



TOWN OF BROOKFIELD

May 30, 2018

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Region 5 Coordinator
Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security

SUBJECT May 15, 2018 Storm
 Preliminary Damage Assessment (PDA) Narrative
 Brookfield, CT

A macroburst powering winds of an estimated 110 miles per hour tore into Brookfield at approximately 5 p.m. on May 15, knocking out power to more than 90% of the town's 17,000 residents, businesses, schools and other public buildings.

Most of the town's streets and parks were instantly impassable because of downed trees and power lines. Virtually every road in town had trees and power lines down. We estimate 7,000 trees fell, and another 1,000 seriously damaged, with hanging limbs threatening to fall.

The town's Preliminary Damage Assessment is \$3,783,000, which includes estimated repair to public property (less anticipated insurance) and town-owned roadways, and labor (including that of the volunteer fire departments and police private duty) and equipment for emergency services and debris removal. It does not include personal property (we estimate 75 cars and boats destroyed) and business loss, utility company mutual aid, repairs within state right-of-way, state emergency services and other resources brought in to assist in the recovery (National Guard, Red Cross, CT Food Bank, among others).

This is a summary of the storms impact, how Brookfield managed rescue, recovery and rebuild, and how the community – led by hundreds of town employees and volunteers -- rallied to overcome the worst natural disaster in Brookfield history.

- **Emergency Operations Center:** The EOC was established the evening of the storm at the Pocono Road Firehouse. It was staffed by EMD Wayne Gravius and operated in conjunction with the Mutual Aid assets. First Selectman Steve Dunn, Police Chief Jay Purcell, Director of Public Works Ralph Tedesco, Eversource representatives and other key responders were present and available to assist the Incident Management Team. The IMT disbanded on May 19, but as of this date, the EOC remains at the firehouse to complete recovery efforts.
- **Housing:** Twelve percent (547) of the town's 4,700 single family homes reported house damage: 10 destroyed, 24 suffered major damage and 513 categorized as minor or affected. Building officials worked approximately 200 hours in the first eight days inspecting homes. At least 50% of the residences have tree damage, but almost none of it is covered by insurance.

People face bills of up to \$30,000 to remove the fallen and damaged trees and debris on their properties. It will likely take months to remove all of the debris. Three condominium associations reported damage.

- **Businesses:** Fifty businesses reported losses totaling \$2 million: \$1.3 million lost revenue, \$600,000 property damage and \$100,000 inventory loss.

- **Public Schools and Library:** Brookfield Public Schools lost five school days, while facilities and fields suffered significant property damage. When schools re-opened on May 23, buses could not be driven on some streets, so temporary pick-up/drop-off locations were established. Nineteen families with school-aged children and teachers are displaced from their homes. School Superintendent John Barile has requested a waiver of the 180-school day requirement to the State Board of Education. The library was damaged and was forced to cancel nine programs.

- **Utilities:** All three substations that feed power to Brookfield were affected. Eversource reported 77% of its customers were without power at 5 p.m. on May 15, and the outage peaked at 92% an hour later. Ten percent were without power at 8 p.m. on May 21, and 1% were still without power on May 23. There are still intermittent outages, and leaning trees near power lines are a concern. Three staging areas were established in town to receive more than 450 utility poles, hundreds of capacitors, more than 150 miles of wire and other equipment. More than 150 utility crews and their sub-contractors, many of whom came from out-of-state, rebuilt Brookfield's electrical infrastructure, but there is much work left to do. Two weeks after the storm, the local utility companies still have crews in town repairing damage. Phone and cable service outages are at much higher rates -- that work will take weeks to complete.

- **Fire, Rescue and Public Works:** Sixty-eight Brookfield volunteer firemen, EMT's, paramedics, dispatchers and staff worked 2,934 hours from May 15 through May 25 to protect our community. Seventy-four fire houses from across the state provided additional manpower and equipment. Our Department of Public Works worked 1,182 man-hours clearing roadways of debris and there is much work left to do. There were five cases of carbon monoxide poisoning and several residents and one fireman were injured from falling debris. Several residents were trapped in their vehicles by fallen trees and were extracted by rescue personnel.

- **Police:** Brookfield Police worked 2,849 man-hours ensuring roadways were safe for vehicle traffic, conducting welfare checks for residents and traffic control during the infrastructure rebuild, as well as routine service calls. They received 339 phone calls to 911 in the first 3 hours of the storm and 424 in the first 24-hours. Four police vehicles and the headquarters building were damaged. The police and fire house mobile radio communication system became inoperable, forcing them to switch to highway band for radio communications.

- **Social Services and Public Health:** Elderly and disabled residents, those with functional needs including oxygen, CPAP units and required refrigerated medical supplies were of first priority. A Functional Needs Shelter was established by the Housatonic Valley Regional Public Health Preparedness Committee at Western Connecticut State University. The Volunteer Ambulance Association and ATV owners assisted in evacuation. A shelter was established at Brookfield High School, where 150 residents were served meals, and the Senior Center was opened for residents to be comforted by staff and volunteers. The food pantry extended operation, is replenishing

perishables and making purchases from the CT Food Bank. Meals on Wheels, a daily lunch program for seniors and shut ins was cancelled for 3 days.

The Department of Health visited food service establishments to inventory spoiled foods. Residential septic systems have been damaged by uprooted trees. Residents who already suffer from anxiety about health and financial situations are severely impacted.

● **Community and Volunteerism:** The Senior Center received many donated gift cards for staples such as gas and groceries. Several organizations and individuals are raising money to provide aid and support the volunteer firemen. One resident raised money to create a “thank you to emergency responders” banner that was hung on an overpass. The Knights of Columbus and other volunteer groups are organizing debris clean-ups for those in need. Churches assisted displaced families. Duracell set up a station to give out batteries. When the town closed its shelter at Brookfield High School, town agencies directed people in need of assistance to the town YMCA, where more than 250 showered, recharged electronic devices and reconnected with friends and family.

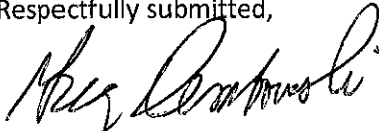
● **Parks, Open Space and Sports Fields:** Brookfield’s 1,400 acres of open space were heavily damaged. Because of downed and leaning trees several town trails and parks, including the Still River Greenway and Williams Park, are closed until further notice. Two main athletic complexes are closed causing high school and adult league practices and games to be either moved out of town or cancelled. All Parks & Recreation classes were cancelled for seven days.

At least three town events were cancelled because of safety concerns:

- Memorial Day Parade (one of the town’s longstanding and most-beloved traditions)
- Connecticut Trail Day
- Kids Day at the Firehouse

In countless numbers of neighborhoods, neighbors joined hands to clear roads so ambulances and emergency personnel could pass. Our town leaders are most appreciative of the dedication and hard work of every organization and local resident who contributed to getting us up and running. There is much work left to do and residents to care for but as we have walked the town’s neighborhoods and met with many of our residents, we are reminded again of why Brookfield is such a wonderful place to live.

Respectfully submitted,



Greg Dymbowski
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Town of Brookfield

cc: Stephen Dunn, First Selectman
Wayne Gravius, EMD
Jay Purcell, Chief of Police