Helene Response and Recovery Update

Brevard City Council

October 21, 2024

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Preparations

- City Communications Coordinator (CC) begins posting weather alerts to all social media platforms and City website 9/25/24
- Transylvania County declares State of Emergency 9/25/24
- CC issues emergency alert through CivicReady system notifying residents of TC's State of Emergency declaration 9/25/24
- Brevard Public Works (BPW) clears storm drains, checks generators, prepares equipment and makes arrangements to have 24/7 staff coverage.
- Brevard Fire Department (BFD) doubles on-site staffing and places another crew on-call
- TC Emergency Management begins evacuations in areas expected to flood 9/26/24

Preparations

- Brevard Police Dept. (BPD) fills cars with gas and arranges to have extra staff on patrol. Plain clothes officer shifted to patrol.
- Brevard Utilities sets WWTP for overnight function and evacuates plant 9/26/24
- Normal trash collection cancelled for the remainder of the week.
- All other non-essential city functions closed at noon on 9/26/24
- Communications Coordinator begins sending Council relevant City information and updates as Helene makes landfall in Florida 9/26/24

During the storm

(late 9/26-midday 9/27)

- BPW begins pumping and hauling overflowing sewer manholes 9/26/24
- Brevard Fire Dept. responds to first weather-related call at 2:38 AM on 9/27/24
  - BFD respond to an estimated 100 calls on 9/27*
- Non-essential city services called off for 9/27/24.
- BPD and BPW battle flooding in City Hall basement



Immediate aftermath

(afternoon 9/27-midday 9/28)

- BPD and BPW close in-town roads as waters rise
- BPW clears mudslide at Cathey's Creek to help maintain access to plant
- BFD, Transylvania Rescue Squad, and out-of-county teams begin water rescues along Old HVL Hwy.
- WWTP likely overtops during this period
- Mayor begins going door-to-door downtown with paper updates



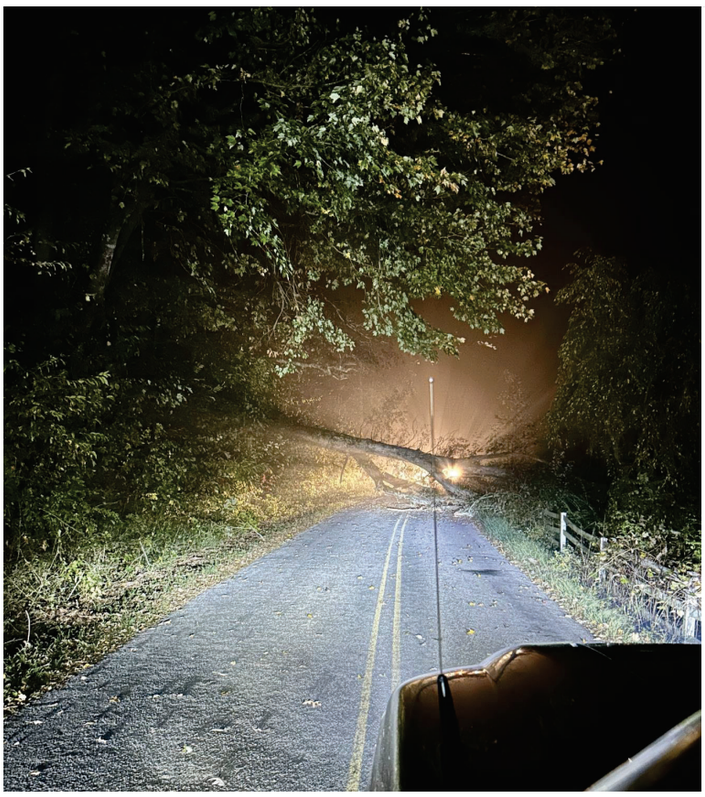


Immediate aftermath

(afternoon 9/28-midday 9/29)

- WTP loses generator power
- BPW receives first shipment of emergency gas/diesel from NC Emergency Mgmt. for area public safety vehicles.
- EOC sources spare generator; WTP regains power at around 0200
- BFD responds to another 100 (est.) calls
- Mayor begins reading communications updates on WSQL (which are then repeated at the top of every hour) –staff begin circulating and posting hard copies for public
- CC posts updates to social media platforms using temporary internet connection





Immediate aftermath

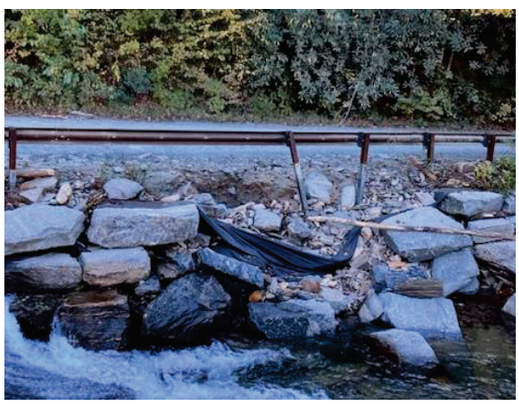
(afternoon 9/29-midday 9/30)

- Duke power restored to WTP
- BPW begins tree clearing in earnest.
- WWTP accessed for first time since storm; initial assessment indicates floodwaters overtopped clarifiers but raw sewage got partially treated entire storm

Damage assessment

- BPD cruiser crushed by falling tree (estimated loss $65,000)
- BFD folding frame tank fell off truck (est. loss $2,800); damage to bay door ($8,300)
- Streambank washout near WTP ($20,000); sand and debris in creek and intake channel ($10,000)
- Damage to RBC “cups”, actuators, valves, and other misc. components at WWTP (loss value TBD)
- Misc. repairs to City Hall (de minimis)







Initial Recovery

(9/30-10/04)

- Cell service restored to much of the city
- Mayor Copelof appears on 94.9 (WGCR) to share update
- CivicAlert notifications and website/social media posting resume
- WTP operating at full capacity
- Curfew lifted 10/1 @ 5:00 PM
- City Hall opens at a limited capacity before fully reopening

Initial Recovery

(9/30-10/04)

- Comms shift to once-daily emergency response updates 10/2
- Planning staff begin substantial damage determination assessments of flooded buildings
- County stages public dumpster outside of the library for spoiled food disposal; PW crews collect and haul refuse from site while beginning spot collections and make-up collections around town
- BFD receives bottled water and MREs for distribution



Recovery

(10/05-Present)

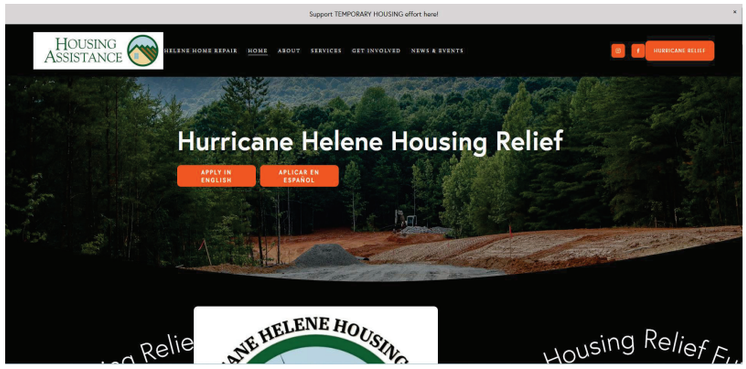
- FEMA reps arrive in-county and begin performing initial assessments
- BFD resumes normal staffing levels and operations
- Normal trash and recycling routes resume; PW continues with supplemental collection in flood damaged areas
- FEMA reps meet mayor and city manager and share info as to various services 10/8
- City issues final set of emergency response updates 10/10
- FEMA in-person Disaster Response Center (DRC) opens 10/17



Recovery

(Efforts underway)

- Nonprofits pivoting to help people with critical needs
- Create temporary dwelling units for displaced people. Housing Assistance Corp. coordinating this effort
- Support small businesses impacted by less visitors; Chamber of Commerce and HoB standing up “Transylvania Tomorrow” fund
  - HalloweenFest now a fundraiser for the fund
- City considering policy changes to support recovery efforts



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