

TOWN COUNCIL STAFF REPORT

Title: Acceptance of 22/23 Winter Storms After Action Report

Meeting Date: May 15, 2024

Prepared by: Haislip Hayes, PE Public Works Director

RECOMMENDATION:

- Accept the 22/23 Winter Storms After Action Report

BACKGROUND:

The winter storms of 22/23 triggered disruptions throughout the region and caused significant damage to private and public infrastructure. The regional response to the 2023 winter storm emergency was substantial and required coordination with the Town of Mammoth Lakes, Mono County, Inyo County, and the City of Bishop. Response efforts also included local fire departments and State agencies. The coordinated response included the use of shared resources including a State Incident Management Team and significant out of area resources. The management of the disaster evolved through several iterations to best respond to the needs of the community. The Town desired to document and analyze the actions taken to better understand successes and deficiencies in order to better respond to future incidents. In September of 2023 Staff proposed hiring Constant Associates, a consultant with national expertise in developing After-Action Reports (AAR). The Town Council authorized execution of this contract which was finalized and signed in mid-October. Work on the document started shortly after.

ANALYSIS/DISCUSSION:

The AAR captures the nature of the incident and actions taken by the region focusing on the Town of Mammoth Lakes and our partners. The AAR is a call to action which encourages the Town to take proactive measures to mitigate future risks from extreme winter events. Development of the document occurred in measured steps managed by the consultant and the Town's core leadership team that included: Dan Holler, Rob Patterson, Haislip Hayes, Dan Casabian, Stuart Brown, and Ales Tomaier. Constant started the process by delivering to the Town project management and quality assurance and control plans. Constant used a multi-pronged approach to collect information utilizing a variety of methods, including a documentation review, surveys, debriefings, and interviews. The gathered data was organized and coded to ensure thorough synthesis and inclusion in the report.

In mid-December 2023 the Consultant hosted a series of in person facilitated discussions. The discussions included a wide range of participants and each conversation focused on a specific topic such as propane, building issues, or snow removal. While compiling and organizing this data the Consultant held targeted interviews to better understand specific issues and fill in gaps. The consultant developed and solicited survey

responses from several public and private groups. There were specific surveys targeting hospital staff and the business community through the Chamber of Commerce. In total, 29 agencies and organizations participated in the process. Staff is grateful for the strong support of this project.

The community response and support in developing the 22/23 winter storms AAR aided in the comprehensive overview of the Town's response and recovery efforts during the emergency. Rather than listing all activities conducted in response to the winter storms, the report focuses on major strengths and areas for improvement and provides recommendations relevant to future emergency responses. The AAR includes an Improvement Plan outlining a strategy for strengthening emergency management capabilities. Additionally, there is an executive summary, background information and methodologies, a comprehensive timeline of events, various statistics, and conclusions. The document organizes findings into eight key themes. Each theme is ordered to include a summary, strengths, areas for improvements, and improvement actions. The key themes are Town leadership and management, public information and messaging, social services and sheltering, visitation and business impacts, fire and public safety response, transportation and snow removal, building and structural issues, and propane/utility issues. The improvement areas were used to generate the Improvement Plan.

The Improvement Plan was developed to assist the Town of Mammoth Lakes in implementing the recommended improvement actions identified in the 2022-23 Winter Storms After-Action Report. While the Town has made significant strides in learning from the impacts of the 2022-23 Winter Storm season, the recovery and improvement process is ongoing. Special consideration must be given to prioritizing the improvement recommendations and the time frames for their full implementation, taking into account the availability of necessary resources and support. It is important to note that the Town may not be able to fully accomplish every improvement action listed here, and programmatic goals and resource availability over time may necessitate changes or revisions. Therefore, the Improvement Plan should be reviewed regularly to document the progress of the recommended improvement actions and adjust as needed. Finally, the Town should ensure the key elements of the Improvement Plan are included in the forthcoming Hazard Mitigation Plan.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS:

The Town set aside \$180,000 to complete the report. At the time Staff anticipated that other regional partners would participate in the development of the report. Ultimately, these agencies decided to go in a different direction. The Town executed a contract for \$75,000 to cover the development of the report and improvement plan. The Town intends to execute a \$4,950 change order to translate the document into Spanish. Staff anticipates the final cost of the document will be \$79,950.