

**TOWN OF RIPTON  
SELECTBOARD MINUTES  
04-09-2012**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Meeting No.</b>	<b>Start</b>	<b>End</b>	<b>Next Meeting</b>	<b>Time</b>
04-09-2012	2012-08	7:30	9:40	04-23-2012	7:30 p.m.

**Attendees:** Laureen Cox, Richard Collitt, Selectboard; Ronald Wimett, Selectboard and Road Commissioner; Alison Joseph, Selectboard Clerk. *Present from 7:30 – 9:15:* Mike Klingensmith and Greg Smith, United States Forest Service (USFS); Carolyn Ravenna, Sherry Greeno, Melissa Brookman, VT Elks Silver Towers Camp; Erik Eriksen, John Fontanilles, Christine Carone, Ripton Fire & Rescue; Ceredwyn Alexander, Ripton Fire & Rescue and Town Service Officer; Ed Sullivan, Middlebury College; Sally Hoyler, Town Clerk; Warren King, Planning Commission; Barry King; Jeremy Grip, Regional Planning delegate.

**Post-Disaster Review – Tropical Storm Irene (FEMA 4022-DR-VT) and Planning for Future Events**

1. Welcome, introductions: *Laureen Cox stated the intent of the meeting – to get parties together to talk and learn from one another’s vantage points about past disasters, and to prepare for future events.*
  
2. Discussion: With the experience gained during Tropical Storm Irene and other disasters in mind, the meeting addressed the following questions and related topics.
  - a. What are the most likely emergencies/disasters in Ripton? *Flooding is known as likely. Other potential disasters discussed were fire, high winds, hurricanes, blizzards, ice, and long power outages associated with storms.*
  
  - b. Can we identify the areas of town most vulnerable to these events? *Given past events, all areas of town are vulnerable. Regarding fire, there was discussion that certain types of vegetation, such as red pine plantations, may be more vulnerable than others; that to date fire has not been a major issue though that could change; and spring is the most likely fire season.*
  
  - c. Are there reasonable ways to make those areas less vulnerable? *Mitigation efforts have been made in some areas, such as the village. The effectiveness of the village flood chute was questioned and answered that it is functioning effectively and as designed. Working with the Regional Planning Commission on mitigation grants and a community wildfire protection plan was suggested.*
  
  - d. If the town were cut off for a significant length of time, what resources do we have available to us? How can we best access those resources? Can we create a database of these?  
*Emergency planning for Middlebury College and FEMA guidelines recommend having enough resources to be self-sustaining for 72 hours (3 days). After 3 days, there is reasonable expectation that outside help will arrive. USFS experience in Rochester during Irene, where several people were without medication within 1 day, demonstrated the need for a 3 day supply. The Rochester experience also highlighted the importance of the town clerk’s office in accounting for residents.*

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*All agreed that an inventory and database of resources belonging to major entities be created. Those asked to participate in the inventory are the fire and first response department, road crew, selectboard, USFS, Silver Towers, and Middlebury College Bread Loaf campus. Individuals may be called upon for resources as needed.*

- e. *What are the community's medical resources? During Tropical Storm Irene, Ripton was without ambulance service for two days. Our EMTs, home health care providers, and town service officer were recognized as best able to identify resources, and people most vulnerable in the event of power loss or loss of road access. The need for public outreach to those who may require short-term medical support, such as post-surgery, as well as those with chronic care needs, was identified. Use of the Incident Command System (ICS) with a non-medical person in charge was advised.*
  
- f. *What needs of seasonal residents (Bread Loaf, Silver Towers, Moosalamoo, Forest Service) do we need to consider? Silver Towers staff spoke of their experience evacuating campers with a state emergency management team in 2008. One of the most difficult aspects is deciding when to evacuate, particularly when unable to judge conditions elsewhere. Campers arrive with medication for 2 weeks, so at the end of their stay do not have 3 days of medication. There is typically more than 72 hours worth of food. The USFS evacuates the Moosalamoo campground and remote camp sites, checks for hikers, and closes gates at dead-end roads.*
  
- g. *What resources from the seasonal facilities or nearby communities might aid the town? Are they accessible to the town out of season? The Bread Loaf programs and Silver Towers first priorities are their participants and staff. They will aid the town as they can. Bread Loaf has a caretaker on campus year-round. All buildings other than the caretaker's house and the barn are closed from Nov.-May. The Ripton fire chief has keys for Silver Towers buildings, and the facility will share resources, especially outside of their 9-week summer session. Silver Towers resources include a walk-in cooler and freezer, generators, 120 beds and bedding. The USFS has a trailer with a cooler. Second homes may be an asset if shelter is needed.*
  
- h. *How can we best set up communication systems within the town -- and in various sections of town? Establishing neighborhood communication hubs with 2-way radio equipment within a 1-mile radius of all residents was proposed. Though near one another, the Ripton Country Store and the town office are key locations people frequently contact for information. The importance of rotary phones, emergency radios, and access to cell towers, if there ever are any, was cited. The town is fortunate to have at least two HAM radio operators. Currently we have fire cadets who can staff the fire station and monitor communications during emergencies. Communication through social media such as Facebook, and the likelihood of being without power were discussed.*

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- i. How can we best monitor roads, bridges, and other potential areas of danger? Do we have sufficient signs, barriers, etc.? *Firefighters and first responders were asked to make mental note of road conditions as they respond to calls and to radio reports to the road commissioner. This is to prevent duplication of efforts and keep the roads safer. The importance of driving to and from calls carefully was emphasized.*
  
- j. Are there ways in and out of town that could be created or that exist but are not currently used that could be brought into service if needed? (Forest or private roads, helicopter landing sites, etc.) *The possibility of making the Oak Ridge Trail/Old Town Road route accessible for emergency use was discussed, including USFS maintenance of a right-of-way. Vermont Association of Snow Travelers (VAST) trails and Natural Turnpike to South Lincoln were discussed as emergency routes. During Irene the USFS did not close and lock gates of through-ways such as Natural Turnpike. Officially designated helicopter landing sites are the Ripton School, Bread Loaf campus, and Steam Mill clearing. Other possible landing sites are at the Barker property on Barker Road and the Silver Towers field. The Snow Bowl in Hancock is suitable for landing and an ideal staging area.*
  
- 3. **Wrap-up.** *Mr. Wimett emphasized that we work together to keep people, safe, mobile, calm and informed. An inventory list will be compiled, and is to be updated regularly. The importance of having sufficient supplies for 72 hours was emphasized. Participants were thanked for this discussion, with the hope that it be ongoing.*

Visitors left the meeting at 9:15.

<b>Minutes</b>	The minutes of the previous meeting will be reviewed 04-23-12.
<b>Actions/ Town office</b>	A proposal for a switch-operated light rather than the motion detector security light approved at the previous meeting was considered, moved by Dick Collitt, and denied.
<b>Orders</b>	Reviewed and signed: Roads: \$14,068.46; General Fund: \$3,440.00.
<b>Officer re- ports</b>	Received reports from the delinquent tax collector, zoning administrator, treasurer, state police. No discussion.

Lauren Cox

Ronald Wimett

Richard Collitt