

Special Selectboard Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, August 30, 2023, 6:00 P.M.
Flood Updates & Legislators' Discussion;
Rebuilding for Flood Resiliency throughout the Winooski Watershed

I. Welcome and Overview- Mike Hogan Selectboard Chair & Flood Relief Coordinator - the meeting was called to order at 6:04 p.m. Mike thanked everyone for coming. He wanted to mention there was such an outpouring of people to help, and we could not get through this without everyone working together. *(There was considerable discussion on each topic, please listen to the audio on Cabotvt.us)*

II. Flood Updates: tried to be as transparent as possible:

1. Roads – most roads have been fixed, however, there are some projects that we wait until the spring to do.
2. Fire station – closed now and Dean will have more information at our Tuesday SB meeting.
3. FEMA Public Assistance & Individual Assistance – affected with the flood help is in the Willey Building and will be here through at least next week, maybe longer; we are working with FEMA for the Town.
4. State Response/Federal Response – SEOC worked with us and were excellent from getting debris removed and 95' bridge, helped in all areas. The governor's office was here last Friday. Federal response was excellent.

III. Rebuilding for resiliency and flood management -throughout the Winooski watershed. This is the springboard of where we go from here. Compared pictures from 2011 to 2023 flood.

Winooski Watershed Facts- Gary Gulka – will be the chair of the task force for the watershed. He gave an overview of the watershed from Cabot to Lake Champlain stating there are 7 major tributaries to Lake Champlain. Need to learn with other towns and what they are doing. Judy Pransky – how we are going to be funded – grants, FEMA, geological people. Securing funding technical expertise. Mike stated they are putting together a list of grants

Rebuilding Resiliency- Karen Larsen – What happens here is important. If we are concerned about Montpelier, we need to develop strategies. From her house to the bottom drains all the way down. We can't just talk about our portion. We need to address the massive watershed problem.

Ann Cummings – in 1992 (ice jam) – flood in Montpelier came from another directions. It depends where it hits. Irene came from still another direction. All this needs to be a state coordinated. Work together to figure this out and how we are going to pay for it. How do we coordinate this. Possibly regional planning commissions to be funnels for funding, technical assistance and to coordinate among the area. Do we invent something. Perhaps the Army Corps of Engineers, how we tap them – Mike said we are asking them. We do have a plan for the size of the culverts. FEMA wants to bring it back to the previous condition; however, we need to get it to today's standards. Stormwater utility, tax that will help fund projects. Big Oil is being sued by Montpelier and the Legislature is proposing to sue oil companies.

This time it was Cabot, other times it could be another area. How can we mitigate this. Cabot should not have to do it on its own. It was not just Ludlow, Rutland, any town or watershed. Cabot is the poster child. Must rethink when we have typhoon rain with these mountains. Johanna stated if we could use this experience to help other communities. Complacency happened and thought it was happening and that the culverts could take care of everything, however boulders were being thrown like pebbles. The velocity of the waters was amazing, the mountain was coming to us. Even people at the Top of Danville Hill basements flooded. We could help Warren and other areas. Cabot is thinking ahead. Fred – water bubbling up the road any time of the year. Rethink our village. Must think about our village and what it will be like in the future. As we get bigger dumps of water what are we going to do.

What about buyout – it is a FEMA buyout. Did Barre buyout, no it was FEMA. One of the problems in Montpelier on Elm Street or State Street – if we raise houses the basement must be filled with cement - \$200-300,000 per house. Barre – lower income housing. Not likely they will not come online by winter. Housing is almost impossible to find. House went right through the 1st floor – like to buy out. Need to talk with FEMA town would have to pay out 10 or 20%. Keep submitting to FEMA. The amount of FEMA is still 75%, do we know if it will be raised to 95%? We still don't know. However, it is almost certain that we will be able to get to 90%. Sandy Pond congratulations on the board and everyone that is at the meeting – looking for a solution and not a bandaid. This is the 1st time that that hear about fixing the problem and changing. Simple as working on Danville,

cobblestone – zoning and responsible as to where people can live, wetlands. Her basement flooded within 20 minutes of the flooding. It is little things that help.

RD – flood heroes – fire department – days on end. Nate Smith – holding fire house for WB parking lot with 3 hours sleep in a 72-hour period.

Jenn Miner – housing not coming back up online – EMD, Health Officer – are we going to talk about heat – some concern that one problem will spill things to the next. How are we going to get this done. Concerned about supply chain – not having a problem right now. More efficient heating and technicians – workforce is another issue. Fred – heating technicians – not taking them on new customers. They are over their heads. More trade schools. Try to get a heat pump and install it. It is a long process.

Resources- current programs and grant possibilities- Mike Hogan – appreciate everyone coming. Starting something in Cabot – anyone wants to be part of this task force – hopes to come up with goals and projects that are doable. USDA water shed program. FEMA money tag on. Lot of resources. Any last many comments. Was flooding in Montpelier flooding culverts or water rose. Trees were taking banks out. Lost 50' of property. Nature turning it into wetlands. Peg Hough said she is very thankful to the leadership.

John Grove in Marshfield – September 12 – Friends of Winooski – policy changes – wetland experts and brainstorm ideas, get out of the one town idea. Share the stories. There will be a meeting at the Plainfield Opera House 5:30-7:30 to tell some of the stories and brainstorming.

Rebecca – we are going to have a class focusing on the Winooski and our students could be a good resource. Our school is a community school and to learn about the issues. Please give us three or four questions that the students need to investigate and then feed back to the legislators.

IV. Pending State Legislation to guide flood preparedness/response: Washington County Senate Delegation & Rep. Pearl. We are hoping to get some legislation on this in this upcoming session.

V. How can Cabot participate in current conversations regarding resiliency? Cabot Flood Resiliency Taskforce and Outside Organizations

VI. Q & A – this was basically covered throughout the evening.

Mike thanked everyone for coming and this is a good beginning.

We adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Betty Ritter, Town Clerk/Treasurer