MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and Town Council

FROM: Mark E. Biberdorf, Town Manager

DATE: October 30, 2024

SUBJECT: Tropical Storm Helene Disaster Response Report

It has been one month since Tropical Storm Helene battered western North Carolina. The Town of Fletcher as a community sustained significant damage but not at the catastrophic levels that some other areas experienced. This is not to minimize the damage sustained to homes and businesses here. They are however cleaning up and trying to determine the best path forward for repairing or reconstructing their properties. The most pressing question from the public right now has been debris removal.

Debris Removal

The Town of Fletcher and other municipalities in Henderson County have been working with Henderson County officials to begin a countywide effort to remove debris associated with the storm. The County has identified Southern Disaster Recovery (SDR) as its contractor to undertake this process. Information has been shared on the County's and Town's website about placing debris curbside for the contractor to pick up. Instructions have also been given for separating debris into different piles, based on what it is, so that the contractor can safely and properly dispose of it.

As of this report, the contractor has started work in the Southchase subdivision of Fletcher. They will work through that community and then on to other parts of town. I have indicated to them that Fanning Bridge Road and the streets off of Fanning Bridge are a priority due to debris encroaching into the right-of-way. The Cane Creek Industrial Park area has also been mentioned as a priority due to the large amounts of commercial debris from the Fletcher Business Park building.

Debris removal is going to take up to a year to complete in Henderson County. They have started and are making progress but they are also preaching patience. County officials have also indicated that the contractor will make multiples passes to pick up all debris.

Assistance from FEMA for the General Public

FEMA has set up a disaster recovery center (DRC) in the Blue Ridge Commons shopping center located at 2111 Asheville Highway in Henderson County. A DRC is a one-stop shop where survivors can meet face-to-face with FEMA representatives, apply for FEMA

assistance, receive referrals to local assistance in their area, apply with the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) for low-interest disaster loans and much more.

FEMA financial assistance may include money for basic home repairs, personal property losses or other uninsured, disaster-related needs, such as childcare, transportation, medical needs, funeral or dental expenses.

FEMA is also assisting with temporary housing needs for those who have been displaced. They are doing this by issuing vouchers that can be used at certain hotels. They are also working with the County to identify a location to bring in mobile homes and RVs that will provide extended housing assistance while people make plans to either rebuild or relocate to other homes.

FEMA Assistance for Damage to Public Facilities

Damage to public facilities of the Town was mostly contained to Bill Moore Community Park. Staff has been working to clean up and clear debris from the main portion of the park in order to open it back up to the public for limited recreational use. The Town's insurance provider has been out to see the damage and will provide a report on what will be covered. Expenses for repairs that are not covered by insurance will be submitted to FEMA for reimbursement.

Damage was also sustained to some Public Works equipment. The oldest of the Town's three garbage trucks was totaled. A chipper and mower were also totaled due to flood damage. Insurance is helping to cover these losses.

If you should have any questions on this item prior to the meeting, please let me know.

MEB/meb