

THE Hardwick Gazette

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Police Department Hosts Zoom Meeting



photo by Doug McClure

Hardwick residents continued their weekly protest for racial justice in front of the Gohl Black at the blinking light.

by Doug McClure

HARDWICK – In coordination with the Greensboro Select Board, Hardwick Police Department (HPD) Chief Aaron Cochran hosted an hour-long public forum on August 26 to provide residents with a deeper understanding of HPD officers and their duties. The meeting was held remotely from 6 to 7 p.m. on the video conference platform Zoom.

Hardwick Town Manager Shaun Fielder opened the

discussion. He acknowledged the "unique and pretty volatile time in our country's history," referencing the pandemic and recent protests resulting from the May 25 death of George Floyd at the hands of Minneapolis police officers.

Chief Cochran said he began his career at HPD in 2003. He then worked in Morristown for a time, before returning to HPD as a sergeant in 2011. In August of that year, he stepped in as acting chief and formally took on the role of HPD chief in February, 2012.

Cochran said that speaking as a Hardwick resident he has "a vested interest in this community," and "what happens here is just as important to me." He said his family has lived in Walden for generations, going back to the Civil War.

Sergeant Barber spoke next. He said his two daughters attend Hazen Union School and he has served as a coach there and at Hardwick Elementary School. Barber began his career in law enforcement at HPD in 1992, and then worked for the Lamoille County Sheriff's Department (LCSD), where he was promoted to detective. Next, he worked at the attorney general's office as a detective, and then accepted an investigator position with Adult Protective Services.

"I came back here to finish out my career," said Sgt. Barber of HPD. "I enjoy working for the Hardwick Police Department. It is rare to come across a group of individuals that are as dedicated and concerned about the community."

Detective Kevin Lehoe spoke next. He described himself as a local resident who has worked for the police department for ten years.

"My family and I love the

community, love the area," he said. "I've coached in the area so I'm generally familiar with the community."

Det. Lehoe has been a detective at HPD for eight years, solving crimes of "burglary, narcotics, anything that takes additional investigation time," he said. Lehoe is one of three detectives in the Caledonia County Special Investigations Unit, which deals in part with crimes against children and elder abuse.

Chief Cochran said he promoted Lehoe to detective in response to the department's "extreme" call volume and because he realized the department had not hired an additional officer since the 1990s. The position was initially funded through a KOPS grant "which allowed us to keep six patrol officers and move Lehoe to a detective position," Cochran said. "[Lehoe] has allowed us to do many drug investigations."

Cochran said residents who fear nothing is being done to address drug issues in the area should maintain confidence in the department.

"There's likely something being done," he said, adding that if

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"Everyone Eats" Grant Awarded to Provide 10,000 Free Meals

HARDWICK – The Center for an Agricultural Economy (CAE) has been working with six Hardwick restaurants to recreate a free Hardwick community dinner each Thursday. In Craftsbury, volunteers have provided weekly "soup suppers" for pick-up made with donated ingredients from the community and in Albany the tradition of a community meal was continued through bi-monthly curbside/take home meals.

Now, these three community initiatives have come together and secured a grant award of \$120,000 from Everyone Eats, a project of Southeastern Vermont Community Action, using federal CARES Act funds designed to help respond to COVID-19. These funds will allow all three programs to expand, both to feed more people and to work with more area restaurants and caterers to provide the meals on a weekly basis from now to the end of the year.

Through this project, 10,000 nutritious meals will be provided to residents who have been affected by COVID-19 in the greater Hardwick, Craftsbury, and Albany region of the Northeast Kingdom. It will also support a dozen local restaurants whose businesses have been badly hurt by COVID-19. All meals will include at least 10% ingredients sourced from local farmers and food producers. The project also creates a community of practice by collaborating between local organizations and businesses.

See MEALS, 2



photo by Vanessa Fournier

Hardwick Electric Department (HED) crews just completed a three-year upgrade project across multiple areas in Greensboro, Woodbury and Hardwick. HED General Manager Mike Sullivan said that "the project results improve service quality, reductions of overall inventory requirements, and significantly reduces system-wide energy losses ... each of which offers positive effects for our customers." In this photo, First Class Lineman Nick Leblanc is working on one of the transformers on Spring Street in Hardwick for the project.