

Waterbury Natural Disaster Preparedness Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
6/24/2024

**Opening:** The meeting was held in the Steele Community Room, Waterbury Municipal Center. Committee Chair John Malter called the meeting to order at 5:50 p.m., which is when we achieved a quorum.

**Present:** John Malter, Forrest McDonald, Matt Dugan, Bette Lewicke (prospective committee member)

**Absent:** Kane Sweeney, Select Board representative to the committee

**Approval of Minutes:** Unanimous approval of minutes at 5:55

**Approval of Agenda:** Matt motioned to approve agenda; Forrest seconded.  
Vote: Unanimous at 5:55 p.m.

**Business from Previous Meeting:** Discussion of the committee's mission statement

**New Business:**

We discussed the mission statement that Forrest assembled and moved into a discussion of what our job is as a committee as it relates to what the Select Board expects from us. Are we more advisory or hands-on?

The conversation drifted from a discussion of the statement to items in the manual being assembled by Matt. This manual is a combination of processes and equipment lists to be used when the next natural disaster (centering on flooding) occurs.

There was concern over the mission statement being locked in stone, and so the decision was made to allow the mission statement to evolve over time. Forrest volunteered to revise the mission statement and "decouple the volunteer aspect" from the statement and to circulate a draft prior to the next meeting.

We spent some time filling Bette in on the differences between CReW and our committee and providing information regarding history and names of people connected to the flood recovery effort.

We discussed Bette's past relationship with the Red Cross and how we might be able to coordinate with them for volunteers. For example, the Red Cross offers trainings in disaster relief, both online and in person.

Forrest suggested talking about what our ideal response looks like and determining what resources are needed, then scaling back based on what resources are actually available. This is

dependent on Matt finishing the manual and laying out the needs. Matt said this document will be ready for the next meeting.

John expressed concern about volunteer availability and maintaining momentum; there was wide agreement.

There was general agreement that we need to build relationships with organizations so that we can call on larger numbers of volunteers. Matt mentioned UVM and the RISE Summit. John mentioned the VYCC, on whose board he used to sit.

The committee agreed that talking to organizations such as the VYCC and UVM to get volunteers would have to be the responsibility of designated people ahead of time to form (or improve) relationships that we could call on in response to a natural disaster.

Bette brought up the Red Cross disaster response and agreed that we should establish a relationship with them.

John said he'd get more information on VYCC as possible partners, contact Tom Drake to join us at our next meeting, and check with Tom Leitz regarding our committee's possible relationship with the Red Cross (with the idea that we don't want to step on any toes).

Matt asked if our volunteers could receive their disaster training from the Red Cross.

Forrest stated that he does not want to manage a volunteer force, that our job is to provide recommendations to the Select Board so that they can address the issue. He suggested the foundation of a separate non-profit for volunteer management.

Matt suggested that it's our job to provide the recipe and then talk about needed resources down the road once we've identified the plan for recovery.

Forrest suggested that we ask the Select Board to form the volunteer force.

Matt suggested that, between the part-time disaster response coordinator and the town employee Tom Leitz mentioned the town may be able to lend us, we have resources to carry out some of this work.

Matt volunteered to learn more from Liz Schlegel about the Red Cross' involvement in the response to the flooding of 2023 and report back to Bette.

**Adjournment:** At 6:52, Matt made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by John.

Vote: Unanimous

**Minutes Submitted By:** Matt Dugan