

From: The Hardwick Selectboard
To: Everyone who helped the Hardwick community cope with the flooding of July 10, 2023
Date: August 3, 2023

July was the month for all good people to come to the aid of our community — and boy, did you come.

From the time we knew the rain could cause serious trouble, Town employees went into emergency mode. The morning of July 10, the Town set up an emergency shelter at the high school, and volunteers from The Civic Standard and the high school staffed it during the several days it remained open.

During the late afternoon and night of July 10 into 11, the Town Manager and his staff immediately started opening lines of communication with anyone who needed help or could provide help. The Town assisted in water rescues. Town crews monitored roads.

After the storm passed, people with supplies or equipment made it available to the Town crews, or they just did what they knew needed doing. Brian Perry and sons, Jan Gonyaw, Laggis Farm, Scott Brown, Fred Vance, and Danny Hale provided trucking. Fixing the roads required tons of gravel, but the Town crew could not get to the Town's gravel pit on Billings Rd. or on Route 14, so Tyler Demers Sand & Gravel made their material available. Gravel Construction helped reconstruct Bunker Hill Rd. and other areas on the west side of Hardwick with both equipment and material. Other people, using their personal tractors and equipment, worked on back roads while the Town crew worked its way around the more traveled roads. Within 2 days, all but 3 of the 17 damaged river crossings had been fixed.

While Town crews addressed the infrastructure emergency, volunteer groups organized rescue and support services and supplies for people. The Neighbor to Neighbor (NtN) organization's call center at the Jeudevine Library responded to people needing help and/or information. The staff at the Town offices could refer calls there, which allowed the Town staff to address both routine business and the exploding amount of "paperwork" needed to manage the Town's response to the emergency.

Businesses like Poulin Lumber, Amazon, and Jericho Hardware, and dozens of individuals donated clean-up supplies, so NtN set up a supply distribution center at the Senior Center on High Street and provided organized access to buckets, shovels, rakes, dehumidifiers, box fans, sump pumps, gloves, personal hygiene items, blankets, tarps, liquid cleaners, trash bags, paper towels, covered bins, etc. Eighteen volunteers kept it open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. daily through July 31.

NtN and Civic Standard organized work parties to help people clean up the mess and arranged for public dumpsters so people could get rid of the trash. The Civic Standard provided food for clean-up workers by asking community members to sign up and donate a dish (a main course, a salad, or a dessert) for a meal. More than three dozen people donated food. Other volunteers then distributed the meals to work sites, so workers could make use of the long summer evenings.

The Town Manager's staff carried out their regular jobs and responded to all the emergency requests that came to them, despite the fact that their own offices were flooded, and they had to move to temporary and inconvenient quarters. The Town Clerks also responded whenever anyone needed help. Zoning Officer, Kristen Leahy, took up the job of damage assessment. Community Development Coordinator, Tracy Martin, collected and organized information about state and federal programs that the Town and individuals could tap into for recovery help.

The Hardwick Electric Department traveled difficult roads and got the lights back on for several hundred customers within hours of the end of the storm.

The American Legion opened its hall and provided a meal for a community meeting ten days after the flood, so Town officials could report on the status of the damage and the recovery to that point, and so community members could ask questions and share information they had learned. Annie Houston, a professional grant writer, volunteered to help with their applications for state and federal assistance.

Now that the crisis has largely passed, although the clean-up period hasn't, the Hardwick Selectboard sends a huge thank you to all those good people who came to the aid of the Hardwick community:

Town Managers Office: David Upson, Jr., Casey Rowell, Amanda Fecteau

Town Clerk's Office: Tonia Chase and Alberta Miller

Zoning Officer: Kristen Leahy

Community Development Officer: Tracy Martin

Custodian of Town Buildings: Mark Sassi

Jeudevine Library: Diane Grenkow, Marilyn McDowell, Kevin Hill and volunteers

Public Works Crew: Tom Fadden, Perley Allen, Mike Gravel, Tod Ferland, Edward Richard, Spencer Nelson

Hardwick Police: Mike Henry, Scott Gagnon, Steve Mitchell, Andrew Force, Paul Barnard, Chad Stacey, Bill Morley, George Sheldrick

Hazen Union Staff: Todd Delaricheliere and the Hazen Union crew

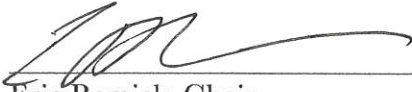
Hardwick Electric: Mike Sullivan and his crew

Neighbor to Neighbor: Dozens of volunteers

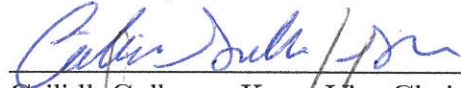
The Civic Standard: Dozens of volunteers

The American Legion: Phil Mercier, and all the folks in the kitchen.

We know that the people listed above represent a minor fraction of the people who made a donation, volunteered to cook a casserole, worked at the distribution center, looked after a neighbor, shared information, or just cleaned up a mess. As Tom Fadden, Head of Public Works, said, "the community really came together for this event," and we, the Hardwick Selectboard, could not be prouder or more grateful. Thank you, all, for taking care of our community.



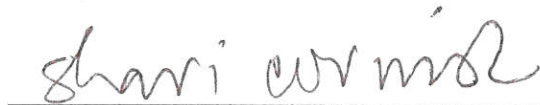
Eric Remick, Chair



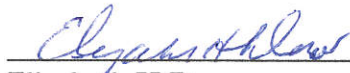
Ceilidh Galloway-Kane, Vice Chair



Danny Hale



Shari Cornish



Elizabeth H Dow