

**Hazard Mitigation Planning Meeting - South Hero**  
**May 22, 2025 | 11:00 a.m.**  
**South Hero Town Office and Zoom**

**Attendance:** Kim Julow (Treasurer & former Fire Chief), Sue Arguin (Town Administrator), Naomi King (Town Clerk), Pat Robinson (Fire Chief), Martha Varney (Zoning Administrator), Dave Carter (Select Board Chair), David Roy (Planning Commission Chair). Shaun Coleman (NRPC)

This purpose of this planning meeting was to review the Town's capabilities and update the mitigation goals and strategies and the plan maintenance schedule.

**Survey Results**

Ten people have responded to the community survey so far.

**Timeline**

Shaun reviewed the planning timeline. The draft plan will be sent to selectboard and local organizations (Champlain Islands Chamber of Commerce, Economic Development Office). Meet with the Select Board to release public comments. After public comment period then submit to FEMA.

**Mitigation Strategies & Actions**

Purpose: Review mitigation goals and actions for the town's next five-year plan.

The group reviewed actions from the last mitigation plan and provided an update on their status.

Shaun explained that FEMA requires actions now must fall under one of four categories. Some fall under more than one. The categories are:

1. Structures and Infrastructure
2. Natural Systems Protection
3. Local Plans and Regulations
4. Education and Awareness Programs

Shaun reviewed the 12 Actions Scoring Criteria typically used to prioritize each action. Each action is prioritized based on a total score.

- Each criterion scored 1-3
- Highest possible score: 36
- Lowest possible score: 12

A Cost-Benefit estimation is required as well. Shaun explained the criteria used for cost-benefit. If it is a public safety benefit, then it scores high. Infrastructure functions are medium and general aesthetics are low.

The group reviewed hazard mitigation actions that are based on issues the town has identified. The group reviewed the Vermont Flood Ready site, the state's transportation resilience planning tool, and the municipal vulnerability indicators tool.

Shaun noted that for each action the group must identify responsible party, time frame, and funding source is. For funding the town should identify the source (i.e. reserve fund, general fund or grant source).

The previous actions from the last approved plan were reviewed and their status updated. Previously it was simply laid out and not the requirements want more detail. The old plan is available on the project webpage.

- Fire station generator. It was installed when the building was built. August 2018.
- Landon Road culvert upgrade. The Land Road was looked at and repairs have been done. Not sure if it was replaced. Need to follow up with Road Foreman.
- Martin Road was done when they upgraded the road.
- Station Road culverts were replaced near Tracy replaced culverts.
- The state has not replaced culverts under Route 2 to Keeler Bay. That is the state's responsibility. It can be included in the plan but it's not the town's responsibility. This is a culvert that needs replacing.
- Kibbe Point Road culvert was replaced. Anticipate paving this summer.
- Incident Command Training was done in 2019 prior to Covid at the Sheriff's Office.

River Corridor Bylaws – Shaun review Flood Ready site, ANR Atlas for showing where they are located and ERAF benefits for having river corridor bylaws. ANR mapped river corridors for towns that have no rivers, as streams that drain an area 0.5 to 2 sq. miles with a 50-foot setback.

Martha noted that the town did not include this in the last zoning regulation update because either the data wasn't available, or the criteria wasn't defined.

The group discussed road issues related to flooding and erosion. David Carter provided background information.

#### Road Paving on Kibbie Point Road, Hochelaga Road and East Shore Road

- Culverts are going to be plastic. Road Foreman responsible. Project underway this fall. Funding Source is the highway fund. Estimated cost: \$400,000 for all three from Pike Construction.
- Priority: Medium-High
- Infrastructure Projects, Natural Systems Protection

#### Floodplain Regulations Update

Martha, Sue and Kim provided background information. The group discussed the new FEMA flood working maps that were recently released. The final maps will likely become officially registered by FEMA in 2027.

- Floodplain Regulations will need to be updated. Potential timeline challenges.
- Planning Commission and Development Review Board will be involved. NRPC will be working with communities regarding the updates. General fund will pay for the work. Cost will be low and benefits will be high.
- Local Plans and Regulations, Natural System Protection

#### Continuity of Operations Plan

Shaun explained what a COOP is and why it is becoming more important to have. Dave C., Sue and Kim reviewed what they did during the pandemic. Naomi wasn't entirely sure if they had anything written down. Some insurance companies are requiring municipalities to have this in place. The town has an Emergency Management Plan that updated recently.

Shaun will send an example. Martha noted VLCT released something about preparing your town for the next disaster. Naomi would reach out to North Hero to see if Corrine had a template.

- The town has a vault and the cloud for backup of digital files and the ability for staff to work remotely.
- Develop a 1–2-page plan for town operations during emergencies.
- Identify key, backup systems, and operational procedures.
- Martha noted that the next municipal plan is due in 2031.
- Local Plans and Regulations

#### Road Erosion Management

- Municipal Road Erosion Inventory update due to state in 2027.
- The inventory identifies erosion issues along roadways. ANR and VTRANS established criteria. It
- Conducted by the highway department with assistance from a contractor.
- Part of Municipal Roads General Permit (MRGP) program with funding from Grants in Aid.
- Structure and Infrastructure, Natural Systems Protection

#### **Funding Considerations**

The group discussed utilizing various funding sources for implementing actions: Highway fund, general fund, grants in aid and structures grant through Agency of Transportation, Agency of Commerce and Community Development, Vermont Emergency Management, FEMA mitigation grants, Assistance to Firefighter grants. Potential state and federal matching funds.

Kim noted the town has a capital fund that is being funded by local option tax that is only used for recreation program projects and town building and maintenance repairs. The town has a highway fund as well for road infrastructure and maintenance. There is a fund for reappraisal money coming in as well.

It is up to the Selectboard to develop a capital plan. The budget for each of the hazard mitigation actions is under each of the funds like the highway fund. The has a capital fund which is specifically for town buildings and rent. The appraisal fund is separate money. In process of doing reappraisal.

Kim explained the expenditures that are in the treasurer's report. Tax dollar transfers feed the other separate funds. There is an equipment replacement fund. Fire, Rescue and Highway have an equipment replacement fund and is kept in the fund balance. There's a local option tax that has about \$25k for repairs and maintenance. There is about \$150k in capital improvement fund.

The group reviewed town capacity information that was drafted. Corrections: The Treasurer is employed full-time and not part-time. Rescue is per diem. The town funds rescue through the general fund. Planning commission members get paid a small stipend as do the Development Review Board members. The fire department is volunteer.

#### **Policies and Plans Final Review**

Shaun reviewed the draft policies and plans table from the information provided at the last meeting and follow up with Kim and Sue.

#### **Plan Maintenance and Updates**

Shaun reviewed the plan maintenance section requirements and the process for monitoring and evaluating the plan. A template for the plan maintenance process was reviewed.

- Tracks implementation progress, assesses effectiveness, and identifies necessary updates.
- Defines maintenance steps, when and how they occur and who is responsible.
- Includes public input opportunities.
- The group agreed to conduct it annually during the April Selectboard meeting or after a disaster.
- Regular Plan updates occur every 5 years.
- Involves securing funding, issuing RFPs, selecting contractors, building a planning team, and conducting stakeholder engagement.
- Draft plans are reviewed locally and submitted to Vermont Emergency Management (VEM) for approval before adoption.
- Must have public involvement to ensure community engagement through public meetings, website postings, social media, and hard copy notices.
- Public feedback is incorporated into the plan.

### **Additional Notes**

Shaun emphasized the need to meet FEMA mitigation planning requirements and community needs. It is a balance to apply federal requirements with local needs.

The group decided not to meet again until after summer due to scheduling conflict and summer tourist season.

### **Next Actions**

- Finalize draft plan
- Circulate for internal and external review
- Prepare for public comment period
- Submit to FEMA for final approval

The meeting adjourned at approximately 12:20 p.m.