

Public Heath, Safety and Public Works:

August 4, 2026, 5:45-6:00, Harvey Hearing Room

Committee members present:

Suzanne Swope, Chair, Paul Riordan, Vice Chair, Marty Finn, Member

Guests:

Tony Marino, Martin Pillsbury

Minutes:

Hopefully the Zoom transcript will be posted to support the minutes.

The Zoom meeting can be found under the Finance Committee meeting posted on August 4, 2026. Apparently Zoom was not set for a separate meeting.

The Committee supported the Financial Mitigation Plan with the caveats that were presented to the Town Manager. We believe that this team effort will hopefully help us to be hopefully put us in a more advantageous position to acquire state and federal grants funding. Attached are the memorandums that were sent back and forth to Tony and Martin.

TOWN OF WINTHROP
TOWN COUNCIL
Committee on Public Health, Safety and Public Works

TO: Anthony Marino, Town Manager
FROM: Suzanne Swope, Vice President, Town Council (Precinct 4); Chair, Committee on Public Health, Safety and Public Works
CC: Members, Committee on Public Health, Safety and Public Works; James Letterie, President, Town Council
DATE: August 3, 2026
RE: Hazard Mitigation Plan, 2026 Update — Follow-Up on Staff Responses to Committee Questions

Tony,

Thank you, and please extend the Committee's thanks to DPW and the Hazard Mitigation Planning Team, for the written responses to the Committee's prepared questions on the 2026 Hazard Mitigation Plan update. Several responses fully resolved the underlying question. In particular, the survey finding that the Lewis Lake drain culvert invert sits above the lake floor is exactly the kind of engineering fact the Committee was seeking, and it closes the dredging question. Likewise, the commitment to bring a proposed stormwater fee to the Town Council during the FY28 budget process, tied to the Tileston and Girdlestone repair projects, is a concrete, dateable commitment that I intend to have reflected in the Committee's minutes.

A handful of items warrant follow-up before, or as part of, the Committee's hearing on the Plan. I have set them out below in the order of the original questions. None of these is intended to slow adoption; to the contrary, item 1 argues for adopting promptly.

1. BRIC — Timing and Target Funding Cycle (Question 2)

The response indicates that staff is awaiting Plan adoption and "the Fall 2026 BRIC application process." I want to make sure we are working from a shared understanding of the program's current posture. Following the March 6, 2026 federal court enforcement order, FEMA restarted BRIC and released a combined FY2024–2025 Notice of Funding Opportunity on March 25, 2026, with approximately \$1 billion available. The application period for that NOFO closed on July 23, 2026.

Two questions follow. First, did staff evaluate submitting the Morton/Banks package (or the seawall work) under the FY2024–25 NOFO, and if the timing of Plan adoption was the disqualifying constraint, the Committee should understand that clearly — it is a strong argument for the Council to act on adoption without delay. Second, can staff confirm the specific NOFO being targeted this fall (FEMA has been directed to make FY2025 and FY2026 funding available), and the anticipated application window, so the Committee can align the adoption calendar accordingly? A project must appear in an adopted Hazard Mitigation Plan to be eligible, so the sequencing here is squarely within the Council's control.

I would also note that the restored program's scoring rubric weights construction readiness at 30 of 100 points. That strongly supports the approach described in the response to Question 1 — completing the engineering for the Morton Street culvert structures, piping, and backflow preventers now — and I would encourage staff to frame that design work in the next Capital Investment Plan explicitly as grant-readiness investment.

2. Community Rating System (Question 6)

The response identifies the Town Manager as floodplain administrator and speaks to individual first-floor elevation, but it does not answer the question asked, which concerns the Town's participation class in the NFIP Community Rating System. CRS class improvements discount flood insurance premiums for every NFIP policyholder in Winthrop — not only owners who elevate — and with 153 repetitive loss properties townwide, this is among the few measures in the Plan that returns money directly to residents. I request a written response before the hearing addressing: (a) Winthrop's current CRS class, if enrolled; (b) the class staff proposes to target during this plan cycle; (c) the estimated aggregate premium reduction for Winthrop policyholders at that class; (d) the staffing and documentation burden of the application; and (e) whether the \$20,000 per year shown in Table 57 is a realistic implementation figure.

3. Critical Facilities — Senior Center and Bayou Street Substation (Question 7)

I appreciate the clarification that the Middle/High School first-floor elevation sits above the floodplain elevation. With respect, however, sandbags and comparable preventative measures are not an adequate long-term answer for the Senior Center, given the population it serves and its placement in both the FEMA AE zone and projected sea level rise inundation areas. I ask that staff consider whether a facility-level floodproofing measure for the Senior Center should be restored to the mitigation strategy, even if unfunded in year one, so that it is grant-eligible during this plan cycle.

The response did not address the power substation in the Bayou Street local flood area. I recognize this is utility infrastructure rather than a Town asset; the question is what coordination is occurring, or should occur, with the utility regarding flood protection at that location, and whether the Plan should carry a coordination measure to that effect.

4. Stormwater System — Capital Programming of the I&I Replacement Work (Question 3)

The engineering rationale in the response — upsizing and replacing original push-joint clay pipe to address inflow and infiltration before layering on backflow devices at outfall tie-ins — is sound and well taken. My follow-up is programmatic rather than technical: I ask that the system replacement effort appear as an identified line in the next Capital Investment Plan, with annual targets (linear feet replaced, outfalls retrofitted as improvements tie in) so that the Council can track progress across budget cycles rather than encountering the work project-by-project.

5. Evacuation Planning — Measure U Deliverable (Question 9)

Thank you for the reference to the Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan and for the outreach to Boston on signal coordination at Saratoga and Bennington Streets. The remaining question is what Measure U is intended to produce during this plan cycle — a signed protocol with DCR, MassDOT, and Boston, a study, a tabletop exercise, or some combination — and how Point Shirley access via Deer Island factors into that work. I would also welcome the connection the response to item 17 suggests: if a Mary Kelly Parkway extension to East Boston could be designed to permit vehicular access during

emergencies, that bears directly on our dual-egress vulnerability and should be cross-referenced in Measure U.

6. Annual Progress Reporting (Question 12)

I accept the point that the adoption resolution language is prescribed by FEMA and should not be modified. However, nothing prevents the Council from adopting a separate companion motion — the same evening — requesting an annual written progress report to this Committee with a short set of measurable indicators: outfalls retrofitted, seawall/berm linear feet completed, grant applications filed and awarded, and CRS class. This preserves the FEMA template while putting the accountability commitment on the record as a Council action rather than an internal goal. I intend to offer such a motion at the hearing and would welcome your office's input on the indicator list beforehand; my aim is a report your staff can produce from records already kept, not a new reporting burden.

If it would be more efficient, I am glad to receive the responses to items 1 through 5 in writing in advance of the hearing so that hearing time can focus on the Plan itself and the adoption calendar. Thank you again to you and to the departments involved — the quality of the underlying responses made this a short list.

Respectfully,

Suzanne Swope

Vice President, Winthrop Town Council — Precinct 4 Councilor

Chair, Committee on Public Health, Safety and Public Works