

PLAINFIELD FLOOD RECOVERY GRANTS WORK GROUP  
Tuesday, September 3, 2024 @ 10 a.m.

Attending:

Karen Hatcher (KH)  
Michael Zahner (MZ)  
Gary Smith (GS)  
Josh Pitts (JP)  
Karl Bissex (KB)  
Michael Billingsley (MB)  
Denise Wheeler (DW)  
Arion Thiboumery (AT joined later)

**Mission Statement: Identify, explore and secure resources for flood recovery – no dollar left behind.**

Updates:

- 1) KH – advised that the Town has available up to \$1M from the Vt. Municipal Bond Bank. KB said the loan may be interest free or .5% and may later be forgiven. This will help with the current budget shortfall. The Selectboard will need to authorize the Town Clerk to request these funds.
- 2) HMPG Submission - MZ successfully filed the Hazard Mitigation Planning Grant application with VEM Hazard Mitigation (Stephanie Smith) by the August 30<sup>th</sup> deadline (asking for \$15 to 20M). MZ will check with Pat Moulton, Central VT Recovery Officer, to confirm it has been correctly filed. It may also need to be filed through the Public Assistance portal – yet to be determined. MZ has since our meeting filed on 9/4/2024 a Supplemental document stating that the Town cannot rebuild in the same manner as before and expect a different outcome. ANR will need to complete a comprehensive study of the phased planning and gather data to assist with a comprehensive plan.
- 3) PA, Damage Inventory –  
JP noted that flood related Water/Wastewater expenses are roughly \$122K.  
GS stated that everything needs to flow through the PA application per Thad Leugeors (VEM Flood Recovery team).  
GS and JP have access to the FEMA grants portal and are learning the process. JP and GS have created a damage inventory spreadsheet to track projects. They will define what is still considered an emergency and what is considered an ongoing project. Is it a Town of FEMA project?

GS and JP need to:

- 1) Identify types of projects;
- 2) Emergency protective measures;
- 3) Bridges, brooks and roads.

- 4) Great Brook is considered as "perennial" and falls under ANR jurisdiction. ANR will need to have it reviewed by one of their engineers. It is strongly encouraged that the Town hire its own engineer to perform the same review and ANR's determination. This would be paid for by the Town and may later be reimbursable.

MB suggested enlisting Paul Charron's help in determining if it is a Town or FEMA project. Paul (a former FEMA employee) assisted the Town in 2023 as a volunteer. He will need to be compensated this time.

All the projects (bridges, etc.) will need to be reviewed to see if they are in the floodplain – this is part of the hazard mitigation plan with help from ANR. Something to keep in mind is residents who may need access to emergency services (fire, EMS, etc.)

GS and JP need some administrative support – technical, data entry, etc.

Sam Young from FEMA has been assigned as the Town's case manager.

4. Report on Meeting at Goddard - KB and KH attended a meeting with a team of federal and state funding organizations at Goddard College and were advised that the Town needs to hire a Town Administrator to manage everything that is happening, because the current Town employees do not have the time capacity. Bram is busy with the day to day Town needs. A person to organize and prioritize the long term needs is needed (big picture). MZ stated that part of the HMPG request asks for 7% of the requested funding to be allocated to hire consultants and other administrative staff as needed. The money from the Bond Bank may be used for this position. KH and KB asked at the Goddard meeting how can Plainfield and Goddard help each other – bring in resources for creation of a master recovery plan?

5. MB is still assisting at Goddard with the displaced residents and FEMA. MB would like to hold a Climate Retreat and discuss nature based sustainability.

The group discussed coordinating messaging and public information. MB is the Town's Public Information Officer. Tim Phillips would also be a good resource to assist – he is well known and respected in Town.

MB will send out the FEMA volunteer tracking sheet.

KH would like to update the Selectboard and community members every two weeks to keep everyone informed of what is being planned and help everyone understand the FEMA and State funding process.

MB stated that hazard mitigation is a bigger picture project looking at 20+ years into the future – social psychology needs to be applied.

MB would also like to step down as EMD by March 2025.

6. Buyouts – AT stated that there are currently 25 (could be 30) properties that have been determined to qualify for the Buyout Program a dozen of which have catastrophic damage. AT put in a request for \$10M. He said the State has \$90M remaining from the 2023 flood. He needs to send letters to residents for potential buyouts. This is determined by the Flood Plain Administration through the State.

AT is also working on the new Village Extension project that will create 20-30 new housing units. According to the town plan this project is within the designated village center and will require Town DRB approval. He has requested an Act 250 exemption for the project. The exemption request is currently being reviewed by the District #5 Act 250 Coordinator and awaiting the issuance of a jurisdictional determination. JP requested this project include the WW replacement and roads to the newly created Village Extension project and request for funding. MZ (former Executive Director for Act 250) offered to assist. AT will follow up with the CVRPC for assistance with design work (architect and planner). Sandy Vitzhum is a private consultant and has volunteered her assistance. Need to include the Town Planning Commission and ZA in this process.

7. Identification of Priority Projects (before winter). What funding is needed in the short term? – discuss at the next meeting.

8. Other funding needs to be requested in loan - discuss at next meeting.

9. Technical Assistance Call with CVRPC- KH will attend this afternoon and report back at the next meeting.

10. Municipal Planning Grant- KH is working on a Master Recovery plan.

#### 11. Action Steps

- \* Selectboard to authorize Town Clerk to request \$1M from Vt. Municipal Bond Bank.
- \* Selectboard to create Town Administrator position and begin recruitment process.
- \* Invite Sam Young (FEMA) to the next meeting.
- \* Invite Will Colgan, PC Chair and Karen Storey, ZA to future meetings.
- \* GS building inventory list using Google Earth, resources for JP and administrative support to PA.
- \* Future planning – coordinate with VLCT, VCRD and CVRPC – KH
- \* MZ to follow up with Pat Moulton on HM grant request.

\* KH structured public forums – request VLCT assistance.

12. Next meeting is Tuesday, September 10 at 10 am.

DRAFT