

# NMUHC Agenda and Meeting Minutes

August 25, 2023, 10:00am MDT

## Attendees: 16 total

City of Albuquerque (CABQ) Sustainability Office

- Denise Castillo-Gonzalez, Facilitator/Organizer
- Sandra West, sustainable waste specialist, participant
- Albert Lee, sustainable transportation specialist, heat impacts transportation, particularly those who use public transit and do not have access to a vehicle

Prosperity Works (Community-based organization, CBO)

- Ona Porter, knowing that heat kills more than cold and energy efficiency work, they have seen the impacts of heat and the need for heat mitigation. Energy efficiency work focuses on EJ tracts

CNM (Academia)

- Melanie Will-Cole professor, materials physicist, PhD in atmospheric and oceanic studies. Recently received \$1.2M NSF grant to do UHI research in ABQ

UW (Academia) Unable to Attend

NM Department of Health (State)

- Chelsea Langer, NM Environmental Public Health Tracking group, epidemiologist, background in heat-related illness among farm workers. Seeing a lot of interest in monitoring/tracking information on heat-related illness, and interested in using the data to inform action.

NM Energy, Minerals, and Natural Resources Department (NM EMNRD) (State)

- Maria Lohmann, coordinates climate action across state agencies. Received many requests recently.
- Lauren Reichelt, NMED, developing strategies related to climate, working with Duke University to bring a heat officer who can help coordinate efforts, especially holding equity and heat.

Bernalillo County

- Brian Bonanno, Sustainability Coordinator, interested in UHI, background is in community development and has seen the effects of heat on the most vulnerable community members

CABQ Environmental Health Department (City)

- Maria Gallegos, Public Health Compliance Manager, brings the public health perspective

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Urban Waters & Ciudad Soil and Water

Conservation District

- Jaren Peplinski, Water Resources Coordinator, ambassador for EPA Urban Waters–partnership to leverage resources related to watersheds

CABQ Parks and Recreation Department (City) Unable to Attend

CABQ Family and Community Services (City)

- Sergio Leanos, FCS, funding non-profit partners to provide services to our homeless neighbors. Setting up cooling stations program.
- Maria Wolfe, Homeless Innovations Officer, has concerns about the impact of heat on our homeless population.

CABQ Office of Equity and Inclusion (City)

- Roger Valdez, Conveners of ABQ J40 oversight committee. J40 is a federal initiative that dedicates 40% of funding to disadvantaged areas. Help facilitate and develop proposals that hold equity and mitigate heat. E.g., tree planting grant that focuses on EJ communities/tracts. See OEI's website for their J40 page.

CABQ Metropolitan Redevelopment Agency (City) Unable to Attend

CABQ Office of Emergency Management (City)

- Roger Ebner, Dir. Office of Emergency Management, tasked with managing all activities in the City to mitigate/respond/recover from disasters. Aware of the importance of heat, a silent disaster.
- Michael Archuleta, Emergency Operations Coordinator, share current plans and procedures

CABQ Homeless Services System (City) Unable to Attend

## Meeting Minutes:

### Opening Comments (10 minutes)

- Why start the cohort?
- Why is this work important?

Denise: heat impacts broadly and, the mission is to bring everyone together to help coordinate planning and action

### Mission statement

“Bringing together City departments, community-based organizations, academia, local, regional, and state government agencies to develop strategies that protect our most vulnerable communities during extreme heat events, and together, strategize long and short term mitigation actions.”

### Introductions (10 minutes) (see Attendees section)

### Presentation by Roger Ebner, Topic: CABQ Emergency Response (15 minutes)

Office of Emergency Response Background (Prepare. Respond. Recover.)

- Focuses on coordination with departments, businesses, and other stakeholders to develop and implement plans.
  - Mission: Partnering with the community to create a disaster ready and resilient community.
  - Public Safety goal that is particularly relevant: “The community is prepared to respond to emergencies.”
  - How does the City define emergencies? Natural or human-caused disasters, including the acts of war.
  - Goal: Stop or at least reduce the consequences of an emergency.
  - Facility coordination center: Emergency Operations Center (EOC) (multi-organization coordination center)
  - Common tasks: Interface Management Software; Situational Awareness and Report
  - Use a Emergency Support Function Assignment Matrix to guide incident response
  - Preparation approach/tool: Divide city area spatially into quadrants to help focus resources and ensure each quadrant has enough resources/supplies to support that area in the case of a disaster.
  - Planning/Preparation tool: Emergency Shelter Plan
  - Coordinate with centers that serve the community (senior/community centers)
  - Past: has activated for extreme heat and cold events in the past
  - Staff experience: Roger has experience in other areas with extreme heat, and knows how difficult the response can be, especially to protect those most vulnerable (e.g., seniors)
- What is considered a heat emergency?
    - Tool: Excessive heat warnings: issued by the National Weather Service
  - Emergency shelters versus cooling centers?

The City utilizes current facilities (e.g., libraries, other cooled spaces) and spaces that keep people cool (water-based play area at civic plaza). Places that can be utilized for emergency shelters can also be used as cooling centers to respond to extreme heat emergencies.

- Adding heat alters to ABQALERTS

See Q&A

### **Q&A: 10 minutes**

Verbal questions:

- Q from Brian Bonanno: How much does the City’s OEM coordinate with the County’s OEM?
  - A: City OEM works regularly with Bernalillo County’s OEM staff on a variety of projects
- Q from Denise C-G: What would activate an emergency shelter? The NWS’s alter thresholds?

- A: Possible. First, communicate/send out the advisory and assess the current need for additional response. Many of the resources are open and accessible regardless (e.g., libraries)
- Resource: People can sign up for alerts on [www.abqalert.com](http://www.abqalert.com). They send out messages based on blocks. Other departments use it as well to keep residents informed (e.g., Transit). Can send out alerts in 1 of 60 languages, so people can get the information in the language they are most comfortable.
- Resource: have access to other, broader alert systems as well.
- Q from Maria G: EHD uses the alerts for air quality. Are the air quality alerts connected to the OEM alert system?
  - A: Yes, EHD alerts are sent out through the ABQALERT system, though it can be branded (e.g., “air quality alert”). People can also decide what types of alerts they want, and what platform, and what language through the same platform.
  - Follow-up Q: With recent fires, EHD has received feedback regarding emergency service alerts and systems and ways to improve it. Should we direct people to ABQALERTS?
    - Follow-up A: Yes. Also, we are working with EHD and preparing a larger sign up ABQALERT campaign. OEM’s response to the most recent fire didn’t rise above an air quality alert (e.g., need to be careful about when outdoor sirens are activated).

Questions in the chat:

- Q from Lauren Reichelt: Is anyone working on Tiny Forests? Can they work in the desert?
  - A from Denise: not aware of anything and will bring it to the City forester’s attention.
  - Follow-up Q: Interest in a statewide training
  - Follow-up A: Will coordinate conversation with City forester.

**Closing Statements: 5 minutes**

- Next Steps: Next meeting in September.

**Possible Meeting Topics:**

- Public Health Weekly report
- Heat Mitigation Roadmap