



Office of the Town Manager  
Frank Cassidy

**Warrenton Town Council**

Carter Nevill, Mayor  
Roy Francis, Ward 1  
William Semple, Ward 2  
Larry Kovalik, Ward 3  
Michele O'Halloran, Ward 4  
Eric Gagnon, Ward 5  
Paul Mooney, At Large  
David McGuire, At Large

# **STAFF REPORT**

<b>Council Meeting Date:</b>	September 9 <sup>th</sup> , 2025
<b>Agenda Title:</b>	Emergency Management Agency Designation & Updates
<b>Requested Action:</b>	Receive the information
<b>Department / Agency Lead:</b>	Office of Emergency Management
<b>Staff Lead:</b>	Frank Cassidy, Town Manager / Johnny Switzer, EM Coordinator

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Town of Warrenton, Virginia, recognizes the importance of proactive emergency management and, in 2020, established an Office of Emergency Management to address potential hazards and protect its citizens.

The Virginia Department of Emergency Management has officially recognized the Warrenton Emergency Management Agency as an independent Office of Emergency Management, separate from the county. The office originated during the COVID-19 pandemic and was formally created by Ordinance 2022-11 in July 2022. This new designation as an independent emergency management jurisdiction was approved by the Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM) on April 22, 2025. The town is now responsible for its own comprehensive emergency management program in accordance with the Code of Virginia, Title 44. The town will continue to work with VDEM, specifically the Region 2 team, for support. Key benefits of this designation include a more robust program, enhanced coordination, access to funding, and training opportunities

## BACKGROUND

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The Town of Warrenton's Office of Emergency Management was created in December 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. It was officially established as an agency of emergency management for the town by Ordinance 2022-11 at the July 12, 2022, Town Council Meeting. The office operates under the Commonwealth of Virginia Emergency Services and Disaster Law of 2000. Town Manager Frank Cassidy serves as the Director of Emergency Management, and he appointed Johnny Switzer as the Coordinator of Emergency Management on August 20, 2024.

A request for the Town of Warrenton to be recognized as an independent political subdivision for emergency management purposes was submitted to VDEM on February 4, 2025. This request was affirmed by VDEM's Acting State Coordinator, John J. Scrivani, on April 22, 2025. The town is now an independent emergency management jurisdiction, and the Region 2 team of VDEM will be the primary point of contact for the state.

## STAFF RECOMMENDATION

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Receive the Information

## Service Level/Collaborative Impact

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The establishment of an independent emergency management program allows the Town of Warrenton to create a more robust program with enhanced coordination and resilience. This change provides access to various VDEM systems, such as WebEOC and Crisis Track, as well as opportunities for training, exercises, and grants. The town has already begun a number of initiatives as an independent jurisdiction, including:

- **Public Assistance Application:** An application for Public Assistance from VDEM has been started due to the flash flooding event on July 17, 2025, which caused an estimated \$109,250 in infrastructure damages. The documentation is due to VDEM by October 29, 2025.
- **Emergency Shelter Project:** The town has met with VDEM and the Red Cross to consider using the Aquatic and Recreation Facility (WARF) as an emergency shelter and has on-hand supplies for 25 people. The next steps are to consider a Red Cross Facilities Use Agreement and work with the Red Cross on staff training and standard operating procedures.
- **Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP):** The COOP was established in 2022 and was revised on April 22, 2025, to reflect the town's new standalone emergency management designation. The plan will be reviewed with the Town Council on September 9, 2025, and is anticipated to be adopted on October 14, 2025.
- **Columbia Gas Emergency Reimbursement:** A second request for reimbursement of \$19,922.40 in staff costs related to the March 5, 2025 Columbia Gas Emergency was submitted on August 29, 2025.

## Policy Direction/Warrenton Plan 2040

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With the new designation, the Town of Warrenton must establish and maintain a comprehensive local emergency management program. Key policy directions include:

- **Appointments:** The council must confirm the appointments of Mr. Frank Cassidy as Director and Mr. Johnny Switzer as Coordinator of Emergency Management.
- **Alert System:** The establishment of an "ALERT WARRENTON" notification and emergency warning system is a priority.
- **Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP):** The town will need to review and adopt the 2025 COOP update.

## Legal & Fiscal Impact

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The legal basis for the Office of Emergency Management is rooted in Ordinance 2022-11 and is governed by the Commonwealth of Virginia Emergency Services and Disaster Law of 2000. As an independent emergency management jurisdiction, the town is now responsible for its own comprehensive program. The designation will provide access to funding opportunities and grants, as seen with the application for Public Assistance for the recent flash flooding event. The town has also submitted a second request for reimbursement for staff costs related to the Columbia Gas emergency. Confirmation of the Director and Coordinator appointments by the Town Council is required by the Code of Virginia.

Sources

## ATTACHMENTS

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- A. VDEM Letter to Warrenton EM Designation Letter – Signed
- B. 02/11/25 Council Meeting – EM Staff Report – COOP
- C. ToW COOP – 09/2025 – Redacted
- D. OEM COOP Memo
- E. OEM Actions and Plans Memo
- F. Ordinance 2022-11 – Chapter 20 – Emergency Management
- G. Emergency Management Agency Designation & Updates Presentation
- H. Red Cross - Town of Warrenton-Shelter-Facility-Owner-Pre-Survey-Form
- I. Red Cross - Facility-Use-Agreement-Form-V7\_2025-03-14
- J. Pet Addendum to Facilities Use Agreement FUA-OGC-v2-OGC-update 04.30.2024
- K. Red Cross – MOI
- L. Warrenton Rec ON site survey