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Colchester resident Tracy “Big Daddy” Lynch was in Cromwell this week, filming a bar fight scene for the upcoming film *House Rules*. He’s shown here with one of his costars, Christy Carlson Romano. Photo by Sweeney Photography.

Colchester Resident On the Big Screen

by Kaitlyn Schroyer

Inside the Red Zone Tavern in Cromwell Wednesday, a fight broke out between retired MMA fighter Sean Dillon and a number of “tough guys” over a girl.

But this wasn’t your normal bar fight.

The clash was surrounded by cameras and covered in fake fog. Production assistants scurried around the bar, marking tape where actors needed to stand, fixing camera angles, and wafting the fake fog around the room. And those participating in the brawl were all actors, including Jamie Nocher (playing Dillon), Vincent Pastore, Chuck Zito, Robert LaSardo, Tommy Dreamer – and Colchester’s own Tracy Lynch, also known as Big Daddy.

The scene being filmed was part of *House Rules*, directed by Jacob Cooney, and produced by Connecticut native Dave Gere. The movie also stars Tom Sizemore, Kevin Nash and Christy Carlson Romano.

How did a Colchester man get involved in a professional film?

While he was a big moviegoer as a child, Lynch, 52, never thought he’d wind up in movies. A man who always worked for himself, with various businesses, Lynch got his start doing stand-up comedy for his 47th birthday.

Stand-up comedy had been on Lynch’s

bucket list of things he wanted to do. After going through some rough times in his personal life, Lynch found a certain amount of comedic relief in stand-up. Getting in front of a crowd at a bar in Manchester, Lynch ended up performing for 20 minutes – 15 minutes more than people normally perform for.

Stand-up comedy soon took off for Lynch. In 2011, Lynch booked his own performance at the Shadow Room in Middletown, at the time a popular club co-owned by Gere.

“It must be the most ballsy, terrifying thing,” LaSardo told Lynch about stand-up comedy in the “green room” before Wednesday’s filming.

Gere said Lynch’s personality quickly grew on him, and the two became friends.

“He has a good heart; that’s why I like him,” Gere said. Gere said he loved Lynch’s knack for comedy as well as his look. Lynch, a big, burly guy with a long gray beard, is the epitome of a motorcycle gang member, bar bouncer, or just a standard redneck.

“[Gere] said I was hilarious and crazy and would put me in a movie someday,” Lynch said.

The Shadow Room has since closed, but the lasting friendship between Gere and Lynch never stopped. Although Lynch stopped stand-

See Big Screen Page 2

End in Sight for East Hampton Lawsuit?

by Elizabeth Regan

The East Hampton Town Council Tuesday publicly waved what Chairwoman Patience Anderson called “an olive branch” in a legal dispute that began when the Board of Education asked a Middletown Superior Court judge to decide who has the authority to make appointments to the school board.

On Tuesday, the council met in executive session for about 15 minutes before resuming the public portion of its special meeting. That’s when councilors unanimously approved a motion to send the school board a letter with draft language for a stipulated agreement. Such filings are often used to save time and money on protracted litigation by coming to a mutual understanding before trial.

But school board chairman Kenneth Barber, who said Wednesday he had not yet received a letter and was unaware of the details of the previous night’s council meeting, questioned the wisdom of conducting legal negotiations at public meetings.

“If the Town Council feels that behavior is appropriate, then that’s their prerogative,” Barber said.

The school board will continue to adhere to its practice of not discussing disputes or lawsuits in public, according to Barber.

Draft language approved by the council stated

the parties would have to agree that “the Board of Education shall have the temporary authority to fill any vacancies which may arise on such Board until the Current Town Charter Revision Commission’s proposed amendments have been approved or rejected at referendum and, if approved, such amendments become effective. If any such vacancy remains unfilled for more than thirty (30) days, the Town Council may fill such vacancy.”

Councilors at the same meeting approved a resolution naming the seven members of the Charter Revision Commission and the list of changes for them to consider, including the exploration of “options by which to fill vacancies of elected positions.” The commission is required to file its draft report with the town clerk no later than Dec. 1, 2016.

The lawsuit, filed in December, came after the Town Council refused to cede to the Board of Education’s demand for councilors to pass a resolution formally acknowledging the school board had the right to fill its own vacancies.

The school board and Town Council have different interpretations of the town charter and state statute.

At Monday night’s Board of Education meeting, Barber said a discussion about creating a new policy “to provide a framework for how

board members are appointed” will be held at the next meeting on Feb. 8.

Anderson, when asked after Tuesday’s council meeting for her thoughts on a new Board of Education appointment policy, said she thinks it is a “wonderful” idea and that the lack of such a policy has been one of the problems since the beginning.

Meanwhile, she said, the Town Council has filed a 30-day extension with the court.

“As far as we are concerned, [the lawsuit] is in limbo until such time as we come to some other agreement. And this is our offer. The ball is in [the school board’s] court now,” Anderson said.

The request for an extension, filed on Jan. 14, asks for more time to “fully review and analyze the Plaintiff’s claims, discuss said claims with the client and to prepare an appropriate legal response.” The original pleading deadline was Jan. 22.

Superintendent of Schools Paul Smith said Wednesday the Board of Education has spent about \$1,500 on legal fees related to the lawsuit, as of the January billing cycle.

East Hampton Finance Director Jeff Jylkka and Town Manager Michael Maniscalco said details on town legal fees were not readily available, in response to multiple calls made

Wednesday afternoon and Thursday morning.

The appointment controversy arose after the Republican-led Town Council appointed Republican Michael Rose to the school board seat vacated by Republican Josh Piteo, who resigned upon winning a spot as a councilor in the November election.

But Rose ultimately declined the nomination, so members of the outgoing school board – who had been planning to let the post-election Board of Education choose Piteo’s successor before they were beaten to the punch by the Town Council – appointed former member Jeff Carlson to the seat, tipping the new board’s majority to the Democrats.

The town charter empowers the Town Council to fill any vacancy unless another “appointing authority” has been “designated by law.”

But the school board maintains state statute clearly makes them the other “appointing authority” referenced in the town charter.

State law governing school boards specifies that vacancies shall be filled by the remaining members of the board “unless otherwise provided by charter or special act.”

Councilors, armed with a legal opinion from town counsel, say that while the debate is a “close call,” the town charter gives them the edge.



Tracy Lynch, center right, discusses the bar fight scene with producer Dave Gere, center left, while on set for *House Rules Wednesday* at the Red Zone Tavern in Cromwell. Photo by Sweeney Photography.

Big Screen cont. from Front Page

up comedy a year later – his last show was at the Comix Comedy Club at Foxwoods in 2012 – he stayed in the performance business as a hobby.

Lynch “told me he wanted to get into acting,” Gere said. “Tracy was very eager to get involved.”

In 2012, Lynch was cast in the post-apocalyptic independent movie *Sensory Perceptions*, playing an enforcer named Big Daddy Jack. In addition to acting in the film, Lynch provided multiple props for the set from his business in Colchester, Big Daddy’s Cool Stuff. The store, which opened in 2011 at 167 Lebanon Ave., buys, sells, trades, and liquidates antiques, collectibles, tools and other items.

Since *Sensory Perceptions*, Lynch has been in nine movies for various production companies in Connecticut, New York and Rhode Island.

“Dave tries to cast me in one way or another in all the movies he produces,” Lynch said. “I have also furnished props for a really cool horror movie called *Army of the Damned*.”

Some of those props have included vintage weaponry, vintage cameras, lamps, old tables, and other nostalgia.

“Whenever I need something like hard to find props, he always comes through,” Gere said.

Lynch is often cast as a tough-guy type, due to his look – but he wouldn’t have it any other way.

“I never have to tell Tracy to show up in certain clothes because he always shows up as himself,” Gere said.

In 2014, Lynch was cast as a New York City tourist in *Birdman*, which went on to become an Academy Award-winning film. This was Lynch’s only paying film. All of the others are for free. In his scene, Lynch filmed with Edward Norton and Michael Keaton.

“It was a great experience and really cool to be a part of an Oscar-winning movie,” Lynch said.

One of Lynch’s biggest breaks was last summer, when he played a speaking role in *Pitching Tents* alongside Kevin Farley, John Farley and Pastore. That movie was another one of Gere’s.

Lynch’s audition for the part was unique. Although he originally auditioned for the part of Tony, Lynch said he knew he would lose the audition to Pastore.

But Lynch was undeterred.

“I said, ‘How am I going to do something [in the film]?’” Lynch said. “I had no professional headshots. I took my baby photo, introduced myself and put down the baby photo. I said ‘here’s my headshot, I’ve been thinking of having it updated.’”

From there, he improvised the rest of the audition and the writer made a part just for Lynch called Fisherman Trophy Giver.

“I definitely left a mark,” Lynch said.

Since *Pitching Tents*, Lynch was cast in *House Rules* as an extra in the bar fight scene.

While he loves his extra work, Lynch is interested in more than just acting.

“I help with writing and props and am learning, listening, gathering knowledge and networking,” Lynch said.

Going forward, Lynch is seeing where life takes him. Along with working on his business in Colchester, he hopes to finish writing his own scripts and eventually see his stories come to life on the scene.

“It’s been a wild ride, doing all this after the age of 47,” Lynch said. “I like to show my family and friends that no matter what life throws at you to never give up the fight, to laugh loud and often and to go live your dreams.”

Those family and friends are the people Lynch likes to thank for his success. He said he credits his wife, Cassie, and their daughters Sarah, Hannah and Amelia, and his mother for their support. Lynch said he also wanted to thank Gere, Peter Lodi and Eileen Smith, Renny Marvin, and Steve Kinney for their support.

From the Editor’s Desk

Observations & Ruminations

by Mike Thompson

Am I the only one wondering what the big deal is with Sarah Palin?

Not from an entertainment perspective, of course. From that perspective she’s off the charts, and her back in the campaign spotlight makes me glad that, if Jon Stewart’s gone into retirement, at least Stephen Colbert still has a show.

But is her much-talked-about endorsement of Donald Trump last week that big a deal? Yes, she’s a big name among certain people, and carries a lot of influence among certain people – but it seems to me most of those people are already Trump supporters anyway? If she had endorsed, say, Jeb Bush, that would be one thing, but Donald Trump?

Donald Trump’s got such a commanding lead in the polls that a Palin endorsement almost feels like – well, I don’t even want to call it icing on the cake, since icing tends to add something. Again, I’d think most of the people likely to be swayed by Palin are already going to be voting for Trump.

So I just don’t see Palin’s support of Trump as a huge, stop-the-presses moment – except for, like I said, the entertainment value. When she ran on – and helped to sink – John McCain’s ticket back in 2008, she said some pretty off-the-wall things. And she continued to be off-the-wall for the next seven years.

But last week, in the speech wherein she endorsed Trump, the former governor took her game to a whole new level. I admit to not seeing all of that speech, but I did see some of the highlights, including perhaps the highest light of them all: When Palin sing-songingly says, “How about the rest of us? Right-winging, bitter-clinging, proud clingers of our guns, our God, and our religion, and our Constitution.” Typing the words doesn’t do it justice. Palin’s bizarre comments – including her reference to “Trump and his Trumpeters” – truly have to be seen to be believed.

So wild was Palin’s endorsement speech that when Tina Fey appeared on last weekend’s *Saturday Night Live* to spoof it, it was kind of a letdown. Fey tried, but Palin was so over-the-top, it was tough to outdo her.

* * *

As a baseball fan, I was disheartened to read last week that there seems to be a shift among National League teams when it comes to the designated hitter. Major League Baseball Commissioner Rob Manfred even said the idea of expanding the DH to the National League is “gaining momentum.” Earlier this week, he tried to backpedal some from those remarks, but the horse was already out of the barn. There seems to be an interest in adding it to the National League – perhaps even as soon as 2017, as the collective bargaining agreement between the owners and the players is set to expire at the end of this year.

I realize many of you, being Red Sox or Yankees fans, probably like the DH. I don’t. I hate it. And I hate the idea of it coming to the National League.

The chief arguments for the DH always seem to be variations of “watching pitchers hit is boring,” “we need to protect our pitchers’ health” and “chicks dig the long ball.” As far that last one goes – yes, offense is down, and adding a whole new player to the starting lineup at the expense of light-hitting pitchers can help remedy the situation without baseball having to go back to embracing PEDs.

And would it be safer if pitchers didn’t hit and have to run the bases? Certainly. Pitchers have been injured that way; it doesn’t happen

a lot, but it happens. And injuries are terrible. But there’s always a risk of getting injured in baseball – the pitcher who blows out his Achilles busting it down the line after hitting a ground ball could also blow it out busting it over to first to try to cover the bag.

Lastly, having pitchers hit is certainly not boring. It adds a whole level of strategy that you frankly don’t see in American League ballparks.

The game’s tied 1-1 in the bottom of the seventh. Your pitcher has been superb so far, giving up just five hits and one earned run over seven innings. He looked as strong in the top of the seventh as he did in the top of the second. Having him pitch the eighth would be a no-brainer – except for the fact that, with two out and no one on, your No. 8 hitter just laced a double to right field. Now the go-ahead run is in scoring position. Do you let your .153-hitting pitcher try to bring home the possible game-winning run? Or do you bring a bat in off the bench, and tell your lights-out ace to hit the showers?

Or, try this: It’s the top of the fifth inning in a must-win game against your divisional rival. Your starting pitcher is on the ropes. What was a comfortable 4-1 lead has turned into a sweat-inducing 4-3 one. There are two outs, but the tying run is on third following a wild pitch, and the opposing team’s cleanup hitter is stepping to the plate. Lifting your starter may make sense – except for the fact he’s due to hit second in the bottom half of the inning. You don’t really want to burn your best reliever on one out, so a double switch is in order. But which of your hitters do you replace?

Both of these are delightfully tense situations, demanding lots of strategy and decision-making by the manager and his coaching staff. And guess what? Neither of them would happen in the American League. The pitcher doesn’t hit, so you don’t need to agonize over lifting him for a pinch-hitter, nor do you have to fret about who to double-switch out of a game. Barring injury, there simply is no need for a double switch in the American League.

Former Red Sox star Bill “Spaceman” Lee once said of the DH, “It serves one useful purpose. It relieves the manager of all responsibility except to post the lineup card on the dugout wall and make sure everybody gets to the airport on time.”

That’s a little harsh – I know American League managers work very hard – but the line gave me a good laugh when I first read it last weekend. There’s a real level of complexity to National League baseball that will be missed if the DH becomes the norm for both leagues. I hope people realize this.

All that being said, I realize the days of pitchers hitting are likely numbered. It’ll likely be the aforementioned concerns about pitchers’ health that prove the tipping point. These days, the highest-paid players in the game tend to be pitchers more often than hitters. And while the merits of that can be debated – hitters play nearly every day, while the best starting pitcher is still only taking the mound once every five days – I can understand owners wanting to do everything they can to protect their astronomical investments. So, reluctantly, I admit the universal DH probably will be here relatively soon – if not 2017, likely shortly thereafter.

And when that happens, baseball – and baseball fans – will lose a lot.

* * *

See you next week.

\$20 Million Portland School Budget Approved

by Elizabeth Regan

The Board of Education last week unanimously approved a \$20 million spending plan that includes several new and redefined staffing positions in support of the district's goal to promote technology and innovation.

The \$20,006,840 million school budget – which was first proposed to the school board on Jan. 5 – represents a 1.58 percent increase over current year spending.

The budget proposal calls for the creation of two new technology positions and two new library positions. Superintendent of Schools Philip O'Reilly said both specialties work hand-in-hand to promote academic and technological literacy.

"I have a vision that these [school] libraries are going to be learning commons," O'Reilly said at last week's school board meeting. "They're going to be the hub of the wheel." He described electronic devices, like laptops, as the "movable parts" of the system.

Krista Karch, director of curriculum and technology, said there are 1,000 electronic devices throughout the district currently supported by a two-person Information Technology support staff.

"When you look at the numbers, it's 500 devices per person," Karch said. "That's just making sure we're up and running. And candidly, we haven't scratched the surface on tech fluency skills, on usability. We just haven't even gotten there yet because [the IT staff is] just busy managing and making sure everything's working okay. Making sure we're not broken

down."

Karch said additional and reconfigured staffing would allow the district to maximize existing technologies, such as the Aspen student information system powered by Follet Corporation. While currently used to house student information, parent contacts and as a gradebook for teachers, she said "it has the potential to do even more."

The software can also be used as a family "portal" to open communication between students, parents and teachers by sharing information like grades, homework and discipline reports in real time. The central, online record would also provide continuity as each student passes through the town's three elementary schools to the middle and high school, Karch said.

The proposed education budget eliminates the current technology assistant and replaces it with two full-time positions: an information technology specialist and a tech integration specialist. Both are non-certified, which means they are not teaching positions and are not unionized.

The existing IT manager position remains.

The spending plan also adds two full-time, certified library media specialists so that there will be a librarian with teaching credentials in each of the three elementary schools. The plan eliminates three non-certified library positions to avoid redundancy and alleviate the cost increase, two of those through attrition.

Additional savings to help mitigate the cost increase from the new positions comes from federal and state funds in the areas of elementary reading instruction and high school academic support, O'Reilly said. Those funds allowed the district to move three positions from the operational budget to the grant-supported category.

There are also at least seven teachers retiring this year who will likely be replaced at lower salaries according to a "step" system based on level of education and years of service.

The total proposed budget increase for salaries came to \$57,909 – even with multiple new and redefined full-time positions.

Another key staffing proposal would move the position of athletic director to the administration level – with a resulting increase in responsibility and salary.

The budget proposal includes an estimated salary of \$88,000, pending union negotiations if approved. Current athletic director Christopher Serra's salary for the 2015-16 year is \$62,565.

O'Reilly said the athletic director's new responsibilities would include supervising physical education and wellness teachers from preschool through grade 12 and developing a physical education curriculum to ensure continuity as students progress through the school system.

The proposed athletic director salary is 30 to 40 percent lower than any other administrator

in the district, according to O'Reilly: "I think we get a lot for our money, to be honest with you."

School board member James Tripp expressed concern about creating new job descriptions for existing positions, such as the athletic director. He said instituting new responsibilities and pay increases gradually over a period of years makes more sense to him.

"I'm more worried if you go there with big jumps like that, it makes it very easy for a taxpayer who hasn't seen a 41 percent increase, ever, to get upset about it," Tripp said.

Tripp ultimately called the proposed budget a "big step forward" despite his reservations about redefining positions and increasing salaries.

School board member Chris Darby said the spending plan will allow the district to help both teachers and students make the most of the district's evolving technology system.

"At this point, this is an incredible budget for that much of an increase," Darby said.

Board of Education Chairwoman MaryAnn Rode said each new position, including athletic director, will be posted internally. If there are not enough applicants, O'Reilly can decide to post it externally as well, she said.

"Regardless of whether or not there are people who might be ripe for the picking for these positions, we're not just appointing people to these positions. There is a process," she told board members last week.

Sailor Charged with Sexually Assaulting Hebron Teen

by Geeta S. Sandberg

A member of the United States Navy stationed in Virginia was arrested last week and charged with sexually assaulting a 15-year-old in town last year.

Albert Bustamante, 24, of the Norfolk Naval Shipyards in Portsmouth, Va., was arrested Jan. 21 and charged with two counts of second-degree sexual assault and two counts of risk of injury to a minor following an investigation into the alleged sexual assault of a 15-year-old in Hebron.

According to the arrest warrant affidavit, the alleged victim told police she had sex with Bustamante on several separate occasions in Hebron as well as in Manchester.

The girl's brother also spoke with police and told them his sister had said she'd met Bustamante through the social media application Skout in March, and had sex with him within the week of meeting in person in April. The brother said he used his sister's iPhone tracker to locate her on April 23 and found she was at the Manchester Inn for approximately three hours. The brother then talked with the sister about her decisions, according to the affidavit.

The brother told police he'd learned Bustamante's full name and that he was a member of the Navy through Facebook. He said he had his sister forward to him photos of Bustamante that he'd sent to her, and learned some of the details of what took place between the two of them by talking with his sister. The brother said the sister told him it started off as kissing, but eventually they "went all the way."

According to the affidavit, the girl told her brother they'd had sex the first couple of times at the trail head on Chestnut Hill Road in Hebron. The brother told police he thought it was "creepy and weird" for a 24-year-old to have sex with a 15-year-old, and added in conversations with his sister she had told him she had sex with Bustamante "because I wanted to."

In an interview conducted at the Saint Francis Children's Advocacy Center in June 2015, the girl told a social worker she didn't have a lot of friends at school, and was looking for someone "to relax and be happy with," which led her to download the Skout application and create an adult profile, lying about her age. According to the affidavit, the girl said in the interview she came across Bustamante, found him attractive and contacted him, and after talking



Bustamante

for a while and having "intellectual conversations," he asked her to go out for ice cream.

According to the affidavit, the girl said it was then that she told Bustamante she wasn't 18 but 15, and Bustamante said he wasn't sure they should be talking. However the girl said she told him it was okay, and that no one would find out.

She also told the social worker she sometimes referred to Bustamante as Winston, a character from her favorite book, *1984*, and he sometimes called her Julia, Winston's lover.

The girl shared the two met after talking for some time; she told him to park at the Hebron Veterinary Hospital after which they walked down the trail in that area, talking before getting physical. According to the affidavit, the girl said they met a total of five or six times and communicated with each other through text messages and email.

The girl added after the first four meetings, she asked Bustamante to do "everything" and that it was consensual. The two had sex for the first time in his car in the parking lot; she added she asked Bustamante to do it and said they used protection, which he took out of the glovebox in his car.

According to the affidavit, the girl said the two had sex twice in Hebron, and then Bustamante took her out to dinner a few weeks later and she "really got in the mood" and the two went to the Manchester Inn.

The girl said that was the last time the two met because Bustamante started to get concerned about the relationship. According to the affidavit, the girl said Bustamante didn't want people to find out and "started freaking out" and sending text messages with screen shots of the laws. The girl added she didn't believe Bustamante was actively seeking a relationship with a 15-year-old and was looking for a short hook-up, but because their relationship was "more intellectual," he wanted to see her more.

According to the affidavit, after the girl told Bustamante she had told her brother about the two of them, things ended. She told the social worker she understood their relationship was against the law, and knew what Bustamante did was wrong, but said Bustamante wasn't constantly seeking her, "but she was asking him to do everything."

The girl concluded, according to the affidavit, that while she thought Bustamante needed "some sort of guidance," such as a therapist, he didn't deserve to go to prison.

A warrant was issued for Bustamante's arrest as a result of the investigation. He is currently being held on \$15,000 bond, and is next due in court Feb. 18.

East Hampton Teen Charged with Making Threat

by Elizabeth Regan

An unidentified 14-year-old East Hampton High School student has been charged with two felonies related to an alleged threat made on social media against a "public facility," according to East Hampton Police Chief Sean Cox.

East Hampton Superintendent of Schools Paul Smith confirmed the juvenile is enrolled in the school system. Smith called the social media post "nonspecific" and said "it was not a credible threat."

"East Hampton wasn't even mentioned in the posting; no specific school was mentioned in the posting," Smith said. "But because it was one of our students, we take it to mean our school."

He said the student was not on school grounds when the threat was discovered. It was unclear on what date or at what time the threat was made, according to Smith.

Police were contacted immediately, he said.

"We don't have the luxury of time to determine this is nonsense," he said. "You put a lot of people in motion right away."

While he could not go into specifics about the nature of the alleged threat, Smith said there were no firearms involved.

"It was apparent pretty quickly that no one was in any danger," Smith said.

Smith said the alleged threat was brought to his attention by another school district. He said a student in that district saw the post on social media.

"It was nothing any of our students had even discovered," Smith said. "It leads me to believe it was sent around in a limited circle."

The juvenile was charged on Jan. 13 with two felonies, each punishable by up to five years in prison: first-degree threatening and first-degree breach of peace.

First-degree threatening is applied when someone threatens to commit a crime using a hazardous substance with the intent to terrorize another person or cause an evacuation. It may also apply to physical threats made

against another person with a firearm or the suggestion of a firearm.

First-degree breach of peace is applied when someone uses a fake explosive device or an imitation of a hazardous substance somewhere another person is likely to discover it.

Cox said he was limited in the details he could disclose because the accused is a minor.

"In law enforcement, we have to look at all the facts and circumstances that occurred and address them for the safety of all," he said.

If the facts rise to the level of probable cause, he said, "we need to make the arrest."

Cox said his department has been diligent in maintaining the safety of the community while working with the family of the accused to educate them about how to prevent such a situation from happening again.

"I think in today's day, the ready access to social media does present challenges to youth nationwide," Cox said. "Once the send button is pressed, you can't get it back."

He expressed hope that working through the court system will ensure the student's compliance in the future.

He said no other state agencies, such as the Connecticut State Police or Department of Children and Families, were involved in the case.

Officers continue to monitor the situation, according to Cox.

"It's not just to go in and make an arrest," he said. "It's to go in and make sure we move forward safely."

Smith said the district is fully supportive of the police charging anyone who makes a threat against any person, school or property.

"I compliment the police department for responding very quickly to the school's request," he said. "We followed our safety protocol. When you have all officials and schools cooperating, that's proof that the safety protocols work."

Hebron Selectmen Accept Municipal Waste Grant

by Geeta S. Sandberg

The Board of Selectmen last week voted to accept a municipal waste reduction initiative grant the town applied for in October.

The \$6,000 grant is for the implementation of a recycling education campaign to increase participation and improve recycling rates at the town transfer station.

Hebron was one of seven towns awarded a total of \$60,000 from the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection earlier this month “to enhance local waste reduction, reuse, and recycling programs,” according to DEEP.

In the Jan. 5 press release from DEEP, Commissioner Robert Klee said, “These communities are taking advantage of DEEP’s resources to further reduce the volume of trash we dispose of, conserve natural resources, and find value in our waste stream.”

Selectman Brian O’Connell shared at last week’s meeting taking advantage of recycling in town was a way to save on tax dollars. He said recycling was a way to “take the bull by the horns to reduce tax dollars,” and explained that for every ton of recycled material, the town receives a \$15 rebate, which can then be used to offset other costs, such as waste removal.

Conversely, it costs the town \$60 for each ton of solid waste removed.

“I would implore everyone to pay attention

to [recycling]—not just the children,” O’Connell said.

Citizens Green Committee Chairman Mike Harder said this week the grant funds will be used for a number of items including improved signage at the transfer station and other locations around town.

“I think one of the things that have prevented some people from recycling was that they don’t really know everything that can be recycled,” he said, adding information with more graphics on recyclable items “and signage that makes it clear the town spends a lot of money to throw trash away but makes money for recycling” would be helpful and easier for residents to remember.

Harder also mentioned using the funds to purchase a participation thermometer for the center of town—the kind often seen during fundraisers—that will show “how close or not so close we are to meeting the state recycling goal which is 60 percent.”

Harder said of receiving the grant, “it’ll help us do a lot to get the message out.”

And, he added, the committee wasn’t done looking for funds to aid them in their efforts: they’re currently in the process of submitting another grant application.

Also at last week’s meeting, a number of in-

dividuals were appointed to different boards. Republican Bruce Olmstead was unanimously appointed to the RHAM Board of Education, replacing Kevin Williams, who stepped down after he was elected to serve on the Hebron Board of Education.

Olmstead has lived in town for 20 years, and said at the meeting he thought it was important to give back to the community.

He currently has two children at RHAM High School and said in his letter of interest that the school system was “the paramount factor” that led him and his wife to settle in Hebron.

Over the years, Olmstead has coached baseball and soccer and has been on the Hebron Soccer Association board of directors and a member of Friends of RHAM Lacrosse. He has a background as a professional engineer and a project manager and wrote, “I have the skills to deal with large budgets, integrate schedules into project development, as well as begin the process of asset management.”

Olmstead wrote, “It is imperative that the schools continue to draw people to town,” and said, “I believe my community involvement, as well as my technical and educational background will serve the community well as I apply it to being a board member.”

Olmstead also received the endorsement of the Republican Town Committee.

Along with Olmstead, the board unanimously approved the appointment of John Russo as a regular member of the Parks and Recreation Committee, and Eric Lemieux as a committee alternate.

Russo has lived in town for about 11 years and shared at the meeting he has a 9-year-old son who is “a product of PREP [the Parks and Recreation Enrichment Program] and very involved in sports.”

Russo said he’s seen a lot of parents give back to the town, “and I wanted to be one of those people.”

Meanwhile, Lemieux has lived in Hebron for over 17 years and has two kids in town, one at the middle school and one at Hebron Elementary School, who have been involved with PREP, after school activities and sports. Lemieux said he was similarly interested in giving back to the town, and thought the alternate position was “a good place to start.”

The next regular Board of Selectmen meeting is scheduled for Thursday, Feb. 4, at 7:30 p.m. in the community room at the Douglas Library. Prior to the selectmen’s meeting the board will attend the Board of Finance meeting at 7 p.m. to view the 2015 audit presentation, in the same location.

Marlborough Community Forum Opens Up Discussion

by Kaitlyn Schroyer

Around a dozen people showed up at the Town Hall meeting room Tuesday night as First Selectwoman Amy Traversa hosted the first of what will be a monthly series of community forums.

Traversa explained that, when she was running for office last year, one of the concerns many residents expressed was that they felt they weren’t able to get questions answered by the town. So she decided to hold monthly, informal meetings to encourage transparency and communication.

Tuesday night’s forum was focused on boards and commissions, and encouraging residents to join a commission.

“We have lots of open positions,” Traversa told the group. “We’re looking for volunteers regardless of [political] party.”

Traversa stressed “in a town this small, political affiliation is so unimportant” – although she said state statute bars town boards and commissions from having more than two-thirds of its members come from one political party.

Traversa explained the town currently has a Democratic seat and an alternate seat open on the Board of Finance along with open positions on the Planning Commission, Zoning Commission, and Zoning Board of Appeals. All of those positions are elected, and interested citizens should go through either the Republican Town

Committee or Democratic Town Committee to be endorsed.

Appointed positions, Traversa explained, are more flexible; residents apply for them and the Board of Selectmen appoints. She said that while she’ll discuss applicants with their respective political town committees, ultimately she’s more interested in whether the applicants have skillsets that will complement the particular commission they’re applying for.

The appointed position openings included Economic Development Commission, Conservation Commission, Parks and Recreation Commission, the Water Pollution Control Authority, Nature Trails and Sidewalks Commission, the Commission on Aging, and the Capital Non-Recurring Committee.

“Economic development, beside the Board of Finance, is the most critical board right now,” Traversa said, and referenced the recent foreclosure of five properties in the center of town which may soon see new ownership.

Among the attendees Tuesday night was resident Sarah Stock and her husband Jeremy. She said she’s glad she attended.

“We’ve been in town for 10 years,” Stock said. “We want to get involved and didn’t know where to start.”

Traversa said she was happy the Stocks, a younger family, stopped by.

“We need younger people,” Traversa said. “A lot of people serving have been serving several years.”

The one commission Traversa said she did not need applications for was the Cemetery Committee. The selectmen recently approved a new full member and an alternate member to fill out that committee – and Traversa said she already has seven applications.

One commission that resident Richard Denno expressed interest in was a charter revision commission; however, Traversa said it has not been established yet.

“A number of towns are doing [charter revision] right now and running into issues,” Traversa said. She explained she’s waiting for information from the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities to help guide the town through charter revision.

“I don’t want to slow it down or rush it,” she said. “I want to set it up to be successful.”

The town charter was last reviewed in 2001. A charter revision commission was formed in April of that year that drafted several charter revisions over a 16-month duration. The commission submitted those revisions to the Board of Selectmen in July 2002, and the revisions were sent to referendum that November. Voters rejected the revisions, however. There hasn’t been a charter revision commission since.

Traversa explained she would like to reconvene the previous members from that 2001-02 commission and learn from their experiences.

“It’s an enormous commitment of people’s lives,” she said. “It can be a year to 18 months. I want to do it right.”

Traversa also said she would like to see boards and commissions put in place clear missions and goals for the year.

“What are you trying to achieve?” she said. “I want these commissions to move forward.”

Also included in the night’s discussion was a conversation regarding social media.

“It would be great if the town had a bigger social media presence,” Stock said. Stock is currently a member of a Facebook group called “Concerned Citizens for Marlborough Development” – and she said she is concerned about all of the misinformation and rumors that are spread.

In reply, Traversa said the town is working on revamping the entire town website and part of that work is to discuss a social media page.

Next month, Traversa said, she hopes to invite all four Marlborough representatives on the RHAM Board of Education to answer questions from residents about the schools. That community forum would take place Feb. 23 at 6 p.m. at Town Hall.

Grocery Store Heading to Public Hearing in Marlborough

by Kaitlyn Schroyer

A Zoning Commission public hearing next week could help decide if the proposed grocery store on East Hampton Road could be 15,000 square feet larger than originally proposed.

The original plans, as per a 2013 application by the property’s then-owner Robert Elliott, called for a 40,000 square-foot grocery store equipped with a pharmacy and drive-thru at 3-5 East Hampton Rd. The plan included traffic reconfiguration, the moving of some of the businesses currently in the plaza, the demolition of a home at 22 South Main St. and the revitalization of another home at 20 South Main St. into a commercial or retail use. Currently both of those South Main Street addresses are single-family homes.

However, Elliott was foreclosed on the affected properties in December, and they are currently owned by Chelsea Groton Bank – meaning all those plans could change.

Elliott previously owned five properties in the center of town including the three properties involved in the grocery store, as well as the 1, 3, 5 and 7 South Main St. plaza and a plaza at 32 East Hampton Rd. A judgment for a strict foreclosure was ruled against Elliott in December and he has until Feb. 9 to pay back the bank over \$7 million or forfeit his ability to reclaim the properties.

At a Zoning Commission meeting Jan. 7, Allan Schwartz of Schwartz Realty in Glastonbury came before the commission to discuss the grocery store application. Schwartz is currently managing the five properties in question for Chelsea Groton Bank.

Schwartz is the developer behind several high-profile properties in Glastonbury – including the plaza at 124 Hebron Ave. that houses, among other draws, the Plan B Burger Bar and Rooftop 120 – and he told the commission he

knows the Marlborough properties will require a great deal of attention.

In order to make the development successful, Schwartz said he needs to have an anchor supermarket tenant. He told the commission that, based on his own experience, most high-end markets will not entertain a property under 50,000 square feet.

To be able to change the application, though, Schwartz needs a zone change, allowing any properties in Zone No. 1 – the zone the 3-5 East Hampton Rd. plaza is in – to have ground floors of up to 55,000 square feet. Affected by the zone change would be a currently-undeveloped 59-acre property at the end of Independence Drive.

At that meeting, Zoning Commission chair Kevin Asklar told Schwartz the commission was willing to work with him to help stimulate the center of town.

First Selectwoman Amy Traversa told the

Rivereast last week that while there is “nothing guaranteed [Schwartz] will be the eventual owner” of the properties, if he does indeed take them over, she has faith in the developer.

“I didn’t trust [Elliott] could deliver a well-executed project,” Traversa said. “There is a difference between a poorly-executed 40,000 square-foot project [and] a beautifully-executed 55,000 square-foot project.”

Traversa said she has personally toured many of Schwartz’ developments in Glastonbury and is impressed.

“I believe he could make this a reality in the Marlborough center,” Traversa said.

The Zoning Commission voted Jan. 14 to send the zone change to public hearing, which will be held Thursday, Feb. 4, at 7 p.m. at Town Hall. All are invited to attend. The Zoning Commission has the final say on whether to make the zone change.

Colchester Schools Chief Proposes .61 Percent Budget Increase

by Kaitlyn Schroyer

Superintendent of Schools Jeff Mathieu presented his proposed 2016-17 budget to the Board of Education Tuesday night, which includes a .61 percent increase over current year spending.

Equal to \$241,692, the proposed budget increase would bring the school's spending package to \$40.04 million, up from \$39.80 million approved for this year.

"In September, the Board of Finance gave me a target of a zero percent increase," Mathieu said. "I got as close as I could."

During the 2015-16 budget process, Mathieu originally proposed a .84 percent increase; however, after two failed budget referendums, it was ultimately a .34 percent increase approved on the third try.

Included in the proposed budget for 2016-17 are a number of staffing cuts including a 0.4 full time equivalent (FTE) math teacher at Bacon Academy, a 0.6 FTE English teacher at Bacon, a custodian at William J. Johnston Middle School, an office professional at Bacon, and some software and licensing cuts.

Barbara Gilbert, director of teaching and learning, explained the goal of the budget was to connect the funds to the successes of students and teachers.

"In areas we've fallen short, we reallocated the funds," Gilbert said.

The salaries line in the proposed budget has a 1.4 percent increase which equals \$342,744. The line totals \$24,807,136 and includes \$13,999 for the early childhood program; the salary of Josh Vinoski, the already hired assis-

tant director of pupil services and special education; funding for the WJJMS and Bacon Academy freshmen sports; and additional custodian part-time hours to replace the full-time custodian being laid off.

The salaries line also includes an additional 0.2 FTE hours for an occupational/physical therapist, a general wage increase and step movement for teachers, an additional 0.5 FTE reading position at WJJMS that was previously grant funded, the hiring of a full-time Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) out of college rather than contracting part-time for one, and the reduction of one special education class Vinoski previously taught that is no longer needed.

The employee-related insurance line decreased by 5.57 percent or \$361,070 to \$6,121,860. Mathieu explained this is because of a reduction in claims, changes in the plan design, and increased balance in the reserve account. Mathieu added that amount also included an increase of \$349,872 in compensation for 12 retiring staff members for their sick time.

Instructional supplies also saw a decrease, of 4.95 percent or \$57,235 to \$1,099,872. This is because the BCBA is no longer contracted, so the cost was taken out of this line and put into salaries, Mathieu explained. The line also reflects a 10 percent reduction in instructional supplies at the elementary school and WJJMS.

There was also a decrease in transportation, which went down by 4.65 percent or \$116,685

to \$2,393,344. Mathieu said this line was helped by a reduction in fuel costs and the cost of special education transportation; however the contracts for regular education busing and vocational education busing increased.

Meanwhile, professional services increased 2.2 percent or \$5,774, bringing that line item to \$268,371 due to an increase in legal fees and contract negotiations for teachers and administrators which will begin in July.

Property and liability insurance also saw an increase, rising 3.03 percent, or \$3,838, to \$130,665 due to insurance rates; rates also affected the debt service payment line which had a 21.13 percent increase, or \$36,051, to \$206,675.

Office services decreased by 4.03 percent, or \$13,918, to \$331,558 because of renegotiations of lease agreements for copiers and a reduction in office supplies, Mathieu said.

Mathieu said facilities and grounds also saw a decrease of 11.72 percent, or \$205,278, to \$1,546,496. He explained this was because of the reduced heating costs, changes at WJJMS due to the building project, and a reduction in electricity at the intermediate school after improvements to the building.

Tuition was a hot topic in the budget, Mathieu said, as the line item increased nearly 25 percent due to special education placements. Although there was a decrease of \$47,321 in magnet school tuition, the cost of vocational agricultural placements increased \$42,860 and special education placements increased

\$567,667, causing the tuition line to shoot up 24.4 percent or \$563,206 to \$2,871,085.

One item not seen in the budget relating to tuition was the money coming from Norwich Public Schools for 15 freshmen who may be entering Bacon in the fall. The education board approved an agreement in December (approved by the Norwich Board of Education earlier this month) that will allow a number of Norwich students to attend Bacon Academy. Norwich Public Schools does not have a high school and therefore pays tuition for every one of their students.

Mathieu explained the revenue is not in the budget because the district does not know exactly how many students have applied yet and because it's a revenue item, not an expense, it does not affect the budget increase.

Mathieu also said he put in his proposed budget \$260,000 of capital outlay, a 20.52 percent increase, or \$44,265. This proposed amount is the same amount presented in the proposed 2015-16 school budget that did not pass.

The next step for the proposed budget is to be discussed by the Board of Education at its next meeting. The board will then approve the budget and pass it along to the Board of Finance.

The next regular Board of Education meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, Feb. 17 at 7 p.m. at Jack Jackter Intermediate School in room 120.

Bacon Football Takes Championship Title

by Kaitlyn Schroyer

The Bacon Academy football team has come a long way from winning two games a season.

Last fall, the Bobcats took home their first-ever large division Eastern Connecticut Conference (ECC) championship.

The varsity team was established at Bacon in 2000, after two years of playing as a junior varsity squad. Success was not immediate, however. In fact, in the team's first 15 seasons, it made the playoffs just one time, in 2004 – and as recently as 2013, the team notched a woeful 2-9 record.

But things changed last fall, when the team went 8-2, including 6-0 in conference games – a streak that included topping Ledyard for the first time ever, 25-22. That proved to be Ledyard's only conference loss, as it went 5-1 and Bacon wound up with the conference championship title.

"We made a lot of history," said Sean Kelly, a senior at the high school and quarterback for the varsity team. "Everyone will remember this season."

Third-year coach Erik Larka brought the team from a disjointed, distracted group to a program working together and being a family both on and off the field.

One of the players that stood out, Larka said, was Peter Kazibwe. Kazibwe, a senior, plays running back and is a captain on the team.

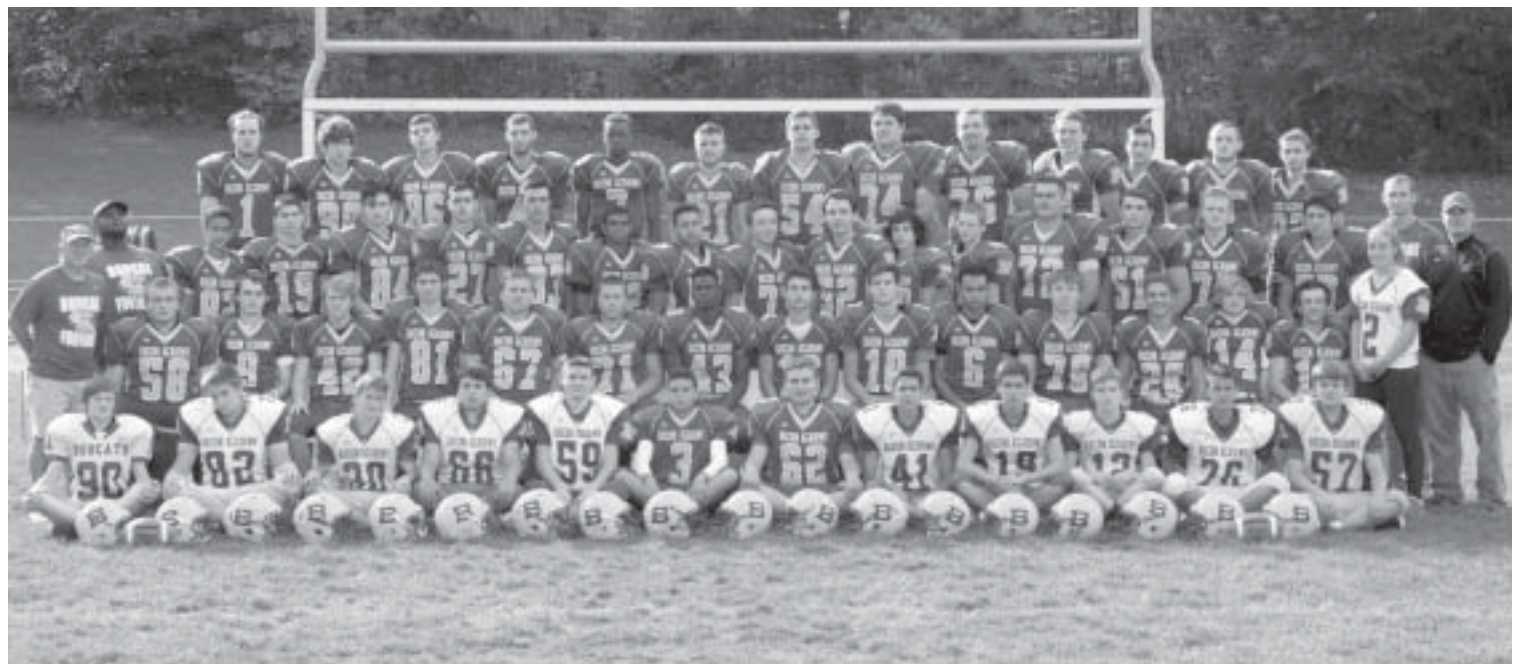
"It's been monumental," Larka said of the season. "I first met Peter he was five foot nothing. He was not big into school. This year he's become a leader in the halls and on the field."

Kelly as well, Larka said, needed to take a bit more direction. Since the beginning of the season, both Kazibwe and Kelly have matured.

Another factor that contributed to the team's success was the unity of the team.

"We have been playing together since we were nine years old," Kazibwe said of the team. "We've had a winning program since Cougars." (The Colchester Cougars are the youth recreational football team in town.)

"Our freshmen and sophomore years, we



The 2015-16 Bacon Bobcats varsity football team had a historical season this year, becoming Eastern Connecticut Conference champions for the first time ever. The team went 6-0 in the conference, en route to an 8-2 overall record.

didn't have the confidence we have now," Kelly said. "We just believed we could win [this year]."

Last season, Bacon played in the medium division of the ECC. But, after some division realignment, Bacon this year wound up in the large division. The division counts among its teams Norwich Free Academy, New London, Ledyard, Fitch and East Lyme – all of which are extremely competitive, Larka said.

Kazibwe said winning the ECC large division title was "remarkable."

"[Winning] was unthinkable at the beginning of the season," Kazibwe said. "We beat Ledyard for the first time and they were undefeated during conference play."

Along with defeating Ledyard for the first time, the varsity team also defeated NFA and

Fitch for the first time.

"We took it a little more serious than before," Kazibwe said of the increased victories. "It doesn't happen overnight. We worked hard during the off-season and that hard work does pay off."

Larka added that the support of the students, administration and community definitely helped.

"The administration in the school is very supportive," Larka said, adding that first-year Bacon Academy principal Matt Peel "really got behind the program."

Along with the community, the school band played for the first time at home games, cheering on the players.

"It made people come together," Larka said. "In support of the band kids, the football team

then went to a band concert."

Larka said the outgoing senior class will be missed next season.

"The outgoing class was not just a team, but friends," he said. "They formed a bond and hopefully that trickles down."

All agreed that they hope Bacon can continue its winning football ways.

"I hope they carry on where we left off," Kelly said, "and don't go back to being the old Bacon Academy."

Kazibwe agreed and said although he admitted it's a far-fetched, he hopes Bacon can become a "powerhouse" school and continue to have a winning program.

However, that will remain unseen until the next Bacon Bobcat football team takes the field in the fall.

\$29.37 Million East Hampton School Budget Presented

by Elizabeth Regan

East Hampton's new superintendent of schools, Paul Smith, is hoping to avoid multiple budget referendums this year by submitting what he feels is the smallest budget increase possible without damaging programs and class size.

Smith presented a \$29,336,180 recommended budget to the Board of Education Monday evening. That's \$559,396 – or 1.9 percent – higher than current year spending. A taxpayer in East Hampton with a home assessed at \$250,000 would pay \$87 more per year for education if Smith's recommended budget were to pass as presented.

The school board is responsible for approving an education budget for presentation to the Board of Finance in March.

Smith's proposal falls short of the East Hampton Town Council dictate to "maintain current spending levels." The council's directive was part of a broader policy statement guiding the months-long budget planning process. The statement instructs the finance board, Town Manager Michael Maniscalco, and the school board to devise spending plans that reflect the needs of the community and taxpayers' ability to pay.

But Smith said fixed costs alone – including contractual salary, benefits and transportation

increases – came in at 3.2 percent over the current year's budget, forcing cuts elsewhere in the spending plan.

He said he sees an increase of 1.9 percent as a reasonable figure, considering it is close to the 1.8 percent increase voters ultimately approved at the fourth budget referendum last year.

"There's nothing new in this," Smith told the Board of Education. "There's no digital enhancement. We're not handing out laptops to the incoming freshman class. It literally takes what you have this year and slides it forward one more year."

The proposed budget does include a 21 percent increase in the salary line item for high school music. While some of that increase is a result of contractual increases, a portion is related to a request for an additional elective to be taught by the part-time choral instructor, according to Smith. The elective would be a digital music course taught in the new digital music lab constructed as part of the school renovation.

To compensate for the increase in fixed costs, Smith is recommending cuts to two and a half teaching positions and at least one non-union staff member through attrition. While not all resignations and retirements have been formally announced, he spoke in general terms to say

the cuts will be made at the middle school and class sizes will be adjusted accordingly.

Numerous line items covering expenses like supplies, minor equipment and textbooks either stayed the same or were reduced.

Business Manager Karen Asetta said this week there is also savings reflected in the amount of money budgeted for natural gas because the schools have been connected to a new pipeline installed by Connecticut Natural Gas Corp. Gas is expected to be flowing into the schools by summer.

The current year's budget line, which is based on oil heat, is about 45 percent higher than what Asetta expects to pay in 2016-17. Even though oil heat is less expensive than natural gas right now, the current year's budget anticipated higher costs for oil.

Making any more cuts to the superintendent's recommended budget will mean laying off employees or getting rid of programs, according to Smith.

"We have to make sure we keep the learner at the forefront during our very long budget development process," he said. "A lot of times when we have conversations outside of this room and at town meetings and various other meetings, we forget that our learner is the most

important thing."

The budget increased 3.07 percent in 2013 and 2.67 percent in 2014 before voters brought the increase down to 1.8 percent last year. Smith said those increases haven't kept up with the higher fixed costs year after year and have resulted in fewer teachers, programs, and supplies across the district.

While student enrollment has remained relatively steady at around 2,000 students, the number of full-time school employees has gone from just under 285 in June 2011 to just under 270 projected for September 2016.

Board of Education Chairman Kenneth Barber said the decline in the number of teachers is a sign of the true gravity of the budget situation.

"Enrollment has fluctuated very, very little, if at all, but meanwhile our full-time employees have been dropping considerably over the last five years," Barber said. "At some point, you need somebody to turn the light on."

He said Smith's recommended budget is "exactly what it has to be" in order to maintain educational services for the coming school year – but it's as low as it can go.

"This is the bare minimum to keep the school running just the way it is," Barber said.

Colchester Selectmen Interview Two Potential Town Planners

by Kaitlyn Schroyer

The Board of Selectmen last week interviewed two applicants for the vacant town planner position – including current assistant town planner Randy Benson and a new face, Kerry Nielson.

First Selectman Art Shilosky explained there were five applicants in this third round of calling for resumes. Three of those applicants were considered qualified and interviewed by Public Works Director Jim Paggioli, Town Engineer Salvatore Tassone, and Hebron Town Planner Michael O'Leary. One of those three candidates took a job in Rhode Island where he lived, Shilosky said, and that left Nielson and Benson as the two to be interviewed by the selectmen.

The town planner position has been open since last August, when Adam Turner left the position to take a job in Martha's Vineyard. Since Turner left, Benson, the assistant planner and zoning enforcement officer, has handled some of Turner's responsibilities.

Since Turner left, a call for applications has gone out three times. The past two times, the town had potential planners respond; however, the candidates took other jobs before the selectmen could hire one. This third round of applications finally resulted in two candidates coming before the selectmen for interviews.

Nielson, a resident of East Hampton and that town's former director of community and environmental planning, explained she has a history of regional planning in Florida and also helped East Hampton with grants and its blight

ordinance.

During her interview, Nielson stressed the need for Colchester to balance its agriculture, rural, residential side with a combination of big box and 'mom and pop' businesses.

"The assets [of Colchester] are its rural and agriculture background with economic development mixed in," Nielson said. "The challenge is mixing those two; keeping the small town approach while also inviting in economic development."

Nielson said the access to Colchester from Route 2 helps bring people from other communities in. She added the town has a good educational system and is a "big, appealing place."

Her focus on economic development, Nielson said, would be to work with the Economic Development Commission and find a good mix of bigger retail along with the smaller family stores.

"I don't like to see the town overrun with big box stores," Nielson said, adding that incorporating the big box stores – such as Tractor Supply – into the town has "been done very well so far here."

Benson had similar thoughts on economic development in town. Having served under Turner as assistant planner, Benson said he has seen the town grow.

Benson explained that when he interviewed for the assistant position, he drove around Colchester to get a feel for the town.

"I recognized a lot of commercial vacancies. It stood out," Benson said. "There have been

quite a few [developments that have happened] since I've been here. The new regulations are more development friendly and the issues are resolving themselves."

Some of the additional developments Benson said he would like to see in town is more affordable, rental options.

"There's a need for it and you can do it in a tasteful manner," Benson said of the rental opportunities.

One thing Benson said he would like to see continue is the Colchester sense of community.

"Colchester takes great pride in being an active community," he said. "We provide opportunities [for residents] to feel they are part of a community. They come home and have something to come home to."

The challenge, Benson said, is getting people from other communities to also come to Colchester.

The position of town planner will be decided at the next regular Board of Selectmen meeting, which will be held Thursday, Feb. 4, at 7 p.m., at Town Hall.

* * *

Also at the board meeting, the selectmen unanimously approved a Facebook page about the town budget, to be created and administered by one member of each of the boards of selectmen, finance, and education.

"There's a lot of Facebook chatter and several different places the Board of Finance tried to address [issues]," Rob Esteve, vice chair of the finance board, said. "This will be one cen-

tral page meant to be helpful."

Esteve stressed the intention of the page is not to sway residents in one way or another; it is simply to provide information.

Many of the posts on the page will link back to the town website, where the budget information can be found. These posts would include when the next town budget workshop is and on what topic, a link to the tax calculator located on the town website, and other helpful tools to inform residents.

Esteve said that previously, the budget subcommittee dealing with communications during budget season found it difficult to get the information out. He said that, since many residents spend their time on Facebook, the subcommittee found the page to be a good solution.

The page will also clearly state whether a post is from an individual's perspective or if they are speaking for the board they are on.

Selectman John Jones was in favor of the Facebook page, saying, "It's going to reach more people than our meetings."

Selectman Stan Soby also was a fan, saying the more channels the town uses to get the information out, the better.

Esteve said Tuesday the page is expected to go live mid-February.

"It will be out with enough time to start posting the budget workshop dates and the subjects so we can encourage people to attend," Esteve said.

Obituaries

Colchester

Barbara Ellen Riley

Barbara Ellen Riley, 76, of Colchester, passed away Saturday, Jan. 23, at Middlesex Hospital, after a brief illness. Born June 18, 1939, in Hartford, she was the daughter of the late Laurence and Christobel (Miller) Riley.

She leaves two sisters, Joanne Gustafson-Crowley and her husband, Robert Crowley and Kathleen MacBryde and her partner, Robert Olbrias; four nieces and nephews; eight grand nieces and nephews and their families.

In keeping with her wishes, there will be no services. Private burial will be observed in the Riley family plot in the New St. Andrew Cemetery, Colchester.

Care of arrangements has been entrusted to the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home of Colchester. For online condolences, visit auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.

Marlborough

Andrew Warren Donnelly

Andrew Warren Donnelly, 56, formerly of Marlborough, passed away unexpectedly Saturday, Dec. 26, 2015, at Park Ridge Hospital in Hendersonville, N.C., from complications related to the lung cancer for which he was undergoing treatment.

Andrew was born in Hartford to Jane Donnelly and the late Edmund Donnelly. He grew up in Marlborough, and was a graduate of RHAM High School. While he spent much of his adult life away from New England, Andy never stopped being an avid Red Sox fan.

He was a veteran of the U. S. Army and a member of the American Legion. He received his associate's degree in business administration from Blue Ridge Community College.

Andrew is survived by his mother, Jane Donnelly; two brothers, Michael Donnelly and his wife Sue, John Donnelly and his wife Correne; a sister, Virginia Eurich and her husband Sam; a niece, Hilary Eurich; and a nephew, Sam H. Eurich.

A memorial service will be held at the convenience of the family at St. Peters Episcopal Church in Hebron.

Memorial donations may be made to St. Peters Episcopal Church, 30 Church Street, Hebron, CT 06248.

An online memorial register is available at grocefuneralhome.com.

Colchester

Debra Jean Mielczarek

Debra Jean Moreau Mielczarek, 50, of Colchester, passed away suddenly at home Monday, Jan. 25. Born in Hartford June 22, 1965, she was the daughter of Donald and Barbara (Kacin) Moreau of Niantic.



Debra married Edward Mielczarek on July 16, 2005. The couple and their children made their home in Colchester. Debra worked at UConn in Storrs as the office manager for the computer science department. She was an active member and organizer for the Friends of Youth Football in Colchester. She was also an avid Steelers and Yankees fan. Debra loved to cook, read books, travel and entertain. She will be remembered most fondly as being "the life of the party" and always one you could depend on.

She will be sadly missed but always remembered with love by her beloved husband, Ed; children, Jason and Alison Geary and Joseph and Samantha Mielczarek, all of Colchester; brother, Jay and Wife Ami Moreau of East Haddam, sister Julie and husband Hassan Robinson of East Hartford; cousins, Steve and Debbie Bordeau of Wethersfield; nephews and nieces, Patrick, David, Kevin Moreau and Naya, Zander and Kacin Robinson; and numerous extended family members and friends.

Family and friends are invited to attend calling hours today, Jan. 29, from 4-7 p.m., at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester. Funeral services will be held Saturday, Jan. 30, at the funeral home, gathering at 10:30 a.m., followed by a chapel service at 11 a.m. Burial will be private.

Donations in her memory may be made to the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society (LLS.org).

For online condolences, visit auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.

Colchester

Donald W. Corcoran

Donald W. Corcoran, 92, of Colchester, died Saturday evening, Jan. 23, at Harrington Court in Colchester. Donald was born in Milford Feb. 13, 1923, the son of the late William and Florence (Boutin) Corcoran.

He was employed as an auto mechanic having owned Don's Auto Sales before retiring. He was a communicant of Sacred Heart Church in Taftville. On Feb. 23, 1946, he married Frances (Horniak) Corcoran in Webster, Mass., who died June 8, 1980.

He is survived by one daughter, Doreen Pothier of Jewett City; one son, Donald W. Corcoran Jr.; three grandchildren; and three great-grandchildren.

A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated Thursday, Jan. 28, at Sacred Heart Church in Taftville. Burial followed in St. Joseph Cemetery, Norwich. There were no calling hours.

Guillot Funeral Home, 75 South B. St., Taftville, is in charge of arrangements.

Colchester

Anna Rudko

Anna Rudko passed away Monday, Jan. 25, at her home in Colchester.

Born Aug. 12, 1924, in Luhansk, Ukraine, Anna was a survivor of Holodomor before taken to Germany at the age of 17. In Germany, she met her husband, Peter, and started their family before moving to the United States in 1955.

Known to many as "Baba," Anna was an avid gardener, who looked forward to spring so that she could tend to her beloved tomatoes, potatoes and other produce. Moreover, she loved bringing her family together with her cooking, whether it was her classic Ukrainian borscht or her homemade pizza. She found joy in having all of her family gathered on her deck, where they could share stories and laughter.

She is survived by her son, Ihor Rudko, and his wife, Natalia, of Colchester; her eldest grandson, Taras Rudko, his wife, Marli, and their daughter, Arianna, of Colchester; her youngest grandson, Andrij Rudko, his wife, Sunny, and their children, Santino, Andrij and Dominica, of Colts Neck, N.J.; and her granddaughter, Motria (Rudko) Grasing and her husband Robert, of Broomfield, Colo.

Anna was predeceased by her husband, Peter, and daughter, Lesia.

Calling hours were Thursday, Jan. 28, with Panachyda that evening, at Maple Hill Chapels/Talarski Funeral Home, located at Molloy Funeral Home, 906 Farmington Ave., West Hartford. The funeral will be held at 11 a.m. today, Jan. 29, at Saint Michael's Ukrainian Catholic Church located at 135 Wethersfield Avenue, Hartford. Burial will follow in St. Michael's Cemetery, Glastonbury.

Colchester

Judy Smead

Judy Smead, 68, passed away unexpectedly Tuesday, Jan. 19, at Backus Hospital. She was born in Norwich March 17, 1947, to Leo and Madeline (Stasiewski) Pankiewicz.

Her passion for prayer and faith in God was extraordinary. She devoted her life to the happiness of her son, Robert Maxx Holiday, who survives her.

Besides her son Maxx, Judy is also survived by her brother, Philip Pankiewicz, and many friends. She was predeceased by her father, Leo Pankiewicz.

A Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated at the Cathedral of St. Patrick at a later date. Memorial donations may be made to St. Patrick Cathedral, 213 Broadway, Norwich, CT 06360.

To leave an online condolence, visit labenskifuneralhome.com.

East Hampton

Warren Frederick Haines

Warren Frederick Haines, 79, of East Hampton, beloved husband of Dorothy (Clayton) Haines, died Wednesday, Jan. 20, at Hartford Hospital. Born June 16, 1936, in Middletown he was the son of the late Frederick and Lois (Richardson) Haines.

Warren was a lifelong resident of East Hampton and was a very active member of Bethlehem Lutheran Church. He had retired from Pratt & Whitney in 1992 after 37 years as a master mechanic. Warren was a loving and devoted family man who cared deeply for his family and his church.

Besides his wife, he is survived by his son, Robert Haines and his wife Michelle of Rockfall; two daughters, Cheryl Kissinger of East Hampton, Karen Haines of Moodus; a brother, Richard Haines and his wife Elizabeth of Cromwell; his three grandchildren, Stephanie Schwartz, Joshua Kissinger, Michael Haines; and his great-granddaughter Emery Schwartz.

Friends called at the Spencer Funeral Home Tuesday, Jan. 26. Funeral services were held Wednesday, Jan. 27, in Bethlehem Lutheran Church, with the Rev. Beth Anderson officiating. Burial was in Rose Hill Funeral Home in Rocky Hill.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to Bethlehem Lutheran Church, P.O. Box 31, East Hampton, CT 06424.

To leave online condolences, visit spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.

East Hampton

Gladys Lawrence Hunter

Gladys Lawrence Hunter passed away peacefully at age 100 at the Masonic Home & Hospital in Wallingford Thursday, Jan. 7.

Gladys was born in Northville, Mich., on Aug. 7, 1915, to the late Frank E. Lawrence and Mary Amelia Kay, who moved to Wethersfield the following year. Gladys attended local schools, and graduated from Wethersfield High School in 1933, and went to work for an insurance company in Hartford. She married Robert W. Hunter on April 10, 1939, and over the years they lived in West Hartford, Hartford, and Bloomfield. Bob owned and operated the Hunter Press, a family business, until he and Gladys retired to a home on Lake Pocotopaug in East Hampton. In 1986 they moved to the Masonic community, where they were among the first residents of the Ashlar Village independent-living community there.

Gladys was predeceased by her parents, her husband, and her nine siblings: Marion, Ernest, Albert, Ruth, Lillian, Frank, Margaret, James and Edwin Lawrence. (Their father, Frank Lawrence, was featured on the front page of the *Hartford Times* on Father's Day 1939 as that newspaper's Typical Hartford Father of the year.) Gladys is survived by many nieces and nephews to whom she became a mother figure, and by many grandnieces and grand-nephews who valued her advice and advocacy.

In addition to being a model matriarch, Gladys was active as a volunteer in a range of organizations through which she contributed to community and civic life in a way that has only recently begun to be recognized as an unpaid career path of great value to our society. She was a life member of The Hartford Women's Club (of which she was president in 1961-62) and of the Order of the Eastern Star (having joined the Rainbow Girls as a teenager). She was chair in 1963 of the J. J. McCook Memorial Hospital Women's Auxiliary and for many years ran their shop selling donated items to raise funds. She was a 70-year member of Beta Sigma Phi, and for 87 years a member of Central Baptist Church in Hartford. At Ashlar Village, Gladys volunteered in a variety of ways.

In August 2010, a large party of family and friends gathered at Ashlar Village to celebrate Gladys' 95th birthday. Family members joined her five months ago to celebrate her 100th birthday in her room in the assisted-living wing of the Masonic complex, into which she had only recently moved. Gladys broke her hip late last year, and her health declined quickly thereafter.

A private interment will be held in early spring, with arrangements made through Beecher & Bennett, 2300 Whitney Ave, Hamden.

Memorial donations may be sent to Masonic Home & Hospital, 22 Masonic Ave, Wallingford, CT 06492.

To send a condolence to the family, visit beecherandbennett.com.

Hebron

Estelle Mary Sazinski

Estelle Mary Sazinski, 98, of West Hartford, formerly of Hebron, beloved wife, mother, grandmother and great-grandmother, died Tuesday, Jan. 26.

She was the daughter of predeceased parents Joseph and Agnes (Andrulic) Vismontas. Her husband, Thomas, passed away April 27, 1998. She was the oldest of five children and was predeceased by two sisters and two brothers: Albina Vismontas, Helen Vismontas, Louis Vismontas and Joseph Vismontas.

She was born Nov. 2, 1917, in Ansonia, and grew up in and around Hartford. She attended Holy Trinity Grammar & High School. Since 1923, she was a parishioner of Holy Trinity Church. She worked at Underwood Typewriter where she met her husband. She lived and raised a family at 160 Affleck St. in Hartford and later moved with her family in 1958 to 82 Foster St. in Manchester. She worked at the Manchester High School cafeteria as head baker. She enjoyed reading, cooking, attending Mass, being with family and friends and watching her favorite old-time TV shows such as *The Waltons*, *Little House on the Prairie*, *Dr. Quinn Medicine Woman* and *7th Heaven*.

She resided at Stonecroft Village Senior Apartments in Hebron from 1990 until 2013, where she was a valued volunteer, cleaning the Holy Family Church rectory in Hebron, assembling the Hebron Senior Center bulletin, and reading to children. She relocated to St. Mary's Home in West Hartford in 2013.

She is survived by her two daughters, Evelyn Snow and her husband Gene of East Hampton, Ann Cassidy and her husband Brian of Hackettstown, N.J., and her son Richard of Glastonbury; six grandchildren: Elaine Snow of East Hampton, Elizabeth Gayhart Jr. and her husband Robert of North Windham, Keith Cassidy and his wife Leslie of San Antonio, Texas, Kenneth Cassidy of Hackettstown, N.J., Kate Cassidy of Great Meadows, N.J. and Colleen Murray and her husband Keith of Kirkland, Wash.; five great-grandchildren, Brandon, Nathan and Madison Goff of East Hampton, and Courtney and Ian Cassidy of San Antonio, Texas; niece Josephine Vismont Quinn of Cardiff, Calif.; great-nephew John (JJ) Siberell and his wife Lisa of Carlsbad, Calif.; great-nephew John J. Sazinski and his wife Lori of South Windsor; two great-great-nephews John Jr. and Joshua Adam Sazinski; great-great nephew Kaden Siberell of Carlsbad, Calif.; and two great-great nieces Paige and Lily Siberell of Carlsbad, Calif.

She was an individual that brought happiness, joy and love to many. She will be missed but never forgotten.

Calling hour will be Saturday, Jan. 30, from 9-10 a.m., at Holy Trinity Church, 53 Capitol Ave., Hartford, CT 06106, followed by a Mass of Christian Burial at 10 a.m. Burial will follow at Mt. St. Benedict Cemetery in Bloomfield.

Donations in Estelle's memory may be made to Holy Trinity Church or St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, 501 St. Jude Place, Memphis, TN 38105.

The D'Esopo Funeral Chapel, Wethersfield, is handling arrangements. To share a memory of Estelle with her family, visit desopo.com.

Amston

Robert J. Turo II

Robert J. "Rob" Turo II, 53, of Amston, passed away Sunday, Jan. 17, surrounded by his loving family. He was the beloved husband of Beth (Cranford) Turo and devoted father to Matt and Julia.

Rob was born in Syracuse, N.Y., cherished son of Ida Turo of Wethersfield and the late Robert J. Turo. Rob leaves a sister, Heather Condron of Lawrenceville, Ga., an uncle, aunts and numerous cousins.

He grew up in Wethersfield and graduated from Wethersfield High School. He received a BS degree from the University of Hartford and an MS from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. Rob was employed by Pratt & Whitney as an engineer in electronic engine control systems and software.

Rob coached Hebron Soccer and Lacrosse, numerous youth hockey teams and Special Olympics Speed Skating. He loved hiking, biking, camping with his family and two black labs, music, playing guitar and cooking. Rob played hockey with The South Windsor Beer League, Bolton Ice Place Thursday Team and was a fan of the NHL Florida Panthers.

A true friend and beautiful soul, he will be missed by all.

Mass and reception was held Sunday, Jan. 24, at Church of the Holy Family, 185 Church St, Amston, CT 06231.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Matt or Julia's college fund at American Eagle Financial Credit Union, 417 Main St., East Hartford, CT 06118.

Portland

Franklin S. Burr Jr.

Franklin S. Burr Jr., 63, of Portland, passed away Monday, Jan. 25, at Middlesex Hospital. He was the son of the late Franklin Sr. and Jeannette Burr. Born Feb. 19, 1952, in Middletown, he lived in Portland for most of his life. He was a U.S. Air Force veteran and a member of the Middletown Moose Lodge.

He leaves his brother, William Burr Sr. (Lois) of Las Vegas, Nev.; sisters, Linda Guertin (John) of Sterling and Sharon Burr of Las Vegas, Nev.; nephews, William Burr Jr., James Burr, Wayne Hendry and Sebastian Ruffino; and three great-nieces.

He was predeceased by a sister, Lucinda Ruffino, and by a niece, Melissa Burr.

He had many friends at the V.A. and where he lived, and will be greatly missed by everyone.

Funeral services will be held Tuesday, Feb. 2, at 11 a.m., at Portland Memorial Funeral Home, 231 Main St., Portland. Burial will be private. Relatives and friends may call Tuesday from 10 a.m. until the service.

To send an online expression of sympathy, visit portlandmemorialfh.net.

Colchester

Alice Lewis

Alice (Barna) Lewis, 82, formerly of Trucksville, Pa., Wilkes-Barre, Pa., and Colchester, died Tuesday, Jan. 26, in Chapel Hill, N.C. She was born Jan. 22, 1934, in Wilkes-Barre to John and Mildred (Gregory) Fletcher.

Alice graduated from Coughlin High School and later graduated from Mohegan Community College with a nursing degree.

Alice is survived by her sister, Judith Williams Porco and Robert Fletcher; and children, David Barna and spouse Veronica, Joseph Barna, Karen Barna and spouse Mary Carter, Beth Salvias, Carol Barna, James Lewis, Robert Lewis and spouse Kitty, Wallace Lewis, and stepson Richard Lewis and spouse Barbara; as well as grandchildren, Susan Barna, Ryan Lewis, Stephan Lewis, Richard Lewis, Scott Lewis; and several great-grandchildren.

Her greatest joy in the world was her children and grandchildren.

A memorial service will be held Saturday, Jan. 30, at 3 p.m., at the Hugh B. Hughes & Son, Inc. Funeral Home, 1044 Wyoming Ave., Forty Fort, Pa. Friends and family are invited to call at the funeral home from 1-3 p.m.

For more information or to send the family an online condolence, visit the funeral home website at hughbhughes.com.

East Hampton Police News

1/11: A 17-year-old juvenile of East Hampton was issued a summons for second-degree threatening and second-degree breach of peace, East Hampton Police said.

1/14: Kevin Ringrose, 23, of 19E Middletown Ave., was issued a summons for kindling a fire in the open, police said.

1/17: Alan J. Kromish Jr., 49, of 41 East High St., was arrested for violating a protective order, interfering/resisting officers, first-degree harassment and second-degree threatening, police said.

Marlborough Police News

1/23: State Police said Edwin Aguilar, 20, of 18 Barker St., Hartford, was arrested and charged with reckless driving, DUI, and operating a vehicle without a license.

New Finance Board Member Appointed in Colchester

by Kaitlyn Schroyer

After more than two years of being a boys' club, the Board of Finance finally has a female member again, as Republican Andrea Migliaccio was tapped last week to replace former board member Art Shilosky.

Shilosky, also a Republican, had two years left on his finance board term when he ran for and won the seat of first selectman this past November. The seat has been vacant since.

Migliaccio was officially appointed Jan. 20 at the board's regular meeting.

A resident in town since 1997, Migliaccio has 25 years of banking experience including 15 years in securities registrations. She is currently with REED Wealth Management in Colchester, a Wells Fargo financial advisor business. Before that, she was vice president of Citizens Bank and Webster Bank along with being a financial advisor for Webster Investments.

Finance board vice chair Rob Esteve said Migliaccio's finance background will be a "good complement" to the board.

Migliaccio is also familiar with the Colchester school system. Along with having three children who have gone through the district, she teaches personal finance and taught at the state Department and Labor and taught in the Colchester Public Schools from 2006-09.

"I'm very invested in the town and I have the ability to step up my contribution and become more active [by being a member of the Board of Finance]," Migliaccio said.

Esteve said it is nice to have a female on the board again; the board has been strictly men since Cathy Pompei resigned in 2013.

Pompei "brought a different perspective," Esteve said. "I'm excited about more diversity."

Migliaccio agreed that she hopes to bring a female perspective – but was not sure exactly what the difference will be yet.

"We all advocate for our children, our properties and the safety of our community and schools," Migliaccio said. "I'm not sure what a



Andrea Migliaccio

female diversification might bring and I'm excited to find out."

She said she is ready to jump in and learn everything she can before town and school officials present the finance board with their budget proposals in March.

"I'm walking in a little late to the show," Migliaccio said. "I'm reading a lot of reports and doing a lot of background. My ears are wide open; I will be doing a lot of listening."

Along with being on the board, she will be a liaison to the Agricultural Commission, Commission on Aging, and the Library Board of Trustees.

"I'm excited for where this will bring me," Migliaccio said of joining the finance board.

Migliaccio will serve until November 2017, when her seat is up for re-election. Her first regular Board of Finance meeting will be Feb. 3 at 7 p.m. at Town Hall.

One Injured After Norwich Avenue Collision

State Police reported a Columbia woman was injured after an accident on Norwich Avenue Jan. 19 shortly before 7 a.m.

Norah Furlong, 52, of 24 Bears Den Way, was transported to the Marlborough Clinic for minor injuries. Police reported Dylan Kermode, 23, of 51 Sashel Ln., Colchester, was traveling west on Norwich Avenue in a Subaru Forester while Furlong was traveling east in a Mini Cooper.

Police said Kermode passed the center line and struck the front and left side of Furlong's vehicle, then went off the shoulder of the road and struck a tree and utility pole. Kermode was found at fault for the crash, police said, and he was issued an infraction for illegal operating of a motor vehicle while under suspension, failure to keep right on a curve, and failure to carry proof of insurance.

One Injured After Route 85 Crash

A Columbia woman sustained minor injuries after an accident on Route 85 Jan. 18.

State Police reported Barbara Sykes, 50, of 24 Doubleday Rd., Columbia, was transported to the Marlborough Clinic for neck and back pain after an accident at 7:03 a.m. Police reported Sykes was traveling north in an Audi A4 behind a Subaru Legacy on Route 85 when the Subaru made a left turn without using a signal. Sykes attempted to pass the Subaru in a no-passing zone, police said, and collided with the other car. Police reported both drivers were found at fault.

Colchester Police News

1/18: State Police said Carli Fandacone, 25, of 138 West St., Hebron, was arrested and charged with failure to appear.

1/19: Colchester Police said they are investigating after an unknown person made two cash withdrawals from a Bank of America ATM with someone else's debit card totaling \$400. Anyone with information is asked to call Officer Cyril Green at 860-537-7270.

1/19: Colchester Police said Brittany Sidler, 27, of 1 Thames River Place, Norwich, was arrested and charged with fourth-degree larceny

and eight counts of sixth-degree larceny. Police said Sidler allegedly stole and pawned \$2,500 worth of jewelry from her boyfriend's mother.

1/20: State Police said Ricky Jones, 27, of 11 Spring St., Gales Ferry, was arrested and charged with DUI and failure to drive in the proper lane.

1/21: Colchester Police said Brandon Pearson, 27, of 37 Leesville Rd., Moodus, was arrested and charged with failure to appear.

One Injured After Deer Collision

Police reported Sue Carr, 53, of 69 North Main St., East Hampton, was transported to the Marlborough Clinic with minor injuries Jan. 20 after swerving to miss a deer then colliding with mailboxes on East Hampton Road.

Carr was driving a Honda Civic eastbound on East Hampton Road at 8:31 a.m., police said, when a deer jumped out in front of the car. Carr swerved to miss the deer, striking multiple mailboxes on the side of the road, police reported.