



Fairfax Mitigation Plan Kickoff Meeting

Meeting Minutes

November 8, 2024 at 10:30 a.m.

Public Meeting held at the Fairfax Town Office,
12 Buck Hollow Road, Fairfax, VT and virtually via Zoom

Participants: Sarah Hadd, Fairfax Town Manager
Steve Bessette, Fairfax Selectboard
Michah Genzlinger, Fairfax Fire Chief
Sheri Rainville, Fairfax Historical Society
Tim Burns, Fairfax Selectboard, VFD
Brent Sheets, Fairfax Public Works Director
Shaun Coleman, Northwest Regional Planning Commission

The goal of the meeting was to review capabilities, plans and policies. Many municipalities in Franklin County have limited resources for both day-to-day operations and emergency preparedness activities. Reviewing capabilities, policies and plans ensures the village is taking proactive steps in reducing impacts of disasters.

The group reviewed current staffing, roles and responsibilities for the community. The biggest changes since the last mitigation plan were the creation of a Town Manager, a Public Works Director and a full-time Fire Chief. The roles and responsibilities of each were reviewed.

Current plans, ordinances and policies include the Municipal Plan, Development Regulations, Public Works Specifications, Local Emergency Management Plan, Building Inspection, Code Enforcement, and Fire Safety and Franklin County Mutual Aid Agreement. Sarah noted the Development Regulations were recently adopted and the Public Works Specifications go beyond Vermont Agency of Transportation's Orange book.

The Town recently adopted a Communications Plan and Policy. The purpose of this policy is to provide the Town with guidance in effectively communicating with citizens, staff, and elected and appointed officials.

There was a discussion regarding Continuity of Operations plans that many municipalities put into place during the pandemic. Sarah noted that the Town has a go-to folder for emergency operations but not a formal "Continuity of Operations Plan" but it is a work in progress.

Sarah noted the zoning administrator was unable to attend today's meeting. She noted the town is waiting for FEMA to release the new draft flood plain maps. Shaun noted that FEMA is currently updating the flood zone maps for the area. NRPC will be working with Zoning Administrators and development review boards on updating flood regulations accordingly. The process began in 2019.

Shaun added that NRPC was recently awarded an EDA grant for flood modeling study of the Lamoille River. NRPC is currently receiving bid proposals in response to RFQ/RFP. Part of the study will include mitigation measures on transportation infrastructure based on the results of the flood modeling. Stones Brook and Mill Brook will be included.

There was discussion on transportation infrastructure inventories and the status of the Municipal Roads General Permit. Sarah and Brent noted the Town will be updating the bridge and culvert inventory in 2025. She would like to hire an intern for the summer to do the field work needed. There is a state mapping website that municipalities can access to add any culverts they have and includes culvert conditions, sizes, type, etc. <https://www.vtculverts.org/>.

There was a brief discussion on the Franklin County Mutual Aid agreement is reviewed and updated annually and includes all municipalities plus several communities in Quebec.

Sarah added that the Town is served by two power companies: Green Mountain Power and Vermont Electric Co-op. Most of the outage seem to occur within the Electric Co-op service area. The town works with the power companies to address any issues but the ultimate decision is up to the utilities.

Micah noted that the town's Emergency Management Plan would be activated for an incident at the school. The Elementary, Middle and High School, like most schools in Franklin County, have a School Safety Plan. The Supervisory District works with the State and Sheriff's Department in reviewing and updating the plan. They address bomb threats, active shooters, lock down procedures, etc.

There was a brief discussion regarding police coverage. The Franklin County Sheriff's Department has a contract with the Town for limited coverage. The Vermont State Police also provide coverage.

There was a final review of roles and responsibilities for the various plans, policies and ordinances.

The group requested to have the mitigation actions meeting scheduled on November 15 at 10:30 a.m. instead of waiting for December. Staff are busy putting together the budget and annual town report. That meeting will be review of past, current and future mitigation actions.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 11:45 a.m.

Action Items:

- NRPC will send the residential hazard mitigation survey to the committee for review and use as appropriate.
- NRPC will draft minutes and post to project website.
- NRPC will send out meeting materials and notice for next meeting.

- The Town Manager will provide a copy of the annual budget, and the Communications Plan and Policy and Budget.
- The PW Director will review the status of the bridge and culvert inventories and waste water spill response plan to determine if there are any mitigation actions needed.