. One thing, Tom, before you go on, and this is to Mike. Just like you, I'm an independent contractor for Haggerty as well. So if there's any opportunities that we can work together through the Haggerty loop, that may be an option.

Tom Moran:

Yeah, part of this-

Mike Sprayberry:

Thanks, Carlos.

Tom Moran:

I'm thinking this may be an opportunity just to set up a subcommittee for the board members that are interested in this. We have great relationships with some pretty big firms that already have relationships with states that we don't. And this may be an opportunity to partner in some way. John Molnar and I have talked about it. Chris, you and I spoke about it. We're still forming, but there's enough there for everybody to eat. And there's, we're going to need a big band of brothers, sisters to do this, not just within government, but within industry. One of the things we discovered with the GPODS project is what got us the super high FEMA BCA scores was our ability to bring in multiple sectors, right? Electric was primary, water was secondary, and health, medical was the third one.

And by doing that cross sector integration in the project, took our little \$20 million project to an \$80 million mitigation benefit, we didn't understand that. So I think we have a unique opportunity to do something not just with GPODS, but other things that are infrastructure related. So maybe what we do is, for those that are interested, we kind of just set up a little side committee and we'll look at what might the North Star be. Mike, I'm with you. I need a target that we all have agreement on. And I know our superpower as a group has always been, you find those people that are of like minds, they want to get something done. And there's no limit when people unify and coordinate their energies on one or two things, not 30 things, certainly, right?

But I think Chris, you got me thinking about our, I mean, we could convene a call in two weeks of four or five states without batting an eyelash. And Mike, if you wouldn't mind, you and Chris talk and run the

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agenda, but I think letting the states organize themselves and talk about whatever they want to talk about, having industry listen, could be extremely helpful to that at the right time, certainly.

Chris Geldart:

Absolutely, Tom. I think maybe we can, Mike and myself and anybody else on board wants to jump in on this, just get a call set up on the side, Tom. And we can doodle through exactly we want to move.

Tom Moran:

Okay. I'll send a note out and let folks opt in. I think it'd be a great start. And one of the things in our meeting with Maryland today, which went very well, one of the things that Russ Strickland zeroed in on, a couple things, but one of the things he mentioned was that a Maryland nonprofit like the consortium, is exempt from FOIA. And that's really, really critical when you're dealing with regulated companies, meeting with the states that regulate them. Now they're not meeting with the people that regulate them, but they're meeting with the states and getting that conversation private between operators is where the results really happen or not.

And he said, "Tom, we'd like to explore that." So I'm making notes as we go through it, but I'll set up as an action, Chris, I'll set up another time. We can just have a little subcommittee that might zero in on a game plan. Because we've got several ideas in the hopper right now, and these are \$50 million ideas. So these are big ones. And not from me or John, but they're coming from our utilities and now in Virginia. And then anybody that wants to opt in into that, unless you wanted to opt in right now, just shout out. Otherwise, I'll send an email out to the board as a whole. So I got Mike and Chris so far.

Carlos Torres:

Yeah, you could throw me in there, Tom. It's Carlos.

Tom Moran:

Okay, very good. Excellent. Okay, next up if there's any... Hang on. Bud, did you raise your hand or you're applauding?

Roland 'Bud' Mertz:

I was saying if you need anything, I'd be glad to be part of it as well.

Tom Moran:

Okay, very good. Thank you. All right, well any other discussion on that? All right, let's move on to our finance update. John's going to give us an update on finance. John, go ahead.

John Molnar:

Yeah, I will. We're in the middle of our audit for these grants right now. Typically, as I mentioned to you before, the grants that we started probably five years ago were around a million dollars through HSEMA through DC that we were working through in the grants. And I think I just got the numbers later on today. Now they're not all in incorporated into everything yet, so it's going to be even be higher. But we were around 3.3 million and that'll probably hit close to 4 million by the time the fiscal year that is 2022 gets finalized here. So we're still getting the reimbursements in from HSEMA and we're incorporating those into the finance report now. So bear with me, you won't actually get a finance report today. We actually submitted about \$400,000 worth of deposits in there today into the finance system anyway, so

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it would skew the numbers and I really didn't want to show something that was not anywhere close to accurate of what we were dealing with in 2022.

But again, so it is amazing. And that was, that was just HSEMA dollars, \$44 million that we were dealing with there that didn't have any INL. The stuff for the Idaho National Labs project is all complete. That was complete in 2021. So this is all pure new activity that we are working through. So anyway, so you'll get that. I won't wait for the next quarter to get that completed. Everything should be finished within a month. I don't think we'll get the audit completed by then, but I will certainly give you the finalized numbers for fiscal year 2022.

Tom Moran:

Yeah, very good. Okay, any questions for John? All right, very good. Next up is our legal update. Tom had to jump off, he sent me a text, nothing on the legal update. We do have a fiduciary responsibility for all board members to review and sign off on the conflict of interest policy. I'll make that available. It's on the board website. Typically, once you do it first time, it's pretty straightforward. I'll be glad to help anybody with that. And that's really a form to protect board members as well as the consortium. We also carry board member insurance. We've gone, Mike, you're new and Carlos has seen already, but we carry board insurance to protect our board members. We have a non-disclosure, or not a nondisclosure. We have a disclosure document everybody signs off to so that we are over and above board on who's doing what where.

So we watch that very carefully because in our world, our currency is trust and we go the extra mile to protect that trust. I've learned people forgive you if you're stupid once, but if you're stupid two or three times, they don't forgive you very much. So we want to make sure we continue in that regard. I think it's earned us a lot of trust down in the past many years. So next up we wanted to give an update to our BRIC mitigation efforts, bud. Let me start with Pennsylvania. We had a, Bud brokered a call with Tom Hughes in Pennsylvania. Bud, I just wanted to have you provide the board an update from your perspective on that meeting.

Roland 'Bud' Mertz:

Well, it was a learning experience, even though I worked for PEMA for how long. I can say that I never realized that Pennsylvania was a state that never applied for any hazard mitigation for the state. That they push it all down to the eligible entities being local, either county or municipal governments. But we had a good conversation with Tom Hughes, he's been the hazard mitigation officer at PEMA for, I'd probably have to say a good 12 years. And very knowledgeable as we talked about our electronic trailers and seemed like he liked the idea. The only thing is that we would have to turn around and find an eligible participant to make the application. So we're right now in that discussion, thinking about it at the county level, that I could maybe walk it through at Westmoreland County to do that. Maybe also picking up some sub applicants with some of the neighboring counties or something like that. But yeah, I'm on board. It's a great idea now that I know that I could take the trailer to the beach in 2035, go to Ocean City, Maryland and charge my car up. It's even better.

John Molnar:

And one of the reasons, this is John Molnar, and one of the reasons it is important for Bud or whoever within Pennsylvania, especially within the municipality side or the local area side, is that of course the electric company is different within each of these localities. So there's coordination efforts that we're going to have to go through depending upon whether it's near Bud's area or it's southwest, I'm sorry, southeastern Pennsylvania or it's in central Pennsylvania, wherever, those are different electric

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companies. So there's collaboration of course, which is the whole reason AHC's in the middle of this in the first place. But it's important that we coordinate with Bud on who and where we are we working and at least giving a shot at Pennsylvania.

Tom Moran:

And just so everybody knows, our approach is first to talk to a state and get their verbal agreement that if we pull together the resources, we provide everything, the people, the writing, the whole thing, would they submit a scoping project? That's step one. If the state says yep, then we will go talk to the utility or utilities about the project and ask them if they would be willing to invest in the first two years to start it up. They got to understand the process. So the risk is on the utility side for GPODS project. And so for them, a \$300,000 risk isn't a big risk, especially if we break it over two years. So far so good, right? Dominion used R and D money and then moved it over into, they have a funded initiative under energy storage, which a lot of utilities do.

So the capital to provide all the people. And our team in Virginia consisted of myself and John from the programmatic standpoint. I did all the outreach, partner building, all of the consortium partners we bring together to do match and to provide subject matter, everything like that. John takes care of all of the back office stuff that has to do with it, any procurements we use to generate measure, all that kind of stuff. And then we contracted Dave Vanderbloemen, former Dominion Utility person, part-time to be our technical person on the electric utility side because he speaks utility language and ease. And of course Dominion, all them know Dave. He'd been there 40 years. So it was a really good match for that.

And then we use Darryl Darnell, former DC emergency management director as our advisor on the government side. So we go in with a team of four behind the curtain, there's a couple three others that work, and we put the grant application together, we gave it to VDEM, and they basically didn't have to touch it. They said it's fantastic. And they submitted the phase one scoping projects. So what we're looking for now is three states maybe to do that with us in this coming January. Phase two is another bigger effort, that's 20 to \$50 million pilot.

And then phase three is down the road. So our business model really is to get the states on board first, then the utility. Once they both say yeah, then we can bring them together and facilitate that process, which worked very well. And we just know from working with the states long enough that if we can take the burden off them or off the local community to get it rolling, Mike, so it's exactly what you said. We let the utility underwrite it so the state doesn't have to use their set aside, right? Virginia was kind of wondering, this is a lot of too good to be true. And we had to explain, well, the reason for this is the utilities are going to get capital from this. They don't have to go raise capital.

The FEMA grant will fund the capital, which saves them a massive amount of energy getting capital approved through their public utility commission. So the utility agrees, if FEMA funds the capitalization of this for three years, then we can pick up the maintenance for the next 18 or 15 years, whatever. It's 20 year life to this. And the maintenance on the GPOD project for 20 million was like under half a million dollars a year, which is nothing for Dominion to bring into their cost center.

But every state's different and every utility's different. So it's kind of customized to every state. But the first step is having those relationships with those state folks

John Molnar:

And to help with the, and I won't burden everybody with all the administration of the grant application itself, but the commitment letters that were put out with all the different, I think we had, I don't know, maybe 20, Tom, in regards to partners that we had commitment letters. That takes work and effort. And

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people are wondering what are we signing and what are we obligating to? And all those types of questions that come into play.

Virginia actually did have people that reviewed our grant and I think their team pretty much had minimal input, certainly on the write-ups and on the detailed writeups of the grant. I think there were probably close to, I don't know, 80 pages that were submitted within that backup documentation within these grants' arena. And then the BCA, the business cost analysis piece, they did have a consultant that we would develop the BCA, the AHC, develop the BCA, and we would send over the Excel spreadsheet and that team reviewed our BCA to make sure the numbers were accurate and were there any backup documentation that was necessary in that BCA.

So that's really what the AHC put forth, and that was on the side of the state of what they had to do and incorporate within that process. And I got to tell you, it wasn't a lot.

Mike Sprayberry:

So I think you make a couple of good points, John. First of all, just how onerous the paperwork is to get anything done like this. FEMA and whoever else, they put out all these great ideas at the headquarters level, but when you get it down to the implementation level, I mean frankly it's extremely hard to get the job done. That's one thing that you said without actually saying that, but you said it. And then the other thing is that putting this together, it's a proof of concept for other states. And so when other states see this and see how good it works, hell, you've got a template right there. So that's why I think, and I know Sean Talmage in Virginia, he's a great guy. He's a field artillery officer just like I was. And so you know he's got to be good, but I'm excited to go show that to another Army officer, Kim Stinson in South Carolina because if we can show him something that worked in another state, that's good stuff.

And then just a couple other points is that you're working with some really great people. They don't get much better than Sean. Russell Strickland, phenomenal guy. He's going to be the next NEMA president. And then Tom Hughes, he's the president of the National Hazard Mitigation Association. And so I meet with him regularly. He's a great guy. And then the last point, and then I'll shut up for real, is that one of my colleagues is Brock Long, former FEMA administrator, and he has been facilitating these grid exes last couple of years. And so I feel like there's a way to take advantage of his connectivity with all these different utilities across the nation. And maybe Carlos, you maybe have something to say about that. I don't know. But it seems like that would be a good opening to some of these utilities, not just on the East Coast, but just around the nation. Thanks.

Tom Moran:

Yeah. And Chris Eisenbrey is with Edison Electric Institute. He's not on the call today, Mike, but he'll have a big interest in this. Their members are all of the 81 publicly traded utilities, and he's been anxious to have us brief them on GPODS, which I think we're at the point what one role for us might be is to be the training organization to teach people how to do. We're not going to do this everywhere because people know each other that don't know us, which is fine. But one role and maybe for us to execute a few projects, maybe one role is to teach others how to do it because there's a process to it and it has to be sequenced. If you get one conversation ahead of the wrong conversation, it's over for a year, then we'll see you next year. I mean, we made that mistake.

So I think this would be a good conversation to take up with our little subcommittee and discussion. But we got a lot of dots we could connect. And of course our mission is always, what can we get done? What can we do to show tangible proof that somebody was here and something was done? And not just talk and write paper. Nothing wrong with talking and writing paper, but at the end of the day, I retired from

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that and I enjoy seeing the results. I don't know about, I know most of you guys here are the same way. So next up, we had a meeting with Maryland. We're going to be talking with South Carolina. I sent everybody a copy of the latest version of our GPODS handout, it's front back page. Thank you, Mike, for providing some final edits. That was very helpful. Dominion Energy's reviewing it now, I don't think there's any issues.

We tried to keep pretty utility neutral, but out of respect, I wanted them to take a look at it as well. So we'll have something to hand out. And again, our whole goal is just to talk with states and give them the pitch and see if they'd be interested in doing a scoping project with us, especially since we bring all the resources. And just because they say yeah, it doesn't mean it's going to happen. I still got to get their utility on board. But what we haven't done, Mike, I haven't gone back to Duke Energy yet. Because now, having done what we've done now, they shied away when it became mobile energy.

They were all in with micro grids and fixed energy storage. Not mobile, but we don't care anymore. We understand now. Mobile was the flavor last year, but I think you brought up some good points and I think we need to brief Duke up on kind of what it is now because there may be a micro grid application in North Carolina. I know Dominion is going to do both, and maybe this is the time to revisit the relation. Duke didn't say no, they just said not now. Okay? But I would love to get Duke in North Carolina back in the fold. I know that would be a good one.

Mike Sprayberry:

Just let me know when.

Tom Moran:

Okay, so action item. I'll get a committee call set up. Mike, Carlos, Chris, probably Chris Eisenbrey's going to be on there as well. And then the other thing too, I'll make sure I send out the full disclosure forms for board members. Like I said, it's on the website. I'll send you a link. You can download them off the website. And I think that's it for our agenda today. So any other new business we want to put on the parking lot, we do have one item Bud mentioned. I wanted to bring up a potential face-to-face meeting with the board, maybe work group chairs, maybe some partners, whatever. At EEI in Washington. I sent Chris Eisenbrey a text about could we find a date. They have a gorgeous facility right on Pennsylvania Avenue, and they take great care of us when we meet there. And we're going to look at some dates, maybe in the summer or some sometime we can pull it off.

Roland 'Bud' Mertz:

Tom, you should add though that that would be in conjunction with our, somewhere around 20th anniversary

Tom Moran:

Bud reminded me that we are coming up on, well, we are in 2023 and the first All Hazards forum event was 2020, or it's 2003. It blew my mind when you said that Bud, the consortium officially was formed in '05, but everything started in '03. But Bud said we ought to do something for our 20 year anniversary. It's 20 years. I can't believe this. Pretty amazing. So yeah, maybe this is it, Bud. So, all right, any other new business? Okay, Mr. Geldart, I'll let you have final word and close it out.

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Chris Geldart:

Thank you, Tom. Thank you everybody for your time on the call today. I don't want to belabor this any longer. We got good movement today, so looking forward to having that call with the folks to see how we can really push on the successes we're seeing and helping states out on the mitigation side. That's it, Tom.

Tom Moran:

Very good. All right, everybody. Thanks every much. Have a great evening.

Ira Tannenbaum:

Always a pleasure, thanks.