

New Ashford Select Board, Commonwealth Consulting LLC
MVP Virtual Kick-Off Meeting and Workshop
New Ashford Town Hall/Zoom
April 15, 2022

Present: Jason Jayko, Mark Phelps, Ken McInerney, Lori Jayko, Keith Lacasse
Zoom: Doreen DeFazio, Rob Polsinelli
Absent: Frank Speth

Meeting opened at 6:00

Introductions: Jason Jayko (Select Board), Mark Phelps (Select Board, Planning Board), Ken McInerney (Select Board, Conservation Commission), Rob Polsinelli from Commonwealth Consulting (CMC), Doreen DeFazio Commonwealth Consulting Founder. Doreen will be point of contact for CMC and Jason for the Select Board. The MVP Regional Coordinator is Carrieanne Petrik.

Housekeeping: The Town received a grant to update its Hazard Mitigation Plan. The contract has been signed with the state and the funds have been received. The Select Board will sign the Statement of Work during their meeting on April 19. Jason will forward any pertinent communications from the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) to CMC.

Overview of the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Process: The Hazard Mitigation Plan for the town is outdated. The MVP started in 2016 to help with climate resilience at the local level. When the Select Board learned about the availability of the MVP grant, they realized the grant would fill in needs. They applied for the grant and funds were awarded and received. CMC was selected as the vendor and will do the community resilience building process to extract the information pertinent to New Ashford, followed by drafting the updated Hazard Mitigation Plan. Once it is approved by FEMA, MEMA, and EEA, New Ashford will be designated an MVP community. This will make the town eligible for action plan grants, some of which towns can apply for solely and some which are done regionally. The town can apply for multiple action grants at a time. The next action grant the town would be eligible for is in Spring 2023. Doreen and Rob will do a site visit, see issues that have been identified, and hold a work shop to define climate related hazards in either a full-day session or two half-day sessions. The workshop will involve department heads and interested community members. Immediate courses of action will be suggested to mitigate problems that are identified.

The town does not need to adopt the plan at a town meeting or by Select Board vote. Doreen advised that the Select Board be part of the process. When the plan is completed, it will be reviewed before it goes out to all agencies. Identified issues are placed in a numbered risk matrix. It's a weighted process to determine the most pressing problems. If there is a tie for two, there will be discussion and a revote. The idea is to fix everything with a focus on what can get done first. Two public comment sessions are required.

Scheduling: Extension: The grant was awarded in February with a June 30 deadline on the reporting project, but the state will allow an extension by amendment to the contract. The Board

thinks that September 30 is a more reasonable deadline and the workshop can be held in June. CMC recommended that if the workshop is done in two meetings, to hold them as close together as possible.

The core meetings will be held bi-weekly for around an hour. The meetings will be held immediately prior to the regularly scheduled Select Board meetings. The next meeting will focus on the already identified vulnerabilities, then CMC will visit the sites under discussion. The next MVP meeting will be May 2 at 6:00.

Doreen will send the list of state requirements for the parameters of vulnerability for funding for the action grants. The goal is to capture every vulnerability in town in order to report to MEMA and FEMA. There will be other funding opportunities besides the state grant. The Board will sign the Statement of Work and discuss the payment schedule (likely a third up front, a third after the workshop, and a third after receiving the designation).

Meeting adjourned at 7:15