

Mammoth Lakes Town Council Agenda Action Sheet

Title: Update and Council Direction on Response to Local Extreme Weather Declared Emergency.

Council Meeting Date: 4/12/2023

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Recommended Motion: Provide Council Comment and Direction on Information Provided and Direction on Actions Taken.

Overview of Emergency Response Resources, Actions Taken and Recommended:

The Town of Mammoth Lakes is continuing to operate under the Town, County, State and Federal proclamations of a State of Emergency. FEMA representatives will be touring Mono County and the Town of Mammoth Lakes to determine if we are eligible for inclusion under a Major Disaster Federal Declaration. The enhanced level of disaster designation will provide access to additional FEMA resources for damage recovery by local agencies, increasing the reimbursement amounts for eligible costs from 75% to 94%.

Throughout this emergency a substantial number of resources were secured through the State emergency management system, working with CalOES, CalFire, and the Incident Management Team. Throughout this emergency Staff made several requests through the Emergency Operations Center and the State for local support. The resources noted above were in response to these requests. Requests for State resources (National Guard or other) to assist with shoveling of private residences to clear roofs and propane connections/tanks was a request that was not filled. A brief summary of requests for resources that were filled through the State process included:

- Mammoth Lakes Fire Protection District (MLFPD) emergency response support from CalOES Engines assigned to Mammoth Lakes. Two engines are currently assigned.
- A total of four USAR (Urban Search and Rescue) teams and one Haz Mat team with overhead support were assigned. All but two of the USAR teams were demobilized on April 8th and the remaining two teams are scheduled to demobilize on April 12th and are under review. These teams included structural support engineers that provided training and assistance in responding to structural failures within several buildings.
- Dump trucks, support team, and loaders supporting snow removal flexed from 10 trucks and one loader to 44 trucks and three loaders, plus support from Town resources. The last day of operations was April 7.
- A series of hand crews were provided to assist with fire hydrant clearing and critical facility and easement shoveling. These resources were demobilized earlier. We used these crews to prepare a stockpile of approximately 7500+/- sandbags ready for use by the community to address flooding issues that may occur as the snow melts.
- Law enforcement support was provided to the Town largely due to the loss of access to local resources due to the closure of Highway 395. This resource was previously demobilized.

Other actions taken by the Town during the emergency include providing staff resources to the Emergency Operations Team (Finance, Safety and PIO support) as well as being regular participants. Town staff and resources were deployed to complete the final rescue of people stranded on Benton Crossing Road. Town staff and equipment assisted in clearing Highway 203 through Town. We coordinated with the USFS to open an alternative snow storage pit. We provided logistical support (Food and Lodging) and secured operational space for the CalOES teams stationed in Town. We provided assistance to the schools and worked with them on the use of facilities, and assisted with logistics for Red Cross personnel as they managed the local shelter for a period of time. We provided logistical support for added law enforcement officers assigned to Mammoth Lakes. We provided emergency housing for those injured in one of the local explosions. Town coordinated and funded the emergency cleanup of the areas impacted by the two explosions in Town. We set up a call center and ongoing system to receive and respond to calls of residents with concerns over structural issues. Additional staff resources have been committed on duty and/or on standby throughout this emergency and is continuing. Several Town employees have taken on additional roles and responsibilities to assist where needed, from filling sandbags, managing traffic, work coordination, answering phones and addressing requests for information, and responding to specific incidents. Overall, Town staff has provided and continues to provide assistance to the community, responders, and coordination with other local partners as we work together through this emergency.

The ongoing impact of the emergency includes responding to propane leaks and structural failures. MLFPD, AmeriGas, and others as needed are responding to propane leaks and reported structural failures. The Town has developed a program for responding to and inspecting buildings with structural damage and to tag the building as red (unsafe), yellow (limited area unsafe), or green (generally safe). Staff has developed a formal program to address inspections, notification, and defining next steps to address the safety of the structures. Staff will provide a more detailed update as part of this report at the Council meeting. To prepare for the needs of the community through the Town's permitting process, we are recommending the hiring of additional part-time staff and outside firms to ensure the timely review and issuance of building permits. This will include a substantial amount of administrative time and support as well as professional assistance.

The Town provided \$200,000 in financial support to the Mammoth Mountain Community Foundation (MMCF) to assist with snow removal and meeting other immediate needs of community members. The funding matched funds from Mammoth Mountain Ski Area and ALTERRA. The focus is on local homeowners. While headway has been made, and continues, the lack of qualified contractors to support these efforts has limited some work. Staff are working with Mammoth Lakes Housing (MLH) and Mammoth Mountain Ski Area to secure short-term emergency housing for those evacuated from their homes due to structural damage. Staff is recommending initial funding to MLH of up to \$100,000 to assist with securing short-term housing. This is an immediate and growing public need to assist low-income households secure housing to keep local employees in the area, to provide stability for school aged children, and meet basic needs of these residents. Staff is requesting Council concurrence to proceed with a grant agreement with MLH for this purpose.

Staff is also working on details for a small business grant program to offset some of the financial impacts incurred by small businesses due to cost of snow removal incurred from this extreme

weather event. The grant program is being developed as a streamlined program like the one used during the COVID 19 emergency. This program is targeted to reduce the potential closure of businesses, reduce the potential layoff of employees, to reduce any potential damages to buildings from remaining snow removal needs and to improve access, parking, and flow of traffic in parking areas. Staff are recommending an initial funding level of up to \$500,000. Staff is requesting Council concurrence to proceed with this grant program. Staff is finalizing the structure of the program and will do outreach to the business community as soon as it is ready.

Staff will continue to compile damage estimates for Town facilities to be submitted for cost recovery and will compile expenditures related to response costs. We are working with CalOES to set up a one-day local assistance center for the public to gain information on various programs that may provide assistance to local residents and businesses. The details of when, where and who all will be there are still in progress.

We are also working on an emergency street repair contract to address several sections of failed streets and several potholes. The goal is to have this work done as soon as possible this spring. As noted above, we are preparing for potential flooding issues by having sandbags available and checking to ensure storm drains are cleared. The current snow conditions will make it more difficult to trace any early flooding as the snow tends to redirect the flowing water from normal patterns. Staff is aware of several areas that typically have flooding issues and encourage homeowners/businesses to begin preparing now with sandbags and continued snow removal or clearing of channels to direct water around properties. We are not anticipating flooding related to Town secured snow storage areas. For the next week, the National Weather Service was not forecasting flooding in streams, etc. in our area. Other parts of Mono and Inyo Counties may see elevated flows and some flooding.