

BDPNN Quarterly meeting
30 April 2015
Dave Brannigan, Berkeley Fire Dept

The meeting at the Berkeley Fellowship of Unitarian Universalists hall was called to order by President Lynn Zummo, who introduced the speaker Dave Brannigan, newly appointed Berkeley Fire Assistant Chief for Special Operations, overseeing the department that includes Office of Emergency Services (OES).

Dave Brannigan spoke about his new role, new disaster preparedness initiatives, and to answer questions posed by attendees. The meeting was very well attended with a number of interesting questions and responses.

TOPICS COVERED:

DESCRIPTION OF OES JOB FUNCTIONS - The department consists of three staff members: Khin Chin is responsible for community outreach; **Jennifer Lazo** is charged with developing preparedness services for underserved populations and the disabled; **Sarah Lana** (with a background in planning) is charged with developing emergency and strategic plans to meet FEMA and state requirements to make the city disaster-ready.

PLANNING PROJECT PRESENTLY UNDERWAY - There is an emergency operations plan to define how the city will respond, including functional guidelines based on FEMA standards for evacuation, security and emergency medical procedures during and after a disaster.

EMERGENCY INFORMATION DISSEMINATION

EMERGENCY ALERTING SYSTEM - A new system will be in place this July for notifications county-wide and for locally-targeted messages received by those who register their phone numbers. This system will replace the older BENS (Berkeley Emergency Notification System) for life-threatening and health related emergencies. Numbers already enrolled under BENS will be ported to the new system. You only need to register if you have a new phone number or email address, There is a brochure describing the various Emergency Alerting Systems; see also <http://www.cityofberkeley.info/emergencyalerting/>

The existing NIXLE system will continue to issue alerts (email or text) for police and community information, but it will be considered secondary to the life and health messages from the new Berkeley alert system.

Berkeley now has a TWITTER account (**@CityofBerkeley**) with references back to the city website.

Other useful emergency resources include: NOAA weather radio; the KGO Channel 7 website; and the 1610 AM radio station, which unfortunately has a weak signal. The city does have an arrangement with KPFA radio (94.1 FM) to broadcast city alerts and messages during an emergency.

The city is presently negotiating with NALCO (Northern Alameda County Amateur Radio group) and hopes to establish a way for community members to communicate their needs to city authorities during an emergency. At this time there is no method for citizens or neighborhood groups to give information to the city regarding their emergency needs, if the regular 911 system fails.

NOTE: There are classes available in the East Bay that prepare interested parties to take the ham radio operator license test and to teach emergency radio basics, as a possible alternative to 911 emergency messaging.

Websites: <http://www.arrleastbaysection.org/category/training> or <http://www.baears.com/>

CITY PREPAREDNESS INCENTIVE PROGRAMS

The city is working with graduate students from the UC Berkeley Goldman School of Public Policy to evaluate and create effective preparedness incentive programs. There will be more news about the decision process and outcomes later.

Dave Brannigan made comments about the following presently active incentive programs:

- **CACHE PROGRAM:** OES is planning refresher classes for residents who have already taken the CERT class offerings.
- **DUMPSTER PROGRAM:** The free neighborhood dumpster program is now tied to disaster preparedness activities and Neighborhood Watch. See <http://cityofberkeley.info/Dumpster/>
- **GAS SHUTOFF PROGRAM:** See <http://cityofberkeley.info/gasshutoff/> for more info on free gas shutoff valves.

CERT/CACHE UPDATE

- The city has a new vehicle for taking CERT training to the neighborhoods
- The city has CERT training in Spanish
- OES staff is working with community organizations for the disabled to bring CERT training and cache supplies to those groups. <http://www.cityofberkeley.info/BEACON/>
- There are now 90 cache groups in the city, primarily in the north and northeastern neighborhoods

OTHER TOPICS of INTEREST

- There is a CERT volunteer group which meets monthly to present programs that benefit city residents, such as the successful April 2014 disaster preparedness fair at North Berkeley BART parking lot. See: <http://www.cityofberkeley.info/ContentDisplay.aspx?id=74224>
- **BFD FIRE PREPAREDNESS DRILL:** The Fire Department is preparing for a practice drill this August that will involve Berkeley hills residents as the BFD prepares for what is expected to be dangerous fire season due to the continuing drought. More info will be forthcoming.