

Newtok Planning Group

March 29, 2024 Meeting Notes

I. BLESSING

Della Carl, Newtok Village Council (NVC) offered the blessing.

II. WELCOME/REVIEW OF AGENDA

Sally Russell Cox with the Division of Community and Regional Affairs (DCRA) asked attendees to review the agenda. No changes were requested. Jason Whipple, DCRA, summarized housekeeping details and safety procedures.

III. INTRODUCTIONS

Ninety-eight people attended the meeting, including 47 in-person attendees and 51 virtual attendees from 29 agencies and organizations. The attendee list is attached at the end of the meeting notes (beginning on page 16).

IV. COMMUNITY UPDATE

Christina Waska, the new Newtok Village Council Relocation Coordinator, provided an overview of where the relocation effort is now and some of the key issues being faced at Newtok and Mertarvik. Christina showed a graphic of a timeline of the relocation effort to date. Christina shared photos of the lifestyle at Mertarvik, including ice-fishing. She described the difficulties in not having laundry facilities at Mertarvik due to issues with the power generator's capacity. She said she had to bring her laundry with her to Anchorage to wash. She said the loss of power was accentuated by the very cold temperatures, -30 to -65 degrees, experienced at Mertarvik. Power outages kept the community from having communications outside the village because cellular and Internet services don't work. The central water system also stopped working because it was so cold. Mertarvik residents relied on their woodstoves to stay warm. However, 6-9 homes are without woodstoves. Carolyn George noted that without power, the kids are missing out on education. There's no running water at the school, food can't be served. To fuel their woodstoves, residents have to haul cut trees by snow machine from Marshall or Russian Mission or they haul driftwood from the Bering Sea coast, a 6-hour trip that takes a great deal of snow machine fuel.

Construction of the new school has begun, but because there is no power, this has resulted in delays in installing the new school pilings. The man camp has flushing toilets, running water, and washing machines, but the residents must use recycled water to do their laundry, and they are still hauling honey buckets. Having an arctic entry is crucial, but some of the new homes don't have them.

There are 100 people still living on the Newtok side and the NVC is trying to find temporary housing so everyone can move from Newtok. Most of the homes at Mertarvik are overcrowded with multiple generations living in each house.

Identified Issues and Needs

1. Washing laundry is a huge issue due to the power generator's lack of capacity. Water must be recycled; power outages cause the central water system to freeze and homes to go without power.

2. Power outages prevent the community from communicating outside the village (Mertarvik and Newtok) because cellular and Internet services don't work.
3. Without power, children are missing out on education at both Mertarvik and Newtok. There is no running water at the school, and food can't be served.
4. Six to 9 homes need woodstoves. Getting wood for the woodstoves is a challenge because residents have to haul cut trees by snow machine from Marshall or Russian Mission or they haul driftwood from the Bering Sea coast, a 6-hour trip that takes a great deal of snow machine fuel.
5. Homes need an Arctic entry to provide a transition between the elements and the interior of the home.

V. INTRODUCTION TO NEWTOK VILLAGE COUNCIL'S RELOCATION PROJECT MANAGER

Tracy McKeon with RESPEC was recently hired by the NVC as the project manager for the relocation to Mertarvik and the decommissioning of Newtok. Tracy provided a brief introduction and expressed her eagerness to work with the NVC on the relocation effort.

VI. AGENCY PROJECT UPDATES + CRITICAL ISSUES DISCUSSION

POWER DISTRIBUTION

POWER OUTAGES

Dillon Willis and Rob Tingstrom with Northern Generation and Power explained why the power outages at Mertarvik have been occurring and what is needed to resolve them.

Dillon Willis reported that the power plant at Mertarvik is comprised of three generators - two backup 65-kw generators and a primary 180-kw generator which hasn't been working for a couple of years but will soon be replaced with a new 230-kw generator. That unit should be online sometime this week, depending on the weather. Mertarvik is currently running on the two 65-kw backup generators, which are completely undersized for the current demand of the community, which is why power outages keep happening. These backup generators will need to be upsized as well as the step-up transformer bank that feeds power to the community. In addition, Mertarvik has new power plant operators who will benefit from training in operation maintenance practices.

Rob Tingstrom reported that on his last visit to Mertarvik, he began installing the new 230-kw generator. He returned to Anchorage to fabricate some parts, but he will return to Mertarvik to complete the installation. The 230-kw generator should be sufficient to power the entire community for now. The man camp is running on its own power currently, so it isn't impacting the demand on the community generators.

The big issue is that the population at Mertarvik has grown very rapidly over the past two years and the community is going to continue to grow, so if there is an issue with generator #1 (the 230 - kw generator), backup generator #2 and 3 will not be able to carry the load for the community. These generators will need to be replaced with generators that can carry an equal load to generator #1, so if it has issues, the backup generators can pick up the load in the interim. The 230-kw generator is a temporary solution on its own.

Calvin Tom noted that the NVC would like to do a complete upgrade of the Mertarvik power plant to make sure they are ahead of additional growth. Daniel Maczynski with the Lower Kuskokwim School District (LKSD) noted that the LKSD planned to use prime power (separate from the community power) for the new Mertarvik school. Jennifer Robinette, BIA Branch of Tribal Climate Resilience, inquired if the transformers would need to be upgraded. Dillon responded that the step-up transformers that distribute power to the entire community are undersized and will need to be enlarged, not immediately, but when the backup generators are replaced in the power plant.

Identified Issues and Needs

6. Fund and implement a complete upgrade of the Mertarvik power plant to make sure the community is ahead of additional population growth at Mertarvik.
7. Provide training on operation and maintenance practices to the new power plant operators at Mertarvik.

FISCAL IMPACTS OF FUNDING POWER PLANTS AT TWO COMMUNITIES

Stefani Dalrymple, NVC accountant with Yukon Accounting discussed the impact of the NVC having to fund power plants for two different communities has had on the NVC's finances. Yukon Accounting began working with Ungusraq Power Company in 2021. Prior to this, Yukon did not have access to the power company's records. Since the relocation of the first residents from Newtok to Mertarvik in October 2019, the NVC has been paying for two power plants to support residents at both Newtok and Mertarvik. This has created an untenable situation for the tribe's finances and has forced the NVC to dip into deferred revenue to sustain the electric company because shutting off the power plant on the Newtok side is not an option, given the number of residents still living there. Stefani has raised this issue at several meetings over the past two years, but nothing has been done and the deficit has continued to increase. As an example of the added strain on the NVC's resources, Stefani noted that running only one power plant for 200 people uses as much fuel as a power plant for 100 people, so the NVC is now paying twice the cost to run two power plants to serve residents at both Newtok and Mertarvik.

Dillon Willis concurred with Stefani. He stated that as people have moved from Newtok to Mertarvik, the load on the Newtok power plant has decreased, but the fuel demand for the generator has remained the same, due to its size (roughly 200 KW) and the fact that it runs 24-7. In addition, maintenance wear and tear and costs on the Newtok side are as high as on the Mertarvik side.

Warren Nicolai said that when the LKSD was designing the new Mertarvik school, they weren't sure what size generator the village of Mertarvik was going to have. Because of this, the LKSD decided to go with prime power. Prime power is when the school produces its own power, independent of the community power system. The LKSD likes to try to hook up the school power to the community power system because it provides an opportunity to invest in the community by paying the community for the school power, and it's less expensive overall. But at Mertarvik, the School will be running its own generator.

Dillon Willis said the school generators are built and designed to run 24-7 continuously. They're not standby-rated units, so they're much more robust and will last considerably longer than a standard generator. Warren Nicolai added that the design fees to design a backup power generator versus a

prime power generator are very different, and they cost more.

Grant Todd, an audit partner with Alton Rogers and Company, a CPA firm in Anchorage, discussed the current and potential impacts on Newtok's audit status due to the power funding deficit. He reiterated Stefani's concern that power costs are quickly burning through the NVC's cash.

Sally Russell Cox stated that the situation created by having to power two communities simultaneously and not the NVC's fault. It is a situation they've been forced into, and it's the direct result of an incremental relocation in which the NVC is forced to fund two separate communities at the same time. The resulting impact on the NVC's finances is an unintended consequence of relocation. Other communities who relocate incrementally will be faced with a similar situation. Sally urged meeting participants to put their heads together to help Newtok resolve this situation. As Calvin Tom stated, the solution is to help everybody move out of Newtok over to Mertarvik and then close down the Newtok power plant. This is hard information to hear. However, it's important information because it's part of the relocation process that nobody really understood.

Identified Needs and Concerns

1. Resolve the \$1.4 million funding deficit the NVC is currently facing.
2. Help the remaining residents at Newtok move to Mertarvik (hopefully before the fall storm season) and close down the Newtok power plant.

VII. FEMA TO TRIBE DIRECT AWARDS FROM THE BUILDING RESILIENT INFRASTRUCTURE AND COMMUNITIES (BRIC) PROGRAM

Molly Parkan, Alaska Tribal Section Chief for the Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) at FEMA Region 10, provided an overview of the awards Newtok has received through FEMA's BRIC and Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM) Programs.

The NVC applied for subgrants through the BRIC Program that are currently under review. There are five pre-existing subgrants that the NVC was awarded through FEMA's PDM Program, which was the program that preceded the BRIC Program.

There were two sub-awards for the preparation of a total of 36 housing pads at Mertarvik. The work funded by these two awards has been completed. These are listed in the agenda as:

- **2020 Resilient Home Mitigation**
- **2021 Resilient Home Mitigation Newtok to Mertarvik Relocation**

Molly noted that she doesn't have the current status on the three other grants or whether these projects have been completed; however, she will share the full grant scope of work with the NVC and figure out the status.

There was an award for resilient water systems which was to install four wells and provide water distribution lines to homes:

- **2020 Resilient Water Systems**

There was a grant for resilient power distribution mitigation, which provided power, distribution lines, power poles, and transformers from the existing power grid to homes and buildings.

- **2021 Resilient Power Distribution Mitigation Newtok to Mertarvik Relocation**

There was also a grant for a washeteria which was to provide four washers and dryers. A building for the washeteria, four restrooms, and four showers, which doesn't appear to have been completed yet. At the last status check, FEMA received, the washeteria was in the design phase in 2022.

- **2021 Resilient Washeteria Mitigation Newtok to Mertarvik Relocation**

Molly noted the several awards the NVC applied for through the BRIC are non-disaster grants which move very slowly. The applications are for a fourth-generation power system in the form of a solar and battery system connected to the grid. Those grants are under review right now. The BRIC is a nationally competitive grant program and so, realistically, if those are selected, it would be a year and a half at the very soonest before those funds would be available.

Identified Needs and Concerns:

1. Determine what work has been done on each PDM grant, what the next steps are, and what reporting may be due.

VIII. NEWTOK AND MERTARVIK SCHOOLS

Daniel Maczynski and Warren Nicolai with the Lower Kuskokwim School District reported. Daniel reported that Phase One of the Mertarvik school has been completed with the piles for the school being installed. The contractors are staying in the existing man camp at Mertarvik. They are using minimum power, only for heat. They are using honey buckets and haven't been able to show, which has been very difficult because they are mixing concrete. Daniel thinks the contractors will be running out of water soon. They had water stored in a tank on-site; however, if the water plant at Mertarvik isn't up and running, it will force the contractors to put a halt to work.

The LKSD just went out to bid for Phase Two of the school project, and Bethel Federal-Unit JV, a joint venture between Bethel Federal Services (a subsidiary company of Bethel Native Corporation) and Unit Company, was selected. Bethel Federal-Unit JV will be building the superstructure of the school, the bulk fuel tank farm, and demolishing the remainder of the Newtok school. The estimated completion date of the school at Mertarvik is July 2026.

Daniel said that in the second phase, the LKSD had to value-engineer the demolition and soil remediation of the old BIA school at Newtok. When the LKSD had a renovation, addition, or new school construction project, they tried to incorporate demolition of BIA school sites, but that funding had to be removed in order to proceed with the new school construction at Mertarvik.

Daniel asked if there was a plan to decommission the remaining buildings and infrastructure at Newtok once everyone had moved to Mertarvik.

Warren Nicolai reported that last year he had the design team do a site characterization of the old BIA school site because there are known fuel spill areas there. The buildings are ready to fall, they're off of their foundations, and they're full of asbestos.

Sally responded that decommissioning has been listed as the final phase of the relocation process; however, to her knowledge, it hasn't been planned out yet.

NOTE: There are some very preliminary reports relating to decommissioning on the Newtok Planning Group website:

- [2015 Newtok Environmental Site Inventory & Assessment \(NESI&A\) Part I: Hazardous Materials Inventory](#)
- [2015 NESI&A Part I: Hazardous Materials Inventory - Appendices A-B](#)
- [2015 NESI&A Part I: Hazardous Materials Inventory - Appendices C-D](#)
- [2015 NESI&A Part I: Hazardous Materials Inventory - Appendix E](#)
- [2015 NESI&A Part II: Assessment](#)
- [2015 NESI&A Part II: Figure 1](#)

Daniel reported that the school in Newtok has been without power for a while. Both generators that were running at the Newtok school are down. The LKSD is not going to be able to get it back up and running before the end of May, and the other one needs a whole new fuel package to replace. It doesn't look like it's going to happen before the school is closed down and demolished this summer.

Sally raised two concerns:

- How would the school-aged children still living at Newtok be schooled?
- In addition, the school has always served as the evacuation shelter during fall storm season. Without any provisional housing for people to move over to the Mertarvik side, residents are going to continue living in Newtok during the fall storm season without any emergency shelter.

Dawn Lloyd, the principal at the Newtok School, stated that with the latest group of people moving over to houses that have been allotted in Mertarvik, it looks like we're going to have probably around 8 to 10 students left in Newtok. Keeping the school open is not an option; it's going to fall into the river very soon. The LKSD is hoping the remaining school-aged children can stay with family and friends at Mertarvik.

DeWayne Cooper asked about the recent funding that went to Newtok and what the justification was for not building any homes this year. Christina Waska responded that she and Calvin Tom, the new tribal administrator, were hired two months too late to order supplies. The planning, design, and ordering of materials had not taken place.

Daniel stated that GCI had contacted the NVC about applying for a grant to have a fiber optic hookup at the school. DeWayne asked if the LKSD could apply for the GCI grant on behalf of the NVC. Daniel said he would look into it. His contact at GCI was Rebecca Markley. She oversees the rural fiber program at GCI, and the grant is the RUS Grant.

Bosco Carl said that he was a teacher at the Newtok School, and he really struggled with helping the children in a remote learning situation. He was very concerned about the loss of education time for any children still living in Newtok.

Identified Needs and Concerns:

1. Issues related to operating the man camp (water/sewer) will need to be resolved to support school construction works during construction season 2024.
2. How would the school-aged children still living at Newtok be schooled? As Bosco Charles noted, Newtok students really struggled with remote learning.
3. The timeline for demolition of the Newtok school was accelerated due to an additional amount of riverbank lost during Typhoon Merbok. The school has always served as an evacuation shelter during fall storm season. Without provisional housing for people to move to the Mertarvik side, residents will continue living in Newtok during the fall storm season without any emergency shelter.

IX. MERTARVIK AND NEWTOK AIRPORTS

Aaron Hughes with the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT/PF) reported that the Mertarvik airport was completed last fall. DOT/PF Statewide Aviation made the decision to keep maintaining the old runway at Newtok as it was still needed for residents still living at Newtok. Statewide Aviation has been making this decision on a year-by-year basis. However, Aaron didn't know what the decision was for this coming year. George Carl reported that a pilot, Donald Johnson, using the Mertarvik runway expressed concern over the slope of the runway.

Identified Needs and Concerns:

1. The NVC will need to understand how long the Newtok Airport will continue to be maintained. After the NVC closes Newtok, RESPEC (project manager) will continue to work on decommissioning Newtok.
2. A pilot (Donald Johnson) was concerned about the slope of the Mertarvik runway, as reported by George Carl, which may need to be looked at.

X. HAZARD MITIGATION GRANT PROGRAM 36-HOME ACQUISITION PROJECT

Garrett Brooks, State Hazard Mitigation Officer with the Alaska Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (DHSEM), reported on the \$6.7 million, 36-home acquisition grant that was awarded to the NVC through FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) that DHSEM administers.

Garrett shared a slide with a flow chart of the project. The grant funds have been obligated, and DHSEM is in the process of writing up more documents for the drive design. They will proceed to the actual acquisition phase of the projects, including the deeding of the property, the actual demolition of the property, and the closing of everything at the end of the project.

Garrett said that an acquisition project, whether it's demolition or relocation, is probably one of the more complicated projects that FEMA funds because of all the paperwork that is involved with the process. Photos must be taken of all the homes before they are acquired and demolished. Then, photos are taken after the homes have been demolished so FEMA can see that the homes are no longer there. Because homes don't have physical addresses in Newtok, the homes will each be

described by mapping coordinates (latitude and longitude), and by acquisition cost. There is a laundry list of information needed before the project is closed out. DHSEM will be working regularly with the NVC to make sure everything is proceeding smoothly. Kim Barenburg is the HMGP project manager. She will be working with the NVC and DHSEM's two contractors, Barry Macciocca and Sage McReynolds. Barry and Sage helped develop the application several years ago, so they're intimately familiar with the project.

The project will require many environmental and historic preservation considerations that will need to be answered as it proceeds. A kick-off meeting will be held soon to explain this process. Because this is a voluntary project, DHSEM will need to make sure all the voluntary participation forms are accurate and up to date.

DeWayne Cooper said that BIA had an environmental assessment done for the Mertarvik site and asked if this could be used. Garrett explained that the award document the tribe will receive has a list of environmental considerations that have to be answered as the project proceeds. When the HMGP grant is closed out, DHSEM must report back to FEMA and ensure the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) was followed, including these questions. The environmental considerations and procurement requirements are included with the award document and will be discussed with the NVC when the kickoff meeting takes place.

Because the home acquisition project is voluntary, DHSEM will need to make sure all the voluntary participation forms are accurate and up to date.

Once a house is acquired, there is a 90-day window in which everything is removed from the house and the house must be demolished. It is possible to request an exemption if there isn't enough time to demolish the home within that period, especially considering Alaska's short construction season.

The other important thing to know is that when the homes are acquired or bought out, plans will need to be in place for where people living in those homes are going to go. The acquisition of the homes of the families moving into the seven new homes at Mertarvik could be delayed, allowing time for the families to move into the new homes first.

Barry Macciocca said that once FEMA has acquired the properties, the occupants cannot remain in the dwelling from the date the home is acquired. The community is responsible for keeping that property and has liability if anything were to happen to that property, if anyone were to be injured, if it were to be broken into, and things were stolen from, things that you would propose be able to use in a recycling process to bring the cost of demolition down. The day that FEMA acquires the property, that family has to have a place to go. It doesn't have to be their permanent location, but they have to have some place, temporary or otherwise. Another very important point is that the list of properties that FEMA has approved for home acquisitions is very specific. You cannot trade properties. If you've got 36 homes that are listed and two homeowners decide they don't want to participate, two other homeowners can't be selected to take their place. Now, I'm assuming that when this is done all of the residential properties in Newtok will be gone. You know if you're leaving any features behind. Is that right? There may be some other things left. There's not going to be any people left behind. So you shouldn't have a problem if 36 is the total number of properties that you need to acquire it. If there are more properties than were first included in the application, DHSEM will need to know about that because they may have to make a change of scope. You can't substitute, but it's possible to add homes.

Barry and Garrett explained that payment for the acquired homes goes to the homeowner, who can use the money for whatever they want. Andrew John explained that with the buyout of the first 13 homes at Newtok, the homeowners agreed to use the acquisition money as earnest money toward a new home at Mertarvik.

Because the land at Newtok is owned by Newtok Native Corporation (NNC), some deeding processes will need to take place to put the land into the homeowner's name. A caveat of the grant is that once the homes have been acquired and demolished, the land will have to be placed in open space for perpetuity.

Identified Needs and Concerns:

1. The day that FEMA acquires the property, that family has to have a place to go. It doesn't have to be their permanent location, but they have to have some place, temporary or otherwise.
2. The occupants cannot remain in the dwelling from the date the home is acquired.
3. The community is responsible for keeping that property and has liability if anything were to happen to that property, if anyone were to be injured, if it were to be broken into, and things were stolen from, things that you would propose be able to use in a recycling process to bring the cost of demolition down.
4. The list of properties that FEMA has approved for home acquisitions is very specific. You cannot trade properties.

XI. WATER/SEWER DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM

Ryan Beckett, project manager, Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium provided a written update on ANTHC's projects at Newtok and Mertarvik.

ANTHC Projects at Mertarvik:

1. **Community-Wide Piped Water and Sewer for Mertarvik:** ANTHC's cooperative project agreement with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) was executed in January 2024 with a funding expiration date of 2030. A Contract Delivery Team Project Manager was assigned, and the next step was to secure a consultant to complete the design. HDL has been working in the community and is one of the top choices to complete the design.

Status of existing sanitation facilities in the community include:

2. **Sewage lagoon:** a sewage lagoon was designed but has not been constructed. The landfill has a septage disposal site where community members are currently dumping honey buckets.
3. **Water plant:** Mertarvik has been experiencing frequent power outages. When the pump at the current water treatment plant shuts off, residents can't draw water, so they get it from the spring.
4. **Water and sewer service (membrane bioreactor treatment system) for the Mertarvik Evacuation Center (MEC) and man camps.** This system was supposed to be temporary and replaced after a year or two with a gravity sewer system.
5. **Gravity sewer system:** A gravity sewer system was designed, but not constructed. The scope includes a new wastewater pump station serving the man camps and MEC to replace the

“pioneering” membrane bioreactor system.

6. **Solid Waste Completion:** The cooperative project agreement is on hold until ANTHC receives funds from the Denali Commission.

Projects at Newtok:

1. **Washeteria Improvements:** This project is complete and in closeout.
2. **Dumpsite Closure:** A Contract Delivery Team work plan is being drafted.

Identified Needs and Concerns:

1. A gravity sewer system needs to be constructed, including a new wastewater pump station serving the man camps and MEC at Mertarvik to replace the “pioneering” membrane bioreactor system.
2. The solid waste project needs to be completed.
3. Closure of the dumpsite at Newtok needs to be completed.

XII. HOUSING

Sally Russell Cox opened up the discussion to housing, noting that no one agency or organization is currently responsible for housing at Mertarvik and there are no plans to build new housing this next construction season. The 36-home acquisition project will provide funding for property owners that could be put into new homes. Christina Waska pointed out that the housing pads need to be adequate to construct homes, and there are only 6 pads ready to build. Christina noted that homes were built on pads that had not adequately settled and walls are separating from the ceiling, or the floors are separating from the wall.

Calvin Tom stated that an inspection determined that the housing pads weren't compacted, so a housing pad redesign will be necessary. The pad needs to be settled to ensure that it has compacted sufficiently. Calvin said there are 12 housing pads available, but 6 of them need to be redesigned.

Calvin said there was an inspection report prepared, and he would look it up. And then you have to figure out how many additional housing pads are needed for the existing households that need existing homes that need to be built because I know he wants to construct. Kristin K'eit asked if it was possible to move in a man camp in one season, or how far ahead it would have to be ordered, and if it is modular, so they could be brought in on a barge, they can bring them in, and it just depends on how many were. How much are you willing to spend? How much money we can find? So that's about enough bed space for 5 homes. Calvin said they needed to think about the school project as well because there's no place for the construction work crew to stay for two years while the school is being built.

One of the meeting participants asked if there were any salvageable materials from the three original homes that were no longer habitable. The response was that they were in very bad disrepair.

A discussion ensued about the four yurts that the NVC purchased several years ago as temporary housing. It was determined that the yurts would not be an option because one was missing parts, and the remaining three would need to be weatherized. Andrew John said the NVC president was told the

yurts couldn't be used as temporary housing; they would be considered permanent housing.

Sally said there was a need for really good inventories of not only people still living at Newtok but also what resources are available. The other issue is whether the residents still living at Newtok are willing to live in transitional housing. The purpose of this meeting is to get everybody thinking seriously about the issues and needs because time is really of the essence, and the next six months are especially of the essence. I know there's money out there that's available.

Dewayne Cooper said tribal members need to determine that there will be a full transition and that everyone at Newtok needs to evacuate and go to Mertarvik. The Tribe doesn't have the money to pay for the power plant at Newtok.

Daniel Maczynski said the LKSD inspected a duplex that was offered to LKSD for teacher housing and looking at the foundation, there needs to be a beam down the center to help support the structure in the middle because it was sagging there. He was pretty sure this was happening at the other houses. The plumbing had to be completely redone so that it drains the way it should. There were numerous other issues the LKSD identified, like when you look up at the attic space, you could see daylight in the rafter. There's snow blowing in from the soffit. There aren't baffles or a soffit to restrict the airflow or snow from coming into the attic space, indicated by the presence of water in the light fixtures. Daniel heard that other houses had similar issues. There are some homes that need to be inspected again, and any new homes need a thorough inspection done by a third party moving forward.

Identified Needs and Concerns:

1. Issues with the existing housing pads at Mertarvik and the structural impacts on the homes should be evaluated and resolved.
2. It is critical to inventory the current number of residents still living at Newtok and their housing needs.
3. Transitional housing is needed for the remaining residents at Newtok to move to Mertarvik. Whatever solution is selected, the homes can't be temporary because it will be difficult to get funding for permanent homes. Available resources will need to be identified as soon as possible.

XIII. VOLUNTARY COMMUNITY-DRIVEN RELOCATION DEMONSTRATION PROJECT UPDATE

Jennifer Robinette with the BIA Affairs Branch of Tribal Climate Resilience reported that \$1.5 million of the \$25 million allocated to Newtok, \$1.5 million has been obligated so far, and a portion of that was used to pay for the project manager. The \$25 million was divided into five fiscal years. Three years into the project, the NVC now has \$15 million available to them. The next award will include \$13.5 million, which will cover the construction of the prioritized needs that Newtok identified. The first need BIA heard from Newtok was housing. What BIA is learning from this is there's a shortage of funding for housing. Secondly, federal funding is very slow. Now we're into the stage where housing was first, but now power has to be first because things change. This has been a great tool to be able to pivot and use this funding where things are falling short.

XIV. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY (EPA) COMMUNITY CHANGE GRANT PROGRAM

Tami Fordham Alaska Operations Office Director at EPA, and Jeremy Call with Logan Simpson, reported on a new effort by EPA, the Community Change Grants Program. The Community Change grants are fast federal funding that is much faster than most federal funding. The Community Change fund can support \$10 to 20 million dollars in environmental and climate justice activities that reduce pollution, increase climate resilience, and build community capacity. The technical assistance team can help Newtok prepare an application for projects that are meaningful to the community and could be constructed within a three-year timeframe. So, by 2027 they would need to be constructed and all the money spent. It's a five-month process to shape the grant application. Jeremy and the team would do two onsite community visits, and they would help to advise on the organizational needs that the grant application requires. They could help with one to three project designs with a budget for each one of those one to three projects. They would then develop a development plan, a construction timeline, a list of the permits that are needed, and a written description that can then be submitted.

In order to do that, they would work with a small committee that can help prioritize the projects. They will be looking forward to kicking that off or starting the effort with the right individuals in this room and the NVC on a kickoff call over the next few weeks. He can summarize the types of projects that are eligible for the group.

Tami Fordham pointed out that EPA has a \$150 million set aside for Alaska Tribal lands, so it's important to see applications coming in. The other thing that's really helpful is all of the technical assistance contractor providers working together behind the scenes to get this ironed out in a way that supports you through this Community Change Grants Program. This could be helpful in other efforts the community has underway. Jeremy's process needs to be wrapped up in the next couple of months.

Jeremy noted that his organization offers free technical assistance within a short timeframe. They are also helping the other Native villages of Gambel, Unalaska, Akiachak, Wales, Teller, White Mountain, Golovin, and Kipnuk. Under this program, the \$150 million set aside in Alaska does not compete against other communities in the United States.

Jeremy has been listening carefully and making a long list of potential projects that could be eligible for Newtok. Rather than go through those, Jeremy made a two-page list of things mentioned at today's meeting that need to be funded.

For the sake of time, Jeremy asked meeting participants to put their names in the chat and Tammy to capture the names in the room of those who would be interested in a kickoff call in the next two weeks, where the projects can be described, as well as the eligibility, criteria, timelines, etc., and how the technical assistance program can support Newtok.

XV. OTHER AGENCY UPDATES

DeWayne Cooper reported that BIA recently provided a number of items to Newtok Village to address emergency needs:

- The purchase of 9 woodstoves with accessories to be installed in homes that don't have them.
- Chip-burnable wood for the woodstoves.

- Water when Newtok experienced extremely cold temperatures and the central water system stopped working.
- Donation of satellite phones shipped recently so the community can communicate outside the community if the power goes down.

Matthew Jull, University of Virginia School of Architecture, said he was surprised to learn about the issues with housing because of the work done by the Cold Climate Housing Research Center on housing at Mertarvik. He stated that if there are any conversations about the design of that housing, its current state, or mediation, he would be very interested in being involved because, as a body of knowledge, he might be able to contribute and help in some way if that's helpful.

Daniel Maczynski, LKSD, said he spoke recently to Calvin Tom and that the LKSD's contractor at Mertarvik has assisted in plowing the roads and having access to the airport. The equipment stored outside got buried in snow and Daniel suggested a warehouse to store equipment. Calvin mentioned that the NVC already had a plan for that, but due to lack of funding, they couldn't complete it. This facility will be important in the future to keep equipment out of the elements and make sure it's available to plow the roads. This facility should also have a waste oil burner for when oil is changed from the equipment.

DeWayne Cooper, BIA, suggested that the LKSD might consider letting tribal members from Newtok stay in the new school temporarily. Daniel Maczynski said once the school is completed the MEC will be turned back over to the village to use for its intended purpose. Warren Nicolai stated that when the LKSD first started working on the transition from the Newtok School to the Mertarvik School, the Newtok School began as a managed retreat effort, gradually moving parts of the school away from the erosion riverbank to allow the school to be used for as long as possible. The LKSD was advised that this would be a costly effort. However, they wanted to give students at Newtok a chance to participate in school. For the LKSD's planning, the longer they're staying in Newtok, it's costing the LKSD more money to stay there.

Greg Stuckey, administrator of the Alaska HUD Office of Native American Programs, reported that he let Calvin Tom know that HUD Imminent Threat funding was available to cover the cost of three homes. That funding can be used for man camps or temporary homes; just let him know how the NVC would like to use it.

XVI. RECAP OF CRITICAL ISSUES MOVING FORWARD

Sally Russell Cox summarized some of the key issues discussed at today's meeting:

- The critical issue of power, not only the power distribution. It sounds like if the interim power is taken care of. But there's the big issue of funding. Part of that will be alleviated by being able to close down the power plant on the Newtok side. But closing down the power plant can't happen until people are able to move over to the Mertarvik side.
- We have the critical issue of housing and what to do in the interim because we've lost one construction season. So now we've got, you know people that are going to be stuck where they are not able to move over because there are no plans for new housing in the next couple of years.
- Potentially, we could do something about that housing if there was some sort of interim

transitional housing that people could move into. That would have to be done in close communication with the people still living on the Newtok side, making sure that they were in favor of that and that it was something that they wanted to do.

- The whole issue with the school, to make sure that the children are able to keep up with their schooling, because the whole process is very disruptive, and the added pressures to community systems of construction workers working at the Mertarvik site, with no place for them to stay.

We are hoping that this meeting will generate additional meetings that people will try to brainstorm solutions for. It's wonderful that there's a new project manager on board. There was a lot of information presented at this meeting, but these are important things to know because they are not going to be taken care of with no action. Many things presented at this meeting were not easy to hear about, but we have to face them, because, in order to resolve them, we have to take them on.

Sally thanked everyone for joining the meeting. This is the largest Newtok Planning Group meeting we've ever had. Sally expressed her appreciation for the strength, resilience, and courage of the people of Newtok Village and stated that it has been a privilege to know them all these long years.

NVC President Paul Charles thanked everyone for attending the meeting. He stated that everyone knows exactly where the NVC is right now, and they have a big challenge ahead. The biggest problem is electricity; with power and how they can pay for the deficit. Paul is hopeful that the NVC can get help with this. Paul said his goal is to lead this young tribal council.

Calvin Tom thanked everyone and stated that it takes a village to move a village. Seeing everyone attend the meeting, he didn't realize there was a big band of people working to help Newtok. He was looking forward to working with everyone and getting this process moving a lot faster. He believes we can do it.

Paul Charles expressed his hope that the people still living in Newtok would be able to have temporary housing before the next superstorm comes in.

Bosco Carl said he was a former teacher at Newtok. Before he resigned, he built a strong relationship with his students. He told his students he was going to resign, and they didn't want to let him go. His students were really eager to learn. Bosco expressed what great students they were and how he hoped they would stick together. With all the brainstorming, while Paul was talking, he'll see if he can get ahold of us and bring some information that can help.

Andrew John said that living conditions in the old village (Newtok) are very dire. A lot of the kids are still getting sick from raw sewage being thrown into the river. Each year, during the storms when it floods, that raw sewage is literally at residents' doors. It's unsanitary and unhealthy, and it has really weighed a lot, not just for the people who are in charge now but for the people who have to live in it every day.

Carolyn George said the kids think it's normal not to have flush toilets, and they call whoever has flush toilets "the rich people."

Della Carl said we all need to bend together as one unit.

Christina Waska stated that the community was having many power issues, and they had no communication with outside due to no Internet or cellular service. This really hurts the community's ability to move forward.

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Kristin K'eit asked if it would be possible for community members to get backup power chargers for emergencies and if anyone in the group could fund this.

The meeting was adjourned shortly after 4:30 p.m.

Meeting notes prepared by Sally Russell Cox.

In-Person Attendees

	Name	Agency
1	Andrew John	Newtok Village
2	Aurora Charles	Newtok Village Council
3	Bosco Carl	Newtok Village Council
4	Calvin Tom	Newtok Village Council
5	Carolyn George	Newtok Village Council
6	Christine Waska	Newtok Village Council
7	Della Carl	Newtok Village Council
8	George M. Carl	Newtok Village Council
9	Paul Charles	Newtok Village Council
10	Sally Russell Cox	AK DCCED/DCRA
11	Barry Macciocca	AK DMVA/DHSEM
12	Garrett Brooks	AK DMVA/DHSEM
13	John Andrews	AK DMVA/DHSEM
14	Kim Barenburg	AK DMVA/DHSEM
15	Richard Hildreth	AK DMVA/DHSEM
16	Sage McReynolds	AK DMVA/DHSEM
17	Romorenzo Marasigan	AK DOT/PF
18	Justin Tuomi	AK Energy Authority
19	Malinda Chase	AK Tribal Resilience Learning Network/AK Climate Adaptation Science Center
20	Max Neale	ANTHC Center for Environmentally Threatened Communities
21	Tricia Howe	ANTHC Center for Environmentally Threatened Communities
22	Tristan Morgan	ANTHC Center for Environmentally Threatened Communities
23	Jackie Schaeffer	ANTHC Climate Initiatives
24	Jennifer Robinette	BIA Branch of Tribal Climate Resilience
25	Jerad Anderson	BIA Branch of Tribal Climate Resilience
26	DeWayne Cooper	BIA Housing Improvement Program
27	Maria Wiseman	BIA Office of the Assistant Secretary
28	Sarah Walker	BIA Tribal Operations
29	Shirley Kelly	Economic Development Administration
30	Tami Fordham	Environmental Protection Agency
31	Molly Parkan	FEMA Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities
32	Greg Stuckey	HUD Office of Native American Programs
33	Jackson Morawski	Landye Bennett Blumstein
34	Jerilyn Kelly	Native American Fish & Wildlife Society/AK Climate Adaptation Science Center
35	David Andrew	Native Village of Napakiak
36	Walter Nelson	Native Village of Napakiak
37	Nathan Burling	Northern Generation + Power
38	Rob Tingstrom	Northern Generation + Power
39	Brooke Hansen	Representative Mary Peltola's Office
40	Danny Ranchenstein	RESPEC
41	Tracy McKeon	RESPEC
42	Greg Magee	Rural Community Assistance Corporation
43	Kristin K'eit	Rural Community Assistance Corporation
44	Cordelia Kellie	Senator Lisa Murkowski's Office

45	Jason Norris	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Headquarters
46	Loretta Flynn	Ungusraq Power Company (Newtok/Mertarvik)
47	Robert Chambers	USDA- Rural Development

Virtual Attendees

	Name	Agency
1	Bernice John	Newtok Native Corporation
2	Marla Fairbanks	Newtok Resident, Lower Kuskokwim School District
3	Jason Whipple	AK DCCED/DCRA
4	Nichole Tham	AK DCCED/DCRA
5	Pauletta Bourne	AK DCCED/DCRA - CDBG-DR
6	Lynn Kenealy	AK DCCED/DCRA - LGA/RUBA
7	Sengbe Kemokai	AK DCRA - LGA/RUBA
8	Erin Leaders	AK DEC Disaster Coordinator/Tribal Liaison
9	Bob Blankenburg	AK DEC Solid Waste Program
10	Anthony Picasso	AK DMVA/DHSEM
11	Ben Schultz	AK DMVA/DHSEM
12	Aaron Hughes	AK DOT/PF
13	Philana Miles	AK DOT/PF
14	Clark Cox	AK DOT/PF - Statewide Aviation
15	Andrew Warner	AK DOT/PF Aviation Design PM
16	Rebecca Garrett	AK Energy Authority
17	Grant Todd	Altman Rogers & Co., NVC Auditor
18	Jolene John	BIA Alaska Region
19	George Rutherford	BIA Indian Self-Determination Officer
20	H Paul Gray	BIA Regional Emergency Management Specialist
21	Stacy Harding	BIA Self-Determination Specialist
22	John Mosley	BIA Branch of Tribal Climate Resilience
23	Andrew White	BIA Tribal Transportation
24	Jocelyn Fenton	Denali Commission
25	Cindy Poe, FEMA IA	FEMA Individual Assistance
26	Jessica Tissell	FEMA Region 10
27	Katja Fiertz	FEMA Region 10
28	Jay Pritchett	FEMA Region 10
29	Mark Romelli	FEMA Region 10 Grant Programs Directorate
30	Rynn Lamb	FEMA Region 10 Risk Analysis Branch
31	Teresa Wood	FEMA Voluntary Agency Liaison
32	Dave Matthews	HUD Alaska Field Office
33	Carma Reed	HUD Community Planning and Development
34	Deb Alston	HUD Office of Native American Programs Alaska
35	Matt Mead	Landye Bennett Blumstein - NVC Attorney
36	Jeremy Call	Logan Simpson Design, EPA CCERTA
37	Ryan Stephenson	Logan Simpson Design, EPA CCERTA

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38	Steve Sigler	Logan Simpson Design, EPA CCERTA
39	Project Management	Lower Kuskokwim School District (LKSD)
40	Warren Nicolai	LKSD
41	Edward Pekar	LKSD Assistant Superintendent
42	Daniel Maczynski	LKSD Project Manager, Newtok/Mertarvik Schools
43	Dawn Lloyd	Mertarvik School Site Administrator (Principal)
44	Dillon Willis	Northern Generation & Power
45	Brian Hayden	RESPEC
46	Ben DiNapoli	University of Virginia
47	Leena Cho	University of Virginia
48	Matthew Jull	University of Virginia
49	Bradley Barrett	White House Council on Native American Affairs
50	Stefani Dalrymple	Yukon Accounting, NVC Accountant
51	Asela Calhoun	Yukon-Kuskokwim Health Corporation CHAP Director