

OHIO AMBER ALERT ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Live In-Person Meeting
2855 W. Dublin-Granville Road
Columbus, Ohio 43235
July 18, 2024

Ohio AMBER Alert Advisory Committee member, Brent Currence, called to order the July 18, 2024 meeting of the Ohio AMBER Alert Advisory Committee at approximately 10:10 am. The first order of business was the roll call taken by Jackie Bonner.

I. ROLL CALL - PRESENT

IN-PERSON

Ohio AG's Office/Ohio Missing Persons' Clearinghouse
Ohio Association of Broadcasters
Local/Regional AMBER Plan
Community Member
Ohio Association of Chiefs of Police
Ohio Department of Transportation
Ohio State Highway Patrol
Ohio Emergency Management Agency
Victim's Advocate
Buckeye State Sheriffs Association
State Emergency Communications Committee
Ohio Department of Aging

Brent Currence
Christine Merritt
Clark Donley
Harry Trombitas
Chief Clayton Harris
Leslie Prater
Captain Ron Raines
Brian Castner
Kathryn (Ryn) Farmer
Sheriff Jim Crawford
Paul Jellison
Erin Pettegrew

ROLL CALL – ABSENT

None

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE

Ohio State Highway Patrol
Ohio State Highway Patrol
Ohio State Highway Patrol
Ohio State Highway Patrol
Ohio State Highway Patrol
Ohio State Highway Patrol
Ohio EMA

Jacqueline (Jackie) Bonner
Jared Reagh
Jeff Grayson
Caesar Schanzenbach
Samantha Scherger
Joshua Menden
Jeff Greene

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE (via Bridge Call)

Ohio State Highway Patrol
Ohio State Highway Patrol
Ohio State Highway Patrol
Ohio DOT
Ohio DNR
Marion County Sheriff's Office
Ohio DODD
CECOMS
Federal Bureau of Investigation

Jonah Young
Julie Akers
Elizabeth Bogue
David Mackey
Doug Young
Lydia Frey
Russell Blank
Jackie Costa
Sandra Berchtold

II. APPROVAL OF THE APRIL 18, 2024 MEETING MINUTES

Brent Currence asked the Ohio Amber Alert Advisory Committee to review the minutes from the April 18, 2024 meeting. A motion to accept the minutes was made by Paul Jellison, Harry Trombitas seconded. Motion carried by all. Minutes approved.

III. OLD BUSINESS

A. Review of AMBER Alerts:

Captain Ron Raines advised there were three (3) AMBER Alert requests in the second quarter of 2024. Only one (1) request was activated by the OSHP Watch Desk. One (1) request did not meet the Ohio's AMBER Alert criteria and one (1) request resulted in the child being recovered before the activation was made. Capt. Raines reported on these three (3) requests.

1. May 13, 2024 – requested by Cedarville Police Department (Child found before activation)
2. May 24, 2024 – requested by Cincinnati Police Department (Did not meet criteria)
3. June 28, 2024 – requested by Columbus Police Department (Activated)

Capt. Raines gave a brief summary of each incident and reported on an issue that was discovered with the 360 character WEA messaging system during the June 28, 2024 activation.

In the activation of the WEA message, the preview screen shown there were 359 characters in the message. After the message was sent out, only a portion of the message was actually received. The OSHP Communications Center immediately realized the error and reached out to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) to successfully re-distribute the WEA message. The cause of the issue was later discovered to be a system error issue involving UTF-8 special characters.

B. WEA Distributions:

The committee revisited the topic of letting the NCMEC send out all WEA messages as opposed to OSHP. Committee member Brian Castner with Ohio EMA voiced a concern that handing the task over to NCMEC will cause the skill and capability to be lost amongst the Department's users. Ohio Department of Public Safety (ODPS) uses a different software vendor for WEA than what NCMEC uses. The system that ODPS uses has caused multiple prior issues to occur during WEA message activations due to numerous nuisances within the program created by its versatility. The committee further discussed the pros and cons of having NCMEC send all WEA messages. A motion to accept the change came from Capt. Raines, Harry Trombitas seconds. Motion approved. NCMEC will send out all WEA messages in lieu of OSHP from this point on.

C. Review of Blue Alerts:

Capt. Raines reported that there was one (1) Blue Alert in the second quarter of 2024. The alert was requested by the Euclid Police Department and was issued on May 12, 2024. Capt. Raines gave a detailed summary of the incident and noted an error that occurred with the OHLEG activation. The activation was sent out with the default message of a missing officer instead of deceased. The error was discovered and an updated message was redistributed.

Members of the committee questioned if they received the Blue Alert via email. This topic will be further looked into and discussed at the next quarterly meeting.

D. Review of Endangered/Missing Child Alerts:

Brent Currence reported that there were six (6) Endangered/Missing Child Alerts this quarter and all were found safe.

1. April 19, 2024 – requested by Union County Sheriff's Office.
2. April 28, 2024 – requested by Marion Police Department.
3. May 9, 2024 – requested by Pike County Sheriff's Office.
4. May 13, 2024 – requested by East Liverpool Police Department.
5. June 13, 2024 – requested by Warren County Sheriff's Office.
6. June 27, 2024 – requested by Brown County Sheriff's Office.

Brent Currence gave a brief summary on each incident. He gave credit to the OSP Intelligence Unit as a result of them having provided assistance on the June 13, 2024 incident, which resulted in the child being safely recovered.

E. Review of Endangered/Missing Adult Alerts:

Brent Currence reported that there were fourteen (14) Endangered/Missing Adult Alerts this quarter and all were found safe.

F. Alerts Training Update:

Captain Raines stated there were four (4) regional training sessions completed in 2024, including the two (2) sessions completed in the second quarter. The second quarter sessions took place in Cambridge, Ohio and Knox County, Ohio. Twenty (20) people were in attendance at the Cambridge session and thirty one (31) were in attendance at the session in Knox County, Ohio. There has been a total of seventy five (75) participants who have attended the trainings this year. There are four (4) more scheduled training sessions for the remainder of the year. Two (2) are the proactive trainings that were scheduled at the beginning of the year and two (2) are additional requested training sessions from Noble County Sheriff's Office and Pickaway County Sheriff's Office. More requests for training from other agencies are anticipated this year.

G. Alerts Video Revision Subcommittee Update:

Jeff Grayson reported that all four (4) videos have been filmed and are in the process of being edited by ODPS's Communications division. Jeff stated that the editing of the videos were delayed but hard deadlines for the video edits have now been set in place to maintain the goal of having all four (4) videos completed and ready for the 2024 Alerts Symposium on October 17, 2024.

The AMBER Alert video was received last night and is currently being reviewed. With today's approved motion to have NCMEC send out all WEA notifications instead of OSHP, Clark Donley will need to re-record that portion of the training video to update the information.

The hard deadlines for the remaining alert training videos are;

- Endangered/Missing Child Alert video – July 31, 2024
- Endangered/Missing Adult Alert video - August 9, 2024
- Blue Alert video – August 23, 2024

H. Sunset Committee Update:

Capt. Raines stated that he presented the purpose and mission of the AMBER Alert Committee to the SunSet Review Committee. He explained that the SunSet Committee's purpose is to review the need for every appointed committee. Capt. Raines stated that his report was well received and that although he hasn't received any official feedback, he doesn't foresee the AMBER Alert Committee to be discontinued.

I. 2024 Alerts Symposium Review:

Clark Donley reported that the agenda for the 2024 symposium has been finalized. The committee is hopeful for the symposium to be granted CPT credit from OPOTA. All the instructors for the symposium have been sent a list of items and instructions on what to send the sub-committee for their lesson plans to qualify for CPT approval. The deadline to receive those items is set for August 15, 2024.

The committee reviewed the 2024 Ohio Alerts Symposium flyer and agenda and gave their approval for distribution.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

A. Security Threat Group Conference Display:

Capt. Raines informed the committee of having part in a multi-agency STG conference scheduled for November 18, 2024. He stated that an Alerts display table would be an appreciated addition to the conference and wanted the committee's opinion. The committee agreed to have a display table at the event and Jackie Bonner with the State Highway Patrol will staff it.

B. Ohio Alerts Guidebook Revision:

Capt. Raines reported that the Ohio Alerts Guidebook had been reviewed by the Members of AMBER Alert Committee and the final revision was uploaded onto the Ohio AMBER website.

C. New Business from Committee Members:

Capt. Raines announced to the committee that Erin Pettegrew with the Ohio Department of Aging was recently approved by the Governor to be a committee member.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn was made by Jim Crawford and seconded by Harry Trombitas. Meeting adjourned.


Brent Currence, Chairperson


Date