



Peter B. Webster
Town Manager

MEMORANDUM

TO: Board of Selectmen

FROM: Peter B. Webster, Town Manager

DATE: September 9, 2011

SUBJECT: Information for the Selectboard

- **Storm Irene Update:** We came through this event relatively unscathed in comparison to our surrounding neighbors. Having said that, I believe this was the worst storm to hit this Town since the 1973 storm that did so much damage to our roads and bridges. We had no significant residential damage that I am aware of, other than some flooding of basements. In a previous report to your Board, I detailed the roads that were washed out, the repairs that were necessary to bring them back online by the opening of school on Wednesday morning, 2 ½ days after the Sunday flooding. To see the school busses running that Wednesday morning, parents walking their children to the MCS, gave me a great feeling of 'normalcy', that we had come through this storm in such good shape. Since then we have had a major sinkhole open on Tigertown Road that has required about 7 truck loads of material, and we continue to clean out plugged culverts all over Town. We will continue to have 'aftershocks' from Irene like that sinkhole appearing a week later, and we do anticipate a huge hit to our entire budget this year. We have significant tree work still to do, as Blood Brook and Mitchell Brook are crisscrossed with downed trees that have to be cleared. Andy and his crew have done a remarkable job, immediately after the storm coordinating with the contractors he had lined up prior to the storm, and in the almost two weeks since the event. Our Fire, Rescue and Police did a fine job of coordinating the emergency services, starting at 4 pm that Sunday.

- **FEMA**—We had a one hour conference call with state and FEMA officials on Tuesday this week, with both Roger and Ed sitting in, along with Roberta, Andy and me. In addition, there was a briefing this morning down in Springfield for Windsor County towns. Roberta and Andy are well aware of what's needed for documentation to receive our 75% federal disaster funding, and we are documenting everything with photographs. As for the dam giving way up at the Norwich Pool, we have great photographs before the event, after the event, and an actual video of the event—if you go to YouTube, type in "*Irene Destroys Norwich Pool*", you will see a 30 second clip of it actually giving way. I'm not sure who the producer of this film is, but it is powerful.
- **Fiscal Year 11 Audit**—We've just had our annual audit, and things went smoothly. The auditors were here just two days, primarily because of Roberta's great organizational skills—they complemented her on having everything reconciled and well organized, which greatly expedited their job. We anticipate a very clean audit once again.
- **Conservation Committee**—Gile Mt. Trail work continues, and although I haven't had a chance to get up there and hike the trail myself, I understand it is going well, despite the weather. There was a good article in the VN the other day about this effort and the heavy traffic (10,000 people/year) that it receives.
- **Labor Day 10k Road Race**—Jill and her volunteers from the Recreation Committee pulled off another smooth race. About 160 runners/walkers either did the 2 mile loop or the 6.2 mile loop. This is a great tradition, with an entry fee of \$1 which makes it so unusual and such a fun event. A number of us probably experienced the guilt I was feeling, namely that we were back to 'life as normal', while so many others around us were still digging the mud out of their homes and businesses.
- **Lister Review Committee Meeting**—yesterday this committee met for about 2 ½ hours with Bill Johnson, Director of PV&R, and Bill Tobin, a District Advisor for PV&R. Tobin oversees 32 other towns in addition to ours and it was a very productive morning session. I will let the minutes of that meeting speak for themselves when they are out, but I think this committee will be gaining much valuable information for our Listers and your Board, helping us in maintaining equity in future Grand Lists, possibly in a more cost effective manner.
- **Norwich Residents' Day at the Montshire Museum/Appalachian Trail Community Event**—from 4 to 7 next Sunday, the 18th, the folks at the Montshire Museum are offering the museum, access to Science Park, all the trails, the Woodland Garden, all permanent exhibits, and the new *Earth from Space* exhibition, free of charge to all Norwich residents. In

addition to the free admission, there will be a free cookout, compliments of our two local banks, the Norwich Women's Club, the Lions Club, the Car Store, the Norwich Inn, and provisions by Dan & Whit's. This should be a great time, immediately following the ceremony on the green honoring Norwich as the first official Appalachian Trail Community here in Vermont. I believe we will have our State Rep, Margaret Cheney, our Congressman Peter Welch, and other dignitaries present at the bandstand for the AT ceremony. Immediately preceding that is a family hike down the AT from Cossingham into Town. Watch the listserve for more details next week.

- **Town Report**—it's hard to believe that it is already that time again, but we have gone out to bid today on next year's annual Town Report.
- **Letter to Department Heads—Budgeting for FY 13**—see attached copy of my memo to all the Department Heads as we gear up for the budget season.