

RIVEREAST

# News Bulletin

Serving Amston, Andover, Cobalt, Colchester, East Hampton, Hebron, Marlborough, Middle Haddam and Portland

Volume 41, Number 37

Published by The Glastonbury Citizen

June 9, 2017



**Milo's Number 1!!!... Milo, an Irish Setter owned by Berry Honore, is Hebron's newest top dog. Milo beat out five other pooches to win the No. 1 dog tag, which means he was issued his 2017-18 license for free. Residents could vote for their favorite Fido at Russell Mercier Senior Center May 22-31. Votes were tallied and the winner announced last Thursday, June 1. Milo is shown here with Honore (back) and Town Clerk Carla Pomprowicz (left). Reminder: dog owners are required to obtain or renew their dog's license by June 30. Cost is \$8 for spayed or neutered dogs and \$19 for all others.**

## Belldown BOE Taps New Member

by Elizabeth Regan

The East Hampton Board of Education has appointed a member to fill an empty seat – despite continuing efforts by the Town Council to prevent them from doing so.

School board members on Monday voted 5 to 0, with one abstention, to appoint Democrat Lois Villa to fill the vacancy left by Kenneth Barber through November 2019.

The other names up for consideration were Democrat James Monahan, Republican Nancy Oakley and unaffiliated candidate Karlene Brooks.

Chairman Christopher Goff described Villa after the meeting as someone with a great energy level. He said members thought Villa would “be a great fit with this happy board.”

Villa has two children who have graduated from East Hampton High School, according to Goff. He said she brings experience as a volunteer with Project Graduation, the group that provides a drug- and alcohol-free graduation party at no cost to high school seniors, and as an active member of the East Hampton High School Sports Boosters.

The appointment came on the heels of a May 30 motion made by the town attorney asking a judge to block the school board from interviewing and appointing a member that night.

Judge Julia L. Aurigemma immediately denied the request for a restraining order, saying the court would not consider the request “on such short notice and without a hearing.” A hearing was then scheduled for June 13, according to the state judicial branch website.

A subsequent request by the council’s lawyers for a judge to hear the request before Monday night’s meeting was denied by Judge Edward S. Domnarski.

Superintendent of Schools Paul K. Smith said Villa was sworn in Wednesday by attorney Michael Dunshee. A photo of Villa, Goff and Dunshee standing in Smith’s office was posted the same day to the East Hampton Public Schools’ Facebook page.

Town Clerk Sandra M. Wieleba said Wednesday she was told earlier this week by Town Manager Michael Maniscalco that the town attorney had advised her not to swear in the school board’s appointee.

Wieleba said she called Smith to inform him she would not swear in Villa.

In appointing Villa, the school board was acting on a newly-revised bylaw which expanded on the previous process for filling vacancies. The new language says the board shall appoint a replacement within 30 days. It specifies the board “shall consider, but is not obligated to act upon, filling the vacancy with a person of the same political affiliation as the member who vacated the office.”

The school board attained a Democratic majority in November after they appointed Democrat Jeff Carlson to fill the vacancy left by Republican Josh Piteo, who resigned to take a seat on the Town Council.

But that was after the council tried to appoint Republican Michael Rose to the seat, which would have given the school board a Republican majority.

The council argued they have the authority, under the town charter, to fill any vacancy unless another “appointing authority” has been “designated by law.”

The Board of Education argued state law governing school boards gives them the power

See Belldown BOE page 2

## Marlborough Home Ravaged by Fire

by Mike Thompson

A two-alarm fire destroyed a Blish Road home in Marlborough last Saturday evening, displacing a man and his three children – but, thanks to community efforts, thousands of dollars have already been raised to help the four put their lives back together.

The blaze occurred at 18 Blish Rd., and was reported shortly before 7 p.m. on June 3.

Nobody was home at the time, though firefighters did rescue a dog.

Upon arrival, firefighters were greeted by heavy fire conditions, Fire Chief Kevin Asklar said. Mutual aid from Glastonbury, East Hampton, Hebron and Colchester all responded, Asklar said, and the fire was brought under control in 30-45 minutes.

Both the local and state fire marshal’s offices did an investigation, Asklar said, but the cause was undetermined.

The owner of the home was Matthew Heslin, 42, who lived there with his three children, Chloe, 16, Emma, 13, and Jackson, 10.

Heslin said Wednesday that, a mere three

weeks before the fire that took his house, he’d lost his job. “It’s just been a double hit,” he said.

While Heslin and his children stay with relatives, friends have organized a GoFundMe page to collect money for gift cards and other necessities. Organizers Kevin and Dayna Carroll set up the GoFundMe page Sunday, and as of Thursday morning the two had already raised \$19,130 toward a \$20,000 goal.

Heslin said Wednesday the reaction from the community “was a complete shock.”

“It’s amazing,” he added. “The outpouring of support has been tremendous.”

Dayna Carroll said that while she and her husband live in Manchester, her husband grew up in Marlborough and has been friends with Heslin since childhood; Dayna, meanwhile, has known him since she was 19.

“We wanted to do something to help,” she said. “Obviously, they lost everything.”

She said she was “very, very surprised” by the massive outpouring of support. She added that her goal was initially \$10,000, but so many

See Fire page 2



**Fire destroyed a home on Blish Road in Marlborough last weekend, displacing a family of four. No one was injured in the blaze, however, and a dog was rescued. Photo by Squad Fire Photos.**



**The East Hampton Board of Education appointed its newest member amid a legal dispute with the Town Council about who has the right to fill school board vacancies. Democrat Lois Villa, center, was sworn in Wednesday by attorney Michael Dunshee, right, at the office of the superintendent of schools. They were joined by Board of Education Chairman Christopher Goff. Photo courtesy of East Hampton Public Schools.**

**Belltown BOE cont. from Front Page**

to fill their own vacancies.

Rose ultimately declined the position amid the controversy.

The next month, the school board filed a lawsuit against the town to clarify which entity has the authority to fill vacancies on the Board of Education.

The cost of litigation is approaching \$40,000, based on the available information.

The Town Council spent \$12,711.85 in legal fees on the vacancy issue as of March 31, Town Manager Michael Maniscalco said Wednesday. School business manager Karen Asetta said the Board of Education spent \$24,888 as of April 30.

Those figures do not account for the flurry of activity over the past month as the parties prepare for an August trial.

Goff and Maniscalco said last week negotiations occurred in the latter part of May to try to reach a settlement. An offer from the town and a counteroffer from the school board were both rejected.

Maniscalco complained last week that the school board failed to post a public notice, as required by the state's Freedom of Information Act, when they met to interview candidates for the open position.

Maniscalco said at the time he only found out about the meeting after one of his employees heard about it from the wife of a staff member in the school system.

On Monday, Goff countered that Smith had emailed Maniscalco the week before the scheduled meeting to let him know the board would be conducting interviews.

A copy of the email showed the message was sent on May 25.

"...I did want to make sure that you and the Town Council knew that the Board of Education is scheduled to conduct interviews for its replacement member on Tuesday, May 30 beginning at 6:00 PM at the high school," Smith wrote.

A computer glitch was responsible for the notice not being posted, according to Goff. He said members decided to wait to vote on the appointment until this week.

Maniscalco on Wednesday said he knew the interviews might occur, but didn't know the meeting actually happened.

"I was surprised they had a meeting, because it wasn't noticed," Maniscalco said.

A hearing on the request for a restraining order is scheduled for June 13.

## Marlborough Budget Fails in Close Vote

by Mike Thompson

By a tight 108-102 vote, Marlborough's proposed \$24.27 million 2017-18 budget was rejected at town meeting Wednesday.

This was the third defeat for a Marlborough spending package for the next fiscal year; two separate proposals failed last month.

The proposal would have featured a mill rate of 35.51 mills, up 1.36 mills from 34.15. This would mean that the average homeowner with property valued at \$250,000 would pay \$8,878 in taxes on it – up from the current \$8,537.

First Selectwoman Amy Traversa – who earlier in the week had publicly campaigned for the budget defeat on the "Concerned Citizens for Marlborough Development" Facebook page – said Thursday she was not surprised by the previous night's vote. In fact, she wouldn't have been surprised either way.

"In this budget year, I have no idea what to expect," she said. "I think there were efforts that were made to get out voters, both for and opposed."

Traversa criticized the budgets put forth by both the local and RHAM boards of education, saying, "There was very little cut from the schools."

The local school board's \$7.33 million proposed operating budget represented a 1.44 percent increase over current year spending. Meanwhile, the RHAM board has yet to get its budget approved. Like the Marlborough budget, RHAM has struck out twice with voters – most recently when a \$28.87 million budget fell at referendum last week.

The RHAM budget's impact to Marlbor-

ough, in the spending proposal rejected Wednesday, would have come in at around \$9 million. This would have been a more than 5 percent increase over Marlborough's current contribution to RHAM.

Traversa slammed the "audacity" of the RHAM and Marlborough school boards to put forth the kinds of budgets they have in the current economic environment.

Board of Finance Chairman Doug Knowlton said he was "not terribly surprised" by Wednesday's budget failure.

"Overall, the preponderance of what I've been hearing is ... [people] just feel like they're overtaxed," he said.

After a 6.66 percent tax increase struck out with voters by a 118-69 tally May 24, the Board of Finance crafted a spending package that featured a 3.99 percent tax increase. While that too failed Wednesday, the fact it only fell by six votes indicated to Knowlton "the Board of Finance got closer."

He said, though, it "would be a guessing game" to try to pinpoint what tax increase would be palatable to voters.

Fellow Board of Finance member Ken Hjulstrom agreed he and his colleagues seem to be closing in on a successful budget.

"It is hard to say what additional changes, if any, might be needed to pass the budget," he said Thursday, "but it appears as though the changes presented last evening came closer to gaining taxpayer support."

The Board of Finance will discuss the next steps to take with the budget at a meeting next Wednesday, June 14, at 7 p.m.

**Fire cont. from Front Page**

people donated she quickly raised it to \$15,000 and then \$20,000.

"Everybody is just coming together for this family, and especially the kids," she said, "and

it's kind of heartwarming."

If interested in donating, visit [gofundme.com/support-the-heslin-family](http://gofundme.com/support-the-heslin-family).

# Referendum Next Week on East Hampton \$44.26 Million Budget

by Elizabeth Regan

A referendum on the \$44.26 million 2017-18 budget proposal will be held next Tuesday, June 13.

Voting will take place at East Hampton Middle School from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m.

East Hampton's proposed budget is an increase of 3.05 percent – or \$1.3 million – over the current budget.

The \$30.05 million education budget proposal is an increase of 3.41 percent over the current budget while the general government budget proposal is an increase of 2.30 percent over the current budget.

Voters will be asked to approve or reject two separate questions at referendum: one for the education plan and one for the general government plan, which includes debt and capital projects.

According to a budget document compiled by the town, the current 29.44 mill rate is projected to increase by 1.44 mills, or 4.89 percent, if the budget is approved. That brings the mill rate to 30.88.

A taxpayer with a home assessed at \$250,000 would pay \$7,720 in the coming fiscal year. It's an increase of \$360 for the year, or \$30 per month.

The mill rate projection in the budget document assumes the town will receive the same amount of municipal aid it receives currently, despite the fact that Gov. Dannel P. Malloy in February proposed reducing education funding by approximately \$1.6 million.

Malloy issued a revised proposal in May that included a \$2.85 million decrease in municipal aid to East Hampton compared to the current year, according to budget analysis from the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities.

When members of the council approved the finance board's spending plan with no changes two weeks ago, they recommended that the finance board ignore the potential loss in state funding when setting the mill rate if the local budget passes before the state budget does.

That would mean sending out tax bills based on a 30.88 mill rate and then sending out a

supplemental tax bill when the state budget is approved, according to the council's recommendation.

So what happens when the state ends up cutting funding to the town?

Finance Director Jeff Jylkka said this week the same hypothetical taxpayer with a \$250,000 home would pay an additional \$228 a year, or \$19 a month, for every \$1 million in municipal aid cut by the state.

The council's budget proposal also does not account for Malloy's proposal to assign responsibility for one-third of teachers' pension costs to municipalities, which would cost East Hampton about \$1.6 million in the coming fiscal year.

The governor's budget recommendations are subject to change based on the state legislature, which must vote to approve the state budget. But lawmakers adjourned their regular session Wednesday without voting on the budget and it was unclear as of press time when a special session will be held to bring up the issue again.

Finance Board Chairman Marc Lambert said this week the decision on when and how to set the mill rate is ultimately up to the finance board, which is in charge of setting a permanent mill rate once the budget is approved.

He said that while he would personally be inclined to "factor in some reduction in revenue," the decision will be based on "what consensus we as the seven members of the Board of Finance come down to."

If the finance board decided not to factor in a reduction in municipal aid and then the state budget came through with municipal aid cuts, it would be up to the council to set a supplemental tax bill as authorized in state statute.

Jylkka, when asked by the *Rivereast* if there were other options besides sending out a supplemental tax bill, said the finance board could also look at using money from the fund balance (informally known as the rainy day fund) or putting a freeze on capital project spending – or a combination of all three.

"I guess it depends on the severity of what

the state comes back with," Jylkka said.

Lambert, Jylkka, Town Manager Maniscalco and Superintendent of Schools Paul K. Smith agreed it's completely unknown how much the town will lose in funding when the legislature finally votes on a state budget.

Smith said this week that the state's delayed budget has made for a "long and arduous" local budget process.

"The state has not been our friend in this," Smith said.

Maniscalco was even more blunt this week when he called the elected members of the Connecticut General Assembly "bad legislators."

Locally, Maniscalco and Smith both cited contractual obligations as a driving factor in town and school budget increases.

On the general government side, Maniscalco said the town is working hard in cooperation with collective bargaining units to make sure contractual increases are "as minimal to the town as possible while making sure the positions we do have remain competitive in the open market."

On the school side, an expected health insurance increase of roughly 18 percent has contributed to the proposed budget increase. The switch to Connecticut Partnership Plan for municipal employees kept the increase lower than it would've been if the town and school district had remained with the current year's provider.

The education budget proposal includes the addition of a fifth grade teacher, additional hours for a high school music teacher, and assistant coaches in volleyball and cheerleading. The expense is balanced by expected savings from teacher retirements, according to Superintendent of Schools Paul K. Smith. While retiring teachers will be replaced, their seats will likely be taken by less experienced teachers at a lower pay grade.

A new kindergarten teaching position is balanced by the elimination of a remedial reading position, Smith said.

On the town side, expenses include a full-time police officer authorized halfway through the current year's budget. The proposed budget would continue to provide funding for the police canine program reinstated last year.

Also included are additional hours for part-time staff in the building department, which has been seeing a steady uptick in permit applications.

Other increases include municipal pension obligations, workers compensation and liability insurance, and a community contribution for the natural gas project going into effect for the first time this year.

Among the projects in the capital improvement budget are \$50,000 in school safety upgrades for the installation of shatterproof laminate on all ground floor windows up to nine feet, \$89,000 for roof replacement at the community center and \$225,000 for road repairs and maintenance.

Jylkka said this week he will be scheduling a Board of Finance meeting on Tuesday following the referendum results so members can set a mill rate if the budget passes.

If the budget does not pass, Jylkka said members of the town council will vote on a temporary mill rate so tax bills can be sent out before July 1.

He said councils typically set the temporary mill rate at the current mill rate.

If there's no budget in place on July 1, Superintendent of Schools Paul K. Smith has said he would have to proceed "cautiously" in planning for the upcoming school year. That could mean laying off four teachers and one custodian and reducing supplies by \$50,000 to \$100,000.

Smith said Monday he will "have to make some decisions" if the budget fails at next week's referendum. He indicated much of that decision will depend on how soon the council sets the next referendum date.

"If they're going to wait and see what the General Assembly does, then I would have to make the cuts that I outlined," he said.

## Belton Manager Gets Mixed Reviews

by Elizabeth Regan

The Town Council last week gave Town Manager Michael Maniscalco an overall rating of average in his annual performance evaluation, scoring him highest in the areas of communication and professionalism while meting out his lowest score in staff management.

Maniscalco outlined his accomplishments over the past year in a memo to the council, many of which were commended by councilors at their Tuesday meeting. The list included completing the natural gas conversion project \$36,000 under budget, saving \$228,777 in health insurance for the next fiscal year and overseeing the transition of police and fire dispatch from Colchester Emergency Communications to the Glastonbury Police Department.

Maniscalco also serves as vice chairman of the Lower Connecticut River Valley Council of Governments.

Town Council Chairwoman Patience Anderson said she has been impressed by the "growth, maturity and progress" Maniscalco has shown in the time she's known him as a council member.

Maniscalco was hired as town manager in 2012.

His contract requires the council to prepare a written evaluation, to meet and discuss the evaluation, and to give Maniscalco a chance to respond in writing each year. Last week's meeting was the beginning of that process.

Each councilor assigned Maniscalco a rating of "superior," "above average," "average" or "needs improvement" in the categories of fiscal management, communications, services, personnel and professionalism.

When the seven separate evaluations were tabulated, his overall score was squarely in the average range. The evaluation form defined an

average rating as "sufficient to fulfill the requirements."

Councilors agreed to meet June 20 to discuss the evaluation results with Maniscalco and to outline goals for the upcoming year.

One question among councilors was how they would identify areas of improvement to help Maniscalco attain higher scores in future evaluations.

Council member Ted Hintz Jr. said the evaluation form alone is "just input from seven people with no corrective measures."

Councilor Melissa Engel agreed the lack of a formal policy for goal-setting is a flaw in the evaluation process.

"If we're going to be critical on any level, there should be corrective measures suggested, otherwise we're not doing our job as council members," Engel said.

Members said they would come to the June 20 meeting prepared to discuss goals for Maniscalco.

Anderson applauded Maniscalco's commitment to the town and his "strong work ethic" when she shared her evaluation scores for Maniscalco with the council.

"It can't be easy having seven supervisors, all with differing communication styles, opinions and political persuasions," she said. "Michael does a very good job of keeping the lines of communication open to all councilors who take the opportunity. His door is always open."

Like Anderson, Engel identified Maniscalco as superior in the area of communication. A superior rating means he regularly performed "substantially above" what was expected of him.

"Based on my 11-year history on the council

I have never experienced this high level of communication with council members," Engel said.

She cited the thorough reports Maniscalco gives to the council at each meeting and frequent email updates.

Hintz offered the dissenting opinion when he said Maniscalco's communication efforts need improvement. He said Maniscalco communicates information "inconsistently amongst Town Council members," pointing to issues such as ongoing litigation with the Board of Education, negotiations with the police union, the circumstances surrounding the former tax assessor's resignation and the proposed town hall and police department complex.

Both Hintz and council member Mark Philhower said they were unhappy with the decision to select a project manager for the municipal complex by using an exemption to the town's purchasing ordinance instead of using the "bid waiver" process that had already been discussed among councilors. The two council members blamed Maniscalco for not communicating with them about the new plan prior to the meeting during which it was brought up for a vote.

Councilors had previously selected a 5.4-acre piece of land within the 59-acre Edgewater Hill mixed-use development near the Marlborough border as the site for the proposed municipal hub. The owners said they would donate the property; they would also serve as project managers for a 4 percent cut of the total project cost.

Using the exemption for a "uniquely qualified contractor" requires approval by a simple majority of council members. Had the council used the bid waiver provision, however, the motion would have required approval by three-

fourths of the council.

Hintz also issued a rating of "needs improvement" in the personnel category based on what Hintz described as a lack of customer service in various departments.

"I believe the duty of all town employees and departments is to serve the public," Hintz said. "I do not feel the town manager expresses that to his employees nor exhibits it from what I have seen."

Engel and Anderson, on the other hand, gave Maniscalco an above average score in the personnel category.

Anderson credited Maniscalco with providing "a good balance of direction and autonomy" to his staff.

Engel said he is "responsive to residents' concerns regarding problematic employees" and effective in dealing with those concerns.

"He has proactively engaged employees in the team building programs that have been popular with staff and resulted in higher morale," she added.

Maniscalco said after the meeting that departmental challenges experienced today are the result of the decades-long failure to address problems including "non-functionality and lack of upkeep."

"It's not an issue that's been created in five years or even 10 years," he said. "I really think it's a 20- or 30-year problem we're fighting very hard to overcome."

It's a challenge he said he shares with Police Chief Sean Cox, who was hired in 2013.

"If you understood the system that we've inherited compared to where we are today, [you'd see] how far we've already come and probably how far we will go," Maniscalco said.

# Bevin Mansion Turned Into New B&B in East Hampton

by Elizabeth Regan

In what is being called the first bed-and-breakfast in town, a local businessman is set to open the doors to a luxurious overnight experience that harkens back to the glory days of the country's last remaining exclusive bell producer.

East Hampton general contractor Dean Brown purchased the Bevin House, a French Empire-style mansion at the crest of Barton Hill Road, for \$299,500 in 2015. The looming, three-story home with a porch wrapped around it was built by bell baron Philo Bevin in 1872.

Philo Bevin was a late addition to his brothers' bellmaking operation, which had been in existence since 1832. He joined William, Chauncey and Abner to incorporate the Bevin Bell Manufacturing Company in 1868.

On a rainy morning tour of the Bevin House Bed and Breakfast this week, the slate roof shone dark and moody below a cupola where Philo Bevin used to stand above it all.

"Back in the day, he was able to look down on his factory," Brown said.

According to local historians, building such a lavish home in an era of architectural restraint let everybody know the Bevin Bell Factory president was the richest bell maker in town.

Now, Brown wants to share the wealth.

"So many people want to see the house, and this is a perfect way to let those people experience what it is and what it has to offer," Brown said.

It is not yet known when they will have the chance, however. Brown said he is waiting on local and state permits before he can officially open for business.

"I've been ready for over a month," he said. "I've just been sitting in limbo waiting for the town and the state to do their thing."

There are six rooms where guests can spend the night; there are 12 seats in the dining area where they can start their day with an extravagant, gourmet breakfast.

Each guest room is named after a leading member of the six-generation bell company family: Philo, Abner, William, Chauncey, Stanley and Matthew. The latter is the current owner of the bell company and the governor of Kentucky.

Brown noted Matthew Bevin was one of four bidders who submitted an offer on the home before it ended up going to Brown.

The house was listed in 2013 for \$925,500

in 2014, according to real estate listings. The East Hampton assessor's database property states the property was acquired by a bank in March 2015.

Brown said the price went down after the house sustained damage from frozen pipes. He credited his skills and experience as a contractor for making the project possible.

"This is what I do by trade. That's what made this able to happen," he said. "Someone else would need a pretty deep wallet to do what I did."

The space – and there's a lot of it – is replete with antique details like etched glass, marble mantelpieces and intricately carved hardware on windows and doors.

A blend of antique and reproduction furniture acquired by Brown over the past year fills the 4,605-square-foot space. Brown said some pieces are sourced locally, from antique shops to the side of the road, while others are ordered online.

Among those acquisitions are 1,200 books bought in bulk from a used book store that was going out of business. That's how many hardcovers it took to fill the shelves lining the walls of the home's stately library.

According to Brown, men of earlier generations would retire to the wood-and-leather enclave with their pipes while women talked among themselves in a parlor on the other side of a massive pocket door.

With a floor to ceiling height of 12 feet on the first two floors and 11 on the third, looking over the banister from the top floor inspires a sense of vertigo. Above that are the pull-down steps to the cupola that Brown said will be closed off to guests.

When asked if there were any stories of hauntings in the historic home, Brown said the only inexplicable thing he's discovered is an unnatural amount of bobby pins.

"My girlfriend finds bobby pins everywhere. I don't know what that means. She will vacuum and all the sudden there's more," he said.

And while there have been some startling sounds – such as books falling – he said he's always been able to figure out the cause once he goes out to investigate.

When it comes to the more literal manifestations of history mingling with the modern day, the bed-and-breakfast features a complex but streamlined heating system separated by room



**The Bevin House Bed and Breakfast mixes the town's rich bellmaking history with modern conveniences in a sprawling, three-story mansion that is set to open its doors soon. Photo by Walt Jedziniak Photography**

to give guests control over their own thermostats. The new technology mixes with the old as heat is pushed through cast iron radiators refurbished by Brown.

The house was notable for being the first in town to have central heating, according to the National Register of Historic Places listing for the Belltown Historic District.

Brown pointed to other new-fangled elements that combine with the Victorian theme to create a rich experience for visitors. Internet-enabled smart devices throughout the home can play music or turn on lights based on the spoken word. In the inn's master suite, a ceiling

fixture in the bathroom acts as a light, fan, night light and audio speaker. The same bathroom features a shower with a rain showerhead and multiple body jets.

"It has to be nice, extravagant," he said. "That's my goal for this place."

*Rooms at the Bevin House Bed and Breakfast range from \$139-\$189 per night, breakfast included. More information is available at [thebevinhouse.com](http://thebevinhouse.com) and by calling 860-310-4913.*

## Colchester Town, School Budgets to Referendum

by Mike Thompson

A town meeting on the proposed town and school budgets brought no changes to spending packages – meaning the two budgets, which total \$55.34 million, will head to referendum next week.

Voting will take place at Town Hall, 127 Norwich Ave., from 6 a.m.-8 p.m. Tuesday, June 13.

The town budget totals \$14,708,083, an increase of \$318,371, or 2.21 percent, over the current year. Meanwhile, the Board of Education budget amounts to \$40,636,405, up \$931,341, or 2.35 percent, over current year spending.

If approved, the budgets would translate to a 32.37 mill rate, up 1.46 mills from the current year. This would mean that the owner of a \$250,000 home would see their property taxes on that house go from \$7,728 to \$8,093. However, due to revaluation, the majority of homeowners would see a tax increase far less than that, with many even seeing a tax decrease, Board of Finance Chairman Rob Tarlov said. He noted there is a link on [colchesterct.gov](http://colchesterct.gov) where people can check their own taxes; the page is listed alphabetically by street address.

Tarlov said he's unsure how the vote will go

next week.

"I don't know what to predict," adding there are "so many complications this year."

The chief complications the town has little control over. Gov. Dannel Malloy has proposed steep cuts in state aid to many area towns, though the state itself has yet to pass a budget.

Tarlov indicated that, if the budget fails next week, the town likely won't hold another referendum until the state passes a budget – and Colchester knows for sure what it will receive in state aid.

"[If the budget fails] at that point we're going to sit back and wait for the state to go 'Here's your number,'" he said.

Tarlov added the town is only "doing the referendum because we have to," explaining the state requires the town to hold at least one budget vote by June 15.

He added that every year the town holds its budget referendum before the state budget is finalized – but town officials at least have a general idea of what's going to happen. This year, with the governor and state legislators putting forth such wildly different proposals, it's been almost impossible.

"We don't have a good feel at all [what the

final impact to Colchester will be]," he said. "We just don't know."

If the budget fails next week, the town will send out tax bills in July based on the current year's mill rate of 30.91, Tarlov said, with a supplemental bill likely coming later when the state budget is finalized.

As for what happens to town spending in that instance, Tarlov said both the general government and the Board of Education "would continue to function," but said "discretionary spending would be put on hold until the budget passed."

"There's not a lot of discretionary spending" to be found in the budgets, Tarlov said, "but what there is, both sides have indicated they'll wait" until a town budget gets approved.

Superintendent of Schools Jeff Mathieu said he's got a good feeling about next week's vote – and based it on the much greater-than-usual public turnout at the school budget meetings this year.

"It feels like there's a lot more energy and a lot more enthusiasm to the education budget this year, so I am optimistic," he said.

If the spending package does fail, though, Mathieu indicated there are options for the

school board. He noted that, in January, he presented a list of possible areas that could be cut to produce budget savings, "and we have not exhausted everything on that list." The list, he said, includes items ranging from middle school sports to a part-time world language teacher.

Mathieu stressed, though, that it's tough at this point to say for sure what the board would have to do, as the finance board would have to put forth a figure the school board would have to cut.

But, all that is a hypothetical – one that Mathieu obviously hopes doesn't come to pass. And he reiterated he's "absolutely" hopeful it won't; that voters will be in a 'vote yes' mood at the polls next week, sending both the town and school budgets to victory.

First Selectman Art Shilosky is hopeful too, and noted that at Tuesday night's town meeting there was "no negative response" to the budget proposals.

"I feel very confident," he said. "We have a lot of support."

And turnout, he stressed, is key.

"We're going to get the troops out," he said. "We have to get out and get the people to come out and vote."

# Obituaries

## Colchester

### Kenneth Stevens

Kenneth Stevens, 52, of Colchester, formerly of Foster, R.I., passed away early Thursday morning, June 1, at Hartford Hospital.

Born in Hartford Oct. 8, 1964, he was a son of Raymond and Jeanne (Archambault) Stevens. Kenny was raised in Colchester and was a graduate of Bacon Academy. He worked as a member of the Local 24 Connecticut Carpenters Union for 17 years. Kenny was a basketball and baseball coach to many of Foster's and Colchester's kids over the years. He was an enthusiastic and excellent sportsman himself, participating in volleyball, soccer and men's softball. An avid Red Sox fan who also loved to dance, he will be remembered as a man with a great sense of humor who loved playing with all of his nieces and nephews.

In addition to his parents, Raymond and Jeanne of Colchester, he leaves a daughter, Taylor Stevens of Foster, R.I.; a sister, Tracy and husband Eddy Girouard of East Haddam; a former wife, Susan (Foley) Stevens of Foster, R.I.; nieces, Krystle and husband Daniel Petersen, Lyndsi and husband John Klimasewiski, Samantha Phillips, Brinley and Cassidy Foley and Cheyenne Dembek; two nephews, Nicholas and Joseph Girouard; two great-nieces, Riley Anne and McKinley Rose; and numerous extended family and friends.

Kenneth was predeceased by a brother, Mark Stevens.

Calling hours were held Sunday, June 4, at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester. The funeral liturgy was celebrated Monday, June 5, directly at St. Andrew Church, 128 Norwich Ave., Colchester. Burial followed in New St. Andrew Cemetery.

Donations in his memory may be made to a charity of your choice. For online condolences, visit [auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com](http://auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com).

## East Hampton

### Edith Dean Bazar

Edith Dean Bazar, 94, of East Hampton, died Sunday, June 4, at Middlesex Hospital in Middletown. On Sept. 1, 1922, Marshall and Amanda Wyman Dean welcomed her as the eighth of nine children.

On Jan. 3, 1942, Edith married Edward Harry Bazar Sr. While their time together wasn't nearly long enough, they had three sons, Edward Harry Bazar Jr., David Dean Bazar, and Thomas Raymond Bazar.

Edith will be remembered as fiercely independent and hardworking. While she was fortunate enough to travel to various places around the world, one of her favorite spots was her backyard. You could frequently drive by and see Edy tending to her garden with the regular visitor, Quincy the cat. Other than gardening, Edith enjoyed going on bus trips with the senior center and visits to the casino with her granddaughter. She was previously honored to be East Hampton's Old Home Days Senior of the Year. Her family and friends will forever feel her warmth from the many quilts she made for them always leaving one square to inscribe "with love." Along with quilting, she spent countless hours crocheting hats and teddy bears for cancer patients.

She is survived by her sons and their wives: Edward and Lois, David and Linda, and Thomas and Elaine; her grandchildren and their spouses, Robin Bazar Walleit and her husband Craig, Elizabeth Bazar Praskievicz and her husband Thomas, Shannon Bazar Lunn and her husband Marty, Devin Bazar, and Kevin Bazar and his wife Julie; her great-grandchildren, Thomas Praskievicz Jr., Megan Walleit, Brooke Praskievicz, Wesley and Brooke Bazar. Edith was very fond of her wonderful, caring neighbors, Pete and Marilyn, Jesse and Janice, and Patty.

In memory of Edith, the family requests for each individual to pay it forward and perform a random act of kindness.

Friends called at Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton, Thursday, June 8. Burial was private at the convenience of the family at Linwood Cemetery Colchester.

To leave online condolences, visit [spencerfuneralhomeinc.com](http://spencerfuneralhomeinc.com).



## Andover

### Vincent Paul Cormier

Vincent Paul Cormier, "Vinnie," of Lebanon and formerly of Andover, passed away Monday, June 5, at the age of 64, from injuries sustaining in a motorcycling accident. Born May 28, 1953, in Hartford, he was the son of Conrad Vincent Cormier and Virginia (Cirilli) Cormier of Farmington.

Vincent was raised in East Hartford with his three siblings. He moved to Andover with his wife and three children in 1986 and from there to Lebanon in 1995. Vinnie has always been a devoted family man and nothing was ever too good for his family. In recent years, his time spent with his granddaughter made many loving memories for her and those around them.

He was an active man who lived larger than life. He enjoyed his dogs and horses, hunting, and anything to do with the ocean and all the adventures it presented – fishing, boating, scuba diving and lobstering. In recent years he rekindled his love of motorcycles and spent many hours cruising with his beloved wife and their friends on his latest Harley.

People always knew when Vinnie was in the room; he was full of fun and jokes and loved to put a smile on people's faces. He worked hard to make sure that family and friends enjoyed their experiences and took home positive memories.

He founded Vinco Mobile Equipment Repair in 2001 and enjoyed the challenges that owning his own business presented. His creativity and inventive thinking allowed him to problem solve and challenge himself on difficult fabrication problems. His great work ethic was exhibited in every project he worked on. His business allowed him to meet and become friends with many people, and his presence and dependability will be missed.

In addition to his parents, he leaves his beloved wife, Dianne (Cormier) Cormier; three children, Virginia Hennessey and her husband Jesse of Windsor, Desiree Cormier of Hebron and Daniel Cormier of Marlborough; a grandchild, Raeme Hennessey; two sisters, Gail Cormier of Burlington and Claire Cormier of Raleigh, N.C.; a brother, Robert Cormier and his wife, Tracey of Gibsonia, Pa.; and numerous extended family and friends. He will be missed by many.

The family will receive guests 1-4 p.m. Sunday, June 11, at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester. Burial will be private.

For online condolences, visit [auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com](http://auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com).



## Marlborough

### Ann L. McCutcheon

Ann L. McCutcheon, 60, of Marlborough, passed away at home with her loving family at her side Saturday, June 3, following a courageous battle with cancer. Ann was born in Denford, England, on Nov. 13, 1956, to the late Albert and Madge (Brown) Sturm.

Ann grew up in Woodside, De., and graduated from Caesar Rodney High School in 1974. On July 23, 1983 she married Roark McCutcheon and they made their home in the Marlborough lake area in 1986. Ann worked for the Glastonbury School System for 20 years, where she made many close friends. She was an avid reader, enjoyed gardening and had a talent for crafts.

Ann is survived by her husband, Roark McCutcheon; sons, Ryan and Zachary; brothers, Christopher and Timothy Sturm; sister, Laura White; mother-in-law, Jayn W. Lukman; sisters-in-law Megan McCutcheon and Raleigh Stewart (John); nieces and nephews Nicolas and Michaela Sturm, and Gentry and Ian Stewart.

Friends may call at the Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton, Saturday June 10, from 10 a.m.-noon. Funeral services will begin at noon. Interment will be private at a later date.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be sent to Eric D. Green MD, PhD, Director, National Human Genome Research Institute, Building 31, Suite 4B09, 9000 Rockville Pike, MSC 2152 Bethesda, MD 20892-2152. For further information, visit [genome.gov/10000933](http://genome.gov/10000933).

To leave online condolences, visit [spencerfuneralhomeinc.com](http://spencerfuneralhomeinc.com).



## Colchester

### Sylvia Stevens Derdeyn

Sylvia Stevens Derdeyn, 89, of Colchester, passed away Saturday, June 3, at the Middlesex Hospital Hospice, with her family by her side. Born in New Orleans, La., she was a daughter of the late Lawrence and Beulah (Williams) Stevens.

Sylvia married her beloved Roman Derdeyn in 1954. The couple shared 27 years of marriage before he predeceased her in 1980.

She loved to read and work the *New York Times* crossword puzzles. Most importantly, she will be remembered by her family as a devoted and loving wife, mother and grandmother.

She leaves to mourn her loss four children and their spouses, Stephen Perrenod and his wife Tangmo of Bangkok, Thailand, Paul Derdeyn and his wife Jean Benoit of Branford, Andrea Alfano and her husband Ralph of Portland, and Larry Derdeyn of Oviedo, Spain; two grandchildren, Stephen Alfano and Jason Perrenod; and numerous extended family and friends.

Calling hours and a celebration of her life will be held today, June 9, from 4-6 p.m., at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester. Burial will be private.

Donations in her memory may be made to the Middlesex Hospital Hospice, 28 Crescent St. Middletown, CT 06457.



## Portland

### Carol Tacke Memorial Service

A memorial service for Carol Tacke of Portland will be held Friday, June 16, at 10:30 a.m., at Portland Riverfront Park, 284 Brownstone Ave, Portland. The Rev. Kari Rinas of Zion Lutheran Church will preside. Casual attire suggested and please bring a lawn chair.

Carol passed away May 13 at the age of 79. She was born Dec. 10, 1937, to George and Edna Schlottmann in Flushing, N.Y.

## Portland

### David Matthew Congdon

David Matthew Congdon of Portland, previously Middletown, passed away Sunday, June 4, after an 18-year battle with multiple sclerosis. Dave was born in Hartford Nov. 4, 1960. He lived in Middletown most of his life.

He attended Woodrow Wilson High School but left prior to graduation to enter the work force to help with family obligations. He later returned to school and received his G.E.D in 1996, an accomplishment of which he was extremely proud. After leaving school, Dave held jobs in various fields of employment. He worked at the Kane Brickyard in Middletown, E.B MFG in Middlefield and Quality Auto Parts, also in Middletown. When he was younger, Dave enjoyed playing touch football for the E.B. Warriors on Sundays. He also played softball for local teams.

Once of his favorite pastimes was to spend weekend nights with his closest friends, playing cards at The Den on Bow Lane. As he became less mobile, due to MS, he would spend his time watching his beloved Red Sox in the summer months and the New York Giants on Sundays in the fall.

Dave is survived by his loving daughter, Sarah Grace Zanelli-Congdon; father, Joseph Congdon; sister, Linda Congdon; three brothers, Joseph Congdon Jr. (Renee), Robert Congdon and Mark Congdon (Nancy).

He was preceded in death by his mother, Helen P. Congdon (Mrs. C).

Dave leaves behind many loving friends and family that will miss him every day. His family would like to thank the nurses and health care providers that took care of Dave through his long battle with MS.

Per David's request, there will not be calling hours prior to the service. The memorial services will be held on Saturday June 10, 2017 at 10:00 AM, at Third Congregational Church, 94 Miner St., Middletown. A private burial service will be held later. Love you, Bro.



*From the Editor's Desk*

# Observations & Ruminations

by Mike Thompson

This summer brings a couple of noteworthy work-related milestones for me.

Later this month, I'll mark 10 years as editor of the *Rivereast*. And then in August I'll celebrate my 15th year as a member of the *Rivereast/Glastonbury Citizen* family. (I covered Hebron and Andover for my first two years, then spent three years in Glastonbury for the *Citizen*, before coming back to the *Rivereast* to be editor.)

Like I said, these are milestone numbers – and have given me reason to pause lately, and look back on my time here. Fifteen years is an awfully long time to spend in journalism if you don't love it, and I'm happy to say I really do enjoy it. Looking back on my earlier years here, I have to say one of the great things about being a town reporter is it affords you the opportunity to write about such a variety of different topics. And I was fortunate that Andover, Hebron and Glastonbury were great places to cover, and could give me a lot of varied ideas. One of the stories I did over the years that still stands out in my mind is a piece called "Adventures in Speeddating."

During my time at the *Citizen*, in addition to being one of the reporters covering the town I also assembled the "Out and About" section, which was like a community calendar of upcoming events in town. One day in the summer of 2005, I received a notice for the paper publicizing an event that was being put on by the organization 8-Minute Dating. As the name suggests, the organization is a speeddating group.

Intrigued, and always looking for an interesting story to tell, I decided to sign up and go to the function "undercover," as an eight-minute dater. I thought it would make for a rather fun story – and it did. It was a pleasant change of pace from the ordinary. I recently found it in my archives and gave it a read. While, looking back, parts of it are a little embarrassing – boy I could be a judgmental little 26-year-old punk when I wanted to be – and the whole thing is more overwritten than necessary, it was a fun little step back in time, and in the spirit of this summer's "workiversary," thought I'd share it here. So here's the story, exactly as it appeared in the July 28, 2005, edition of *The Glastonbury Citizen*:

## Adventures in Speeddating

by Mike Thompson

I'm the one who puts together the Out and About listings for the paper each week, so I got an early heads-up on a speeddating event held last Tuesday, July 19, at Main & Hopewell. My job was to list it in the paper, but the thought of actually going to the event intrigued me. I understood the concept: you have a certain number of minutes to impress a date, and then move on to another one. But I wondered what the experience was actually like. Charlotte had an unpleasant run-in with speeddating on *Sex and the City* – was that an accurate depiction, or yet another example of TV lying to me?

So, after some prodding by co-workers, I agreed to exploit my singleness for the sake of *The Citizen*, and go undercover at speeddating. How's that for journalistic dedication? After I decided to go to the event, I discovered that, while folks of any age could go, the function was geared towards singles aged 32 to 47. I am only 26, but I wasn't going to let that trivial fact get in the way of a story.

As the event, which was officially called 8-Minute Dating, drew closer, I began to worry about being surrounded by single women in their 30s and 40s. Would they be desperate housewives, minus the housewives? On the night of the event, I drove up to the Main & Hopewell, gritted my teeth, and found out. And what I discovered were nice women and, overall, a very pleasant evening.

At the restaurant, I was given a nametag with a number, and something resembling a scorecard. Organizer Hilory Wagner told me that, for each of my eight-minute dates, I should write down the number of the woman I sat with. When the event was over, I could go home, log on to the 8-Minute Dating website, and punch in the number of any woman I wanted to see again. If that woman had also punched in my number, then I'd get her contact information. If she hadn't, I'd get

nothing. That way, if you strike out, you can do it in the comfort of your own home, and nobody knows about it except your computer. Not bad.

Most of us arrived a few minutes early and stood around like kids at a middle school dance. The guys kept to themselves, and so did the women. All that was missing was an appearance by C&C Music Factory. But then Wagner called us together and commenced the 8-Minute Dating festivities. Our little scorecards included lists of possible conversation topics, one of them "what work do you do?" I wanted to get a good feel for the event, and I didn't think I could do that if my "dates" knew I was a reporter looking for a story. I told each of my nine dates I worked for *The Citizen*, but in the layout section, and my task was helping to assemble the paper. They seemed impressed.

The women I dated had a variety of jobs; two of the nine were employed as recruiters.

Not Army recruiters, more like headhunters. Two had relocated to Connecticut from California.

A mid-30s blonde named "Jennie," (the stories you're reading are true; the names of my dates have been changed to protect the single) got the conversational ball rolling by asking about my interests. I'm a baseball fan, I said, and I like the Mets. "The New Jersey Mets?" she said. "No," I answered, "the New York Mets." To which she replied, "The New York Mets? How many teams does New York have?"

Another mid-30s blonde, whom I'll call "Tiffani," learned the last movie I saw was *Bewitched*, and that I saw it mostly because I enjoyed the TV show growing up, but also because I'm a big fan of Nicole Kidman. From there we moved to Nicole's ex Tom Cruise, recapping his infamous "You're being glib" interview with Matt Lauer, and agreeing about what a nutcase the guy's become. It was an enjoyable conversation, and I was willing to overlook her being a Yankees fan.

It seemed clear I was the youngest person present, but only one of the women mentioned my age. Maybe I just look older. (That's a fairly scary thought.) My fifth date of the evening, a young looking brunette named "Shannen," asked me where I grew up. When I said Manchester, she asked me if I went to East Catholic. I found that a rather odd question, considering there a few high schools in Manchester to choose from, but she was on the money – I am an East grad.

Shannen asked when I graduated, and I truthfully told her I was a member of the Class of 1997, knowing that it would expose me as being only in my mid-20s. (For some reason, while I had no problem lying about my job, I felt the need to be honest about the year I graduated high school.) She told me she was an East Catholic Eagle from the Class of '91.

Then she said, "Wait a minute? How old are you?"

"Twenty-six," I sheepishly answered. "You do know this event is designed for people between 32 and 47, right?" Shannen asked.

I was caught. Do I blow my cover, knowing that I'm only halfway through my dates for the evening? I told Shannen that I knew I fell below the target age, but that I've always been attracted to older women. She seemed to believe me, and then proceeded to tell me that just because the women are older doesn't necessarily mean they're more mature.

Most of my dates said they had never been to a speeddating event before, and were attending it more out of curiosity than an intense desire to find a man. They were fun to talk with, and in most cases the eight minutes flew by. Not only did I have a good time, so did Wagner, who after the event said she considered the evening a success.

"I wouldn't be so bold as to say that there were many matches made in heaven," Wagner said, "but at the very least, it's an entertaining evening out, good conversation, with other single folks. At best, it's an opportunity to meet someone who might change your life!"

Now, I don't think I met anyone who'll change my life, but it was still a nice, memorable evening. It's not very often you date nine women who are between 10 and 15 years older than you. Not on a Tuesday night, anyway.

## East Hampton Police News

5/23: Tucker Minor, 18, of 198 Lake Dr., East Hampton was issued a summons for misuse of plates and two counts of operating an unregistered motor vehicle (truck and trailer), East Hampton Police said.

5/25: Sillan Buckham, 40, of 93 Cleveland Ave., Hartford, was arrested and charged with fourth-degree larceny, second-degree identity theft, credit card theft, automatic teller fraud, possession of personal identifying information access device and illegal use of credit card, police said.

5/26: Colton L. Reilly, 22, of 198 Oxford St., Hartford, was issued a summons for operating an unregistered motor vehicle and operating with a suspended license, police said.

5/26: Carrie Martin, 39, of 9 Cedar Ridge, was issued a summons for misuse of plates and operating an unregistered motor vehicle, police said.

## Portland Police News

5/31: George Kallmeyer, 58, of 5 Wellwyn Drive, was charged with failure to renew registration, disobeying an officer's signal, failure to obey traffic control signal, improper use of marker plate and operating a motor vehicle without an interlock device, Portland Police said.

6/2: Kurt Vogt Jr., 25, of 11 Strickland St., was charged with simple trespass, police said.

5/28: Angel Marie Hoppe, 33, of 239 Keeney St., Glastonbury, was arrested and charged with sixth-degree larceny and second-degree failure to appear, police said.

5/28: Zachary J. White, 28, of 22 N. Maple St., was arrested and charged with failure to drive right, driving under the influence, operating a motor vehicle while using a cell phone and operating without insurance, police said.

5/29: Lisa Harvey, 49, of 193 Hog Hill Rd., was arrested and charged with third-degree assault and disorderly conduct, police said. Later the same evening she was charged with violation of conditions of release, police added.

5/30: Sarah Ashley Mount, 30, of 239 Keeney St., Glastonbury, was arrested and charged with sixth-degree larceny, police said.

Also, from May 22-28, officers responded to 12 medical calls, two motor vehicle crashes and eight alarms, and made 61 traffic stops.

## Colchester Police News

6/2: State police said Ariel R. Larned, 29, of 306 Tuckie Rd., North Windham, was arrested and charged with second-degree failure to appear.

## Marlborough Police News

5/29: State police said Caleb Rodriquez, 30, of 195 Old Farm Rd., Springfield, Mass., was arrested and charged with reckless driving and operating under the influence of alcohol/drugs.

## Hebron Youth in Stolen Vehicle Strikes Cruiser

State police said they are looking for a juvenile in a stolen vehicle who struck a Manchester Police Department cruiser in Hebron and fled from a trooper in Bolton.

A Manchester police officer received a minor injury when his cruiser was hit, according to state police.

State police said the incident occurred Tuesday at approximately 6:11 p.m. as Hebron Resident State Trooper Dan Greenwood was assisting Manchester police, who were in town to take the juvenile into custody.

The juvenile showed up in a black 2001 Mercedes E320 that had been stolen from Manchester, according to state police. The license plate was CTAH98067.

State police said the Manchester officer at-

tempted to box in the stolen vehicle on a private driveway. The juvenile backed up the stolen vehicle and then drove forward, striking the driver's side door of the cruiser and causing minor injury to the officer standing inside the open door.

The juvenile left the scene and was spotted by Bolton Resident Trooper Brian Contenta, state police said. The trooper tried to stop the vehicle, which sped away onto I-384 West.

State police are asking anyone with information on the whereabouts of the vehicle to call Troop K at 860-465-5400 or to text TIP711 plus the information to CRIMES (274637). All calls and texts will remain confidential.

## Motorcyclist Sustains Minor Injury on Route 2 in Colchester

A Friday evening accident left a motorcyclist with minor injuries and a verbal warning after a crash on Route 2 in Colchester, state police said.

Brian Lee Marquez, 46, of 11 Harland Rd., Norwich, was traveling east just past the start of Route 11 when traffic began to slow, according to the accident report.

The report said Marquez attempted to slow

down as well, but had to lay down his motorcycle on its left side to avoid collision with the vehicle in front of him.

Marquez was transported to William W. Backus Hospital in Norwich with minor injuries, the report said.

He was found at fault for following too closely and was issued a verbal warning, according to the report.