

**Hampton Roads Planning District Commission
Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) Committee Meeting
Summary Minutes of February 5, 2025**

The February 5, 2025 meeting of the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) Committee was called to order at 11:30 am. by CAO Committee Chair Mary Bunting at the Apex Room located at 555 Belaire Avenue in Chesapeake, Virginia.

CAO Committee Members in Attendance

Alan Archer	Newport News
Mary Bunting, Chair	Hampton
Steven Carter	Portsmouth
Patrick Duhaney	Virginia Beach
Randy Keaton	Isle of Wight County
Al Moor	Suffolk
Rosylen Oglesby	Franklin
Chris Price, Vice-Chair	Chesapeake
Pat Roberts	Norfolk
Melissa Rollins	Surry County
William Saunders	Windsor
Michael Stallings	Smithfield
Carol Steele	Gloucester County
Scott Stevens	James City County
Brian Thrower	Southampton County
Andrew Trivette	Williamsburg
Randy Wheeler	Poquoson

Executive Director:

Robert Crum

Others Recorded Attending:

Ron Carlee	Old Dominion University
Greg Grootendorst	HRPDC
Whitney Katchmark	HRPDC
Diane Kaufman	Senator Tim Kaine
Ben McFarlane	HRPDC
Renee McKinna	All Hazards Advisory Committee, Vice-Chair
Brenda Roberts	Representative Jen Kiggans
Sara Ruch	All Hazards Advisory Committee, Chair
John Sadler	HRPDC
Tammy Sommer	HRPDC
Eric Walberg	HRPDC

Approval of Agenda

Mr. Crum requested that the CAO Committee adjust the order of the agenda and move Mr. McFarlane's briefing on Resilient Design Standards to the first business item on the agenda. The Committee concurred and approved the agenda as amended.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the November 6, 2024 CAO Committee meeting were approved as presented.

Resilient Design Standards

Mr. McFarlane briefed the Committee on the Resilient Design Standards that were endorsed by the HRPDC. He noted that the design standards are guidelines that can be adopted based on local needs and considerations in each locality. The guidelines consider both sea level rise and changing precipitation patterns, and the precipitation projects take climate change trends into account. He noted that the standards will be posted to the HRPDC website with associated maps also posted to HRGEO. In response to a question, Mr. McFarlane noted that development and engineering consultants in the region are discussing these standards with their clients. He noted that decisions on the application of standards often depend on several factors, including project location and flooding risk.

The CAOs held a discussion on the Resilient Design Standards, including the following items:

- The Design Standards provide a comprehensive set of guidelines that can be used as a cafeteria menu that each locality can choose from to meet their specific needs.
- Overall, the CAOs are supportive of the standards but recognized challenging concerns about housing costs. Costs have gone up for stormwater management and flood prevention, and these costs are added to the price of housing.
- It is important to monitor General Assembly actions that enhance state control over local decision-making.
- A good place to start might be with local government facilities that can serve as examples of best practices for the development community.
- Working together as a region on this issue will be important.

All Hazards Advisory Committee (AHAC) Sheltering and Preparedness

Mr. Sadler provided an overview of a proposed request for the State to provide enhanced support for emergency sheltering efforts in the Hampton Roads region. Mr. Crum reminded CAO members that this item was discussed at the last HRPDC meeting, and the Commission forwarded this topic to the CAOs with a request that they provide direction on this item. He noted that Mr. Sadler was joined by All Hazards Advisory Committee (AHAC) Chair Sara Ruch from James City County and AHAC Vice-Chair Renee McKinna from Virginia Beach.

Mr. Sadler noted that a study completed by the Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM) found that Hampton Roads has a deficit of shelter space. The AHAC recommends that the CAOs make the following request for State assistance:

- Funding to increase shelter capacity
- Enhanced State funding for VDEM to reduce dependency on Federal grants
- Improve shelter staffing

It was noted that our region is not receiving needed cooperation and support from the State on shelter preparedness. In particular, Hampton Roads is having a difficult time identifying a sufficiently large building on the Peninsula for shelter use. Christopher Newport University is the primary facility of interest with William and Mary also containing some buildings that could work for this purpose. It was also noted, based on experience with previous events and difficulty in partnering with the State, that enhanced regional coordination among localities may be advisable.

Several CAOs noted that the message to the State needs to be that it is beyond the capabilities of the localities to successfully respond to a major disaster without significant State support. It was also noted that the State has asked localities to work with communities to the west on evacuation plans and sheltering. This is another reason why increased State support is needed.

Following this discussion, the CAO Committee unanimously agreed to authorize the CAO Committee Chair and Vice-Chair to send correspondence to State leadership (Governor, Lieutenant Governor, and Hampton Roads Caucus) requesting increased assistance from the Commonwealth on Emergency Sheltering and Preparedness.

Roadway Flooding Sensors

Mr. Crum noted that the CAOs have received previous briefings on our Roadway Flooding Sensor project and that staff were asking for input on how to expand this pilot program in the region.

Ms. Katchmark provided a synopsis of the Flooding Sensor Pilot project, noting that Xylem was the project consultant, and the pilot effort resulted in the installation and monitoring of twenty sensors. Two types of sensors were tested: pressure level sensors and radar sensors. The pilot project found that the pressure sensors have been difficult to work with, while the radar sensors are less expensive and less subject to damage. The data from the sensors is monitored and shared on the Waze application platform for use by the public.

Staff are currently evaluating two possible funding sources to support the next phase of work. The Community Flood Preparedness Fund, a State grant through the Department of Conservation and Recreation, requires a 50 percent local match, and the Federal “Protect” grant program requires a 20 percent match.

In response to a question, Ms. Katchmark noted that the cost to expand to 50 sensors would be about \$240,000. Although the HRPDC will not know if the State grant is approved until next fall, the plan is to provide the local match through the HRPDC Coastal Resilience Fund. The funding would allow the purchase of equipment and would cover the costs for three years of maintenance. After that initial three-year time frame, the HRPDC would request that the localities hosting the sensors take over the annual maintenance costs at a price of \$900 per sensor per year. Ms. Katchmark asked if there was general agreement with this approach, and the CAO Committee agreed that this was a good path forward.

A question was raised about any challenges with rights of way (ROW) and locality policies on the installation of sensors in the ROWs. Discussion occurred about the differing approaches that have been encountered in various localities and the need for better coordination at the local level. The CAOs agreed that a specific point of contact needs to be identified for each locality and that localities also need to provide input on the location of future sensors as we build out the regional network.

Items of Regional Interest

During a roundtable discussion, the CAOs shared items of regional interest and reported on developments at the General Assembly of local and regional interest.

Other Business

It was noted that the next scheduled meeting will be held on April 2, 2025 at 11:30 a.m. and will be hosted by Surry County.

Adjournment

With no other business to come before the CAO Committee, the meeting adjourned at approximately 1:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Robert A. Crum, Jr.