



By Byron Higgin, Mascot Publisher

“I commend you on what you did. Everyone was proactive. Everyone did a good job and that makes all the difference in the world,” said Tammy VanOverbeke (right), Lyon County Emergency Management Director.

The Minneota City Council held a debriefing Monday night to review emergency management procedures in the wake of the flooding emergency two weeks ago.

VanOverbeke said, “In a letter to President Obama, Governor Tim Pawlenty requested a federal disaster declaration for the State of Minnesota as a result of flooding caused by severe storms that began on September 22 in southern Minnesota. Preliminary assessments indicate a total of \$64.1 million in damage, \$44.9 million of which was to public infrastructure.”

She indicated Lyon county was part of the request for federal individual assistance. FEMA’s Individuals and Households Program (IHP) helps homeowners and renters affected by a disaster with housing needs and necessary expenses.

Public assistance is requested for Blue Earth, Cottonwood, Dodge, Faribault, Freeborn, Goodhue, Jackson, Lincoln, Lyon, Martin, Mower, Murray, Olmsted, Pipestone, Rice, Rock, Steele, Wabasha, Waseca, Watonwan, and Winona counties.

“When disaster strikes in Minnesota, neighbors help neighbors. In the same way, all levels of government are working together to help communities recover and rebuild. I’m hopeful the federal government will act quickly to help Minnesota communities with the recovery process before winter is upon us,” Governor Pawlenty said.

VanOverbeke indicated once the Federal government steps in many of the funds used to fight the flooding emergency may be reimbursed.

“Keep documentation in seperate categories,” she urged. “If a need is determined, FEMA will come out and access the area,” she said.

“It was unique that everyone came together that quickly,” said Minneota Mayor Tony Esping. All city officials involved in the emergency process were called to the debriefing.

“We’re trying to prevent this problem from happening again,” said VanOverbeke.

City crew members, including Tim DeVlaeminck indicated a need for a “backup pump” at the lift station. He told about how fast the water level rose and said, “We need a backup.” He also indicated the city was short one generator.

Mayor Esping indicated the debriefing was being held to discover what was needed in case this happens again.

“We need a backup power source,” De-Vlaeminck indicated.

Fire Chief Jeff Sussner indicated, “If you have one backed-up basement, the cost would pay for a pump.”

“We still have a serious lift station problem because people are dumping into our system,” said Mayor Esping.

An ordinance preventing such dumping will be prepared.

The city decided to look into the prices of pumps and generators and to make back-up preparations.

The city has an emergency management plan and they used it during the recent flooding.

However, Mayor Esping indicated there were a few changes needed in the manual.

In large part, everyone was happy with the way the emergency was conducted and they hoped the debriefing will help improve the emergency plan in the future.

THE COUNCIL heard attorney John Engels concerning the Flood Plain Management Ordinance.

The council needs to be compliant with the Lyon County Commissioners plan and needs to have the ordinance passed by Nov. 26.

There is an ordinance in place but a public hearing will be held Nov. 1 before the new ordinance can be adopted.