

RIVEREAST

News Bulletin

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

Volume 43, Number 21

Published by The Glastonbury Citizen

March 8, 2019



Kindness is Cool... Members of the volunteer group Colchester is Kind recently led kindness initiatives in each of the town's four schools. Colchester Elementary School and Jack Jackter Intermediate School saw a positive Post-It note placed on every student's locker; and students at William J. Johnston Middle School received a Be a Good Human magnet on their lockers (Colchester Eye Care and Family Physical Therapy supported the project). Pictured are members of the group, top row from left, Abby Burke, Carol Burke, Stefanie Goodie, Beverly Noehren and Michelle Noehren; bottom from left, Colton Waterman, Jennifer Waterman, Alyssa Waterman and Lillian Hauserman.

Elmcrest Demolition Could Start in Spring

by Elizabeth Regan

Demolition of the former Elmcrest Hospital property could begin with the spring thaw and construction of the \$30 million apartment complex and neighborhood shopping center could start this summer, based on the latest information provided to Portland officials by developers.

The Brainerd Place development is a venture of the Rochester, NY-based DiMarco Group and Danbury-based BRT General Corporation.

Land use and economic development coordinator Mary Dickerson said this week she expects the developers to submit a building permit application for the first of the two-phase project within 90 days.

Town staff members must review the application and make the appropriate inspections before issuing the permit and collecting the associated fees from the developers, Dickerson said.

The site plan for the roughly 15-acre, \$30 million mixed-use development includes two apartment buildings with a total of 238 units and 108,510 square feet of commercial space.

A brochure from the project's leasing firm, Atlantic Retail, shows the project will be anchored by CVS Pharmacy.

Demolition work, which Dickerson estimated would begin in April, will raze numerous buildings that made up the old psychiatric hospital and pull up old, underground infrastructure including oil tanks and utility lines.

The project also includes the demolition of

homes on the side of Perry Avenue adjacent to construction.

The site has been vacant for more than 10 years. Officials and residents since then have shown a commitment to ensuring the site's most architecturally and culturally significant landmarks are preserved as part of any development.

Construction will likely begin in the summer with foundation and footing work, according to Dickerson. Those driving by should be able to see visible progress in the form of walls going up sometime in the fall.

Dickerson said Dan Bertram, of BRT General Corporation, told her last week that initial construction will focus on a 102-unit apartment building and the renovation of the 1852 Erastus Brainerd Jr. House and the 1884 John H. Sage House.

The 2,900-square-foot Brainerd House will serve as the clubhouse and leasing office for the apartments, while the Sage House will have about 2,400 square feet of retail space.

Dickerson said the apartment building, estimated at \$13.21 million based on 2016 valuation data, will bring in approximately \$158,513 in building permit fees. The pharmacy building, valued at \$1.95 million, will bring in about \$23,377 in building permit fees.

The fees are used to cover the cost of engineering reviews and inspections, according to Dickerson.

She said the other key component of the first phase involves infrastructure work. That means

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RHAM Writers Share Talents with Community

by Sloan Brewster

After four years of being published strictly for the school, *RHAMbler*, RHAM High School's student magazine, released a first-ever community issue last month.

The issue came out Feb. 4, and was available at various businesses in Hebron, Andover and Marlborough.

For the past four years, the magazine has been published monthly for students, said English teacher Meg Clifton, who – with art/tech teacher Shelley Osowiecki – co-teaches the journalism class that puts out the magazine. The community issue was hand-delivered by students, who compiled a list of businesses in the three towns RHAM serves.

It was Osowiecki who had the light bulb moment that led to the community issue.

She was at a Board of Education meeting at which a parent spoke about making the greater community more aware of the great things done at RHAM. Osowiecki immediately thought a twist on the magazine, which was written by students for students, could be a way to spread the word.

Clifton said this week the hope is to make the community issue an annual affair.

Last week, students took a few minutes out

of class to chat about the community issue and all things *RHAMbler* with the *Rivereast*.

Dan O'Connor, a senior who said he plans to study journalism in college, is *RHAMbler* editor-in-chief and has taken the class for two years.

The community issue is a variation on the standard school releases, which are geared toward student readers, O'Connor said.

"[The community issue is] a lot of stories about the RHAM community and RHAM programs, so the community can see what's going on here and maybe fund us," he said.

To come up with stories, magazine staff has brainstorming sessions where everybody pitches ideas.

O'Connor wrote about independent studies at RHAM. His research entailed interviewing and photographing students who were in the process of independent studies. He reached out to the teacher who runs the studies to get names of students and went from there to the students themselves.

Independent studies are for students with specific interests, he explained. O'Connor, for example, is doing one in sign language, and has a textbook; a sign language teacher who lives

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Dan O'Connor is a RHAM High School senior and editor-in-chief of *RHAMbler*, the monthly magazine written by students for students. It's typically distributed solely at the school, but in February, the first-ever community issue was released.

Elmcrest Demolition cont. from Front Page

updating the property’s water, sewer, electric and telephone lines.

The two phases in total are expected to take up to eight years to complete, according to land use department documents.

The Office of State Traffic Authority in January released its approval in the form of a preliminary traffic investigation report, which was subsequently filed with the town clerk according to state DOT requirements. Town Clerk Ryan Curley said the document was delivered to his office on Feb. 22 by BRT General Corporation treasurer Jessica Granger.

A DOT spokesman said the developers had not filed a \$1.67 million bond as of Wednesday. The bond must be filed with the state before construction can begin, based on DOT guidelines.

One of the outstanding issues with the project is the 1830 Hart-Jarvis House, which is slated to be moved from its current spot on the property to the southwest corner.

A private organization identified as the Hart Jarvis Revitalization Alliance, Inc. plans to purchase and restore the building, according to land use documents.

The group has registered as a business entity with the Office of the Secretary of the State and is in the process of securing its nonprofit status with the IRS, according to president Claire Frisbie.

A condition of the February 2018 Planning

and Zoning special permit authorizing the mixed-use development specifies the Hart-Jarvis House must be moved prior to the completion of phase one. It also requires proof that ownership of the building was transferred with the condition the new owner renovate it “in substantial conformance” with the U.S. Secretary of the Interior’s guidelines for historic rehabilitation.

According to a Jan. 30 letter from the Hart Jarvis Revitalization Alliance to Bertram, the Portland-based group was formed “to take ownership of the house, protect its historic designation and preserve and restore it so that it may be used as a cultural, economic, and social resource for the community.”

Frisbie in the letter told Bertram the group was drafting a memorandum of understanding to facilitate “constructive communication” between the alliance and the developers.

Elwin Guild, the Portland Economic Development chairman and a longtime grassroots activist promoting revitalization of the former Elmcrest Hospital, is identified as the secretary and director in the group’s listing with the Secretary of the State. He said last year that efforts to relocate and restore the Hart-Jarvis House will cost roughly \$1 million, with about \$100,000 going toward relocation of the grand, four-columned house.

Guild declined to comment on plans for the Hart-Jarvis House.

RHAM Writers cont. from Front Page

near him is guiding him through the lessons.

“So everyone sort of has something like that,” he said. “They have a mentor,”

Anjun Akhand, also a senior, wrote about seniors who committed early to Ivy League schools. It was a subject that students hoped would attract adult readers, she said.

“When we were brainstorming ideas we really needed to think about articles that would draw in parents,” she said.

Informing people that there are students at RHAM who are planning college careers at Ivy League schools may give them a reason to choose RHAM as a pathway for their children, rather than selecting a private or magnet school, Akhand said.

“If they send kids to RHAM, they would still have opportunities for continuing education,” she said. “A lot of parents that have kids in the school system chose to send them to magnet schools and private schools.”

While some parents may think there are better opportunities at magnet and private schools, that is not so, Akhand said. RHAM is still the better choice for students who plan to further their education.

Akhand said she spoke to 22 students and to guidance counselors and got statistics for her piece.

Kenzie Smith, a senior, does opinion pieces. For the community issue, she wrote a review about the movie *A Star is Born*, a movie she “really liked.”

Her opinion piece for the February student issue, on the other hand, was a “candy review,” for which she wrote about sweets that are not widely known or enjoyed, such as Whatchamacallits, Sweet Tart Ropes and 100 Grand Bars.

They’re all favorites, she said, but she can’t enjoy them for health reasons.

Bethany Loto, a sophomore, wrote about the Latin program at RHAM. A Latin student herself, Loto said she feels the language is not as popular among students as Spanish and French, so she wanted to give it a little press time.

In her research, she talked to the current Latin teacher and a retired teacher who had a 30-year career teaching the subject at RHAM.

Jaclyn Santella, a senior, wrote about RHAM’s sports program. The story focused on the program’s success in the last school year and the part the community played in that, she said. She talked to students on teams to get her information, oftentimes just chatting when she met them in the halls.

Fellow senior and *RHAM*bler correspondent Abbey Perrin, meanwhile, is a magazine veteran, having already written for online magazines, including *Affinity Magazine* and *Perception Magazine*.

With plans to embrace a career in music, she tends to write music reviews for the online publications, but for *RHAM*bler’s community issue, she did some coverage of live events – specifically, taking on a school pep rally.

The research was a bit different than what she does when she writes about music.

“For music it’s mostly opinion-based and if you research, [it’s] into the artist and you don’t need to consult anyone else, but for live coverage you have to get all kinds of perspectives and talk to students and teachers,” she said.

She said her preference in the end was lifestyle pieces in which she can get interesting and diverse feedback from lots of different people.

The highlight of the morning was the arrival of the Feb. 28 student issue of the magazine, which students grabbed and perused for errors. They quickly noticed that one of the mistakes was an omission on the staff list on the back cover – and was also in an earlier issue. At Clifton’s behest, O’Connor went to his station and fixed it on the template to prevent future misprints.

Osowiecki, who is in charge of the layout and graphic design side of the operation, said she has the students work on the magazine using InDesign and Adobe Photoshop.

Visuals draw readers in, she said, adding that it’s about how art is packaged.

“The students have to learn how to put the things together,” she said. “How to put it in a way that invites people to read it and moves somebody through the art sequentially; you want to control how the viewer reads your pages.”

When asked about challenges to getting their work in, the students said meeting deadlines and getting folks to get back to them were on the top of the list. The magazine even had to push back a deadline once when too many students were sick.

Like many journalists out there, however, most of the writers were keen to work against time constraints.

“Deadline rush [helps], for me it’s easier because you have to do it,” O’Connor said. “I work better under pressure.”

Most of the group nodded in agreement.

Observations & Ruminations

by Mike Thompson

A few readers have reached out to us at the *Rivereast* to express concern over a couple of stories in last week’s issue that dealt with sexual assaults that had allegedly occurred in two of our towns. So, I just wanted to take a few moments to address them.

The readers were concerned with what they felt was unnecessary graphic detail in the stories, and even in some cases upset that we did the stories at all – that we should’ve left the victims alone, and that such subject matter wasn’t fit for a community, family newspaper like the *Rivereast*.

Publishing stories like the two that appeared last week isn’t something anyone here takes lightly. Reporting on a sexual assault – particularly one that involves a child – is one of the most revolting tasks a journalist faces. It involves going through an arrest warrant affidavit and being confronted with page after page of mankind at its absolute worst – and then having to distill it all for the reader. It’s not fun, at all.

But it has to be done.

It would simply be irresponsible to not report on those alleged assaults. To turn a blind eye to it would be akin to saying it never happened in the first place – and how is that fair, to anyone? Denying the act happened isn’t fair to the victim, lets the perpetrator off the hook, and it also isn’t fair to the other people living in town. Readers have a right to know what’s happening in their own town. And we, as journalists, have an obligation to tell them about it.

As for the details in these types of stories: yes, they can sometimes be graphic. Unfortunately, it comes with the territory when you’re reporting on sexual assaults. The arrest warrants themselves are almost always much, much more graphic than anything we include with the story. We include the parts we feel are necessary to tell an accurate account of what happened – and the simple truth is that in stories like that, those details can often be difficult to read.

But, again, sugarcoating what happened does all involved a disservice. If readers have a right to know what happened – and I firmly believe they do – they have a right to know the whole story. Does that mean making the story read like something you might find on a pornography website? No. Like I said, the police when writing these warrants typically go into much more explicit detail than anything we would publish. But telling an incomplete story just because it’s less squeamish to read isn’t doing our duty when it comes to our readers.

I know these sexual assault stories are difficult to read sometimes. They’re difficult for us to write. But they’re a necessary part of the job. To not report on them would be very irresponsible.

* * *

On a much more pleasant note: Here’s some happy news to share from one of the *Rivereast*’s neighboring towns, East Haddam. The Fox Hopyard Golf Club was recently named the number one golf course in the state.

That’s according to the folks at Golf Advisor, a sister company of The Golf Channel. Golf Advisor describes itself as “the leading source of golf course ratings and reviews by golfers, for golfers.” The company recently came out with its “Best-of 2018” lists, which

included the Top 15 golf courses in Connecticut – and Fox Hopyard came out on top.

The golf course didn’t come out too badly in the national rankings either; it was named the No. 24 golf course in the United States.

That’s pretty sweet, especially for a local golf course.

In a press release, Golf Advisor explained that the annual Best-of lists “are compiled by analyzing the ratings and reviews submitted by members of the golfing community throughout the year. The company uses the Golf Advisor Index logic that weights newer reviews and combines them with a course’s weighted subcategory averages.” The subcategories include: Value, Conditions, Layout, Pace of Play, Friendliness and Off-Course Amenities.

In 2018, the release said, Fox Hopyard was rated an average of 4.8 out of 5 stars on Golf Advisor – with a full 100 percent of reviewers recommending the course to other golfers.

Brian Cummings, director of golf at Fox Hopyard, said the course “is completely unique and invites positive reviews because people have this incredible experience when they visit and can’t help but remark on the layout.”

The 18-hole, Par 71 Fox Hopyard is a semi-private course that covers 519 acres, 123 of which are maintained. It is surrounded by Devils Hopyard State Park.

Cummings added, “It’s an incredible honor to be named as the number one destination to play in Connecticut and among the top 25 in the country, especially in light of the tremendous competition.”

Can Fox Hopyard repeat in 2019? Cummings sure hopes so – and said the course is aiming to “move up the charts in the USA.”

For more on the golf course, visit golfthefox.com/fox-hopyard.

* * *

Lastly, area teens – and their parents – might be interested in knowing Vinal Technical High School in Middletown will hold an Open House for prospective students and their families on Thursday, March 14, from 4:30-6:30 p.m., at 60 Daniels St., Middletown. Vinal Tech is currently accepting applications for students entering grades 9 and 10 coming this fall 2019.

The Open House event will provide prospective students with information about academics and the 10 trade areas offered by the technical school, which are: automotive collision repair and refinishing; automotive technology; carpentry; criminal justice and protective services; culinary arts; electrical; hair-dressing and cosmetology; heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC); information systems technology; and precision machining.

Vinal Tech is a full-day program for students in grades nine-12. The technical high school offers students the chance to work on projects and gain hands-on career development experience through partnerships with local companies.

For more information about the Open House, contact Brian Pereira at 860-344-7100 ext. 316 or Brian.Pereira@ct.gov. Visit vinal.cttech.org to download an application.

* * *

See you next week.

East Hampton Council Considers Treatments for Blue-Green Algae

by Elizabeth Regan

The application of copper sulfate treatments to Lake Pocotopaug — described by proponents as a “short term” or “Band-Aid” approach — could help control potentially toxic blue-green algae blooms this summer while the town continues to explore longer-lasting solutions.

The Town Council last week authorized a three-year pesticide permit application to be filed with the state Department of Energy and Environmental Protection as a preliminary step in the process, but stopped short of approving funding for the actual treatments.

Blue-green algae — technically known as cyanobacteria — has plagued the lake for decades. The possibly poisonous blooms have led to weeks-long beach closures every summer since 2014, the year after the state Department of Public Health established guidelines to protect residents from possible health risks.

SOLitude Lake Management, a national environmental firm, is charging \$1,240 to oversee the permit application. The amount includes \$600 in state filing fees, according to the contract.

The state requires a permit for anyone looking to introduce pesticides into water bodies to get rid of vegetation, fish or other aquatic organisms.

The copper sulfate treatments themselves cost \$7,980 for each half the lake, according to Solitude.

Research scientist Hillary Kenyon, of the town’s consulting firm Northeast Aquatic Re-

search, said this week the treatments would be applied “just before” cyanobacteria cell counts reach harmful levels — probably in late June or early July.

The town has a contract with Northeast Aquatic Research to conduct regular testing and to report on the findings. The firm is led by limnologist and certified lake manager George Knoecklein.

Conservation-Lake Commission Vice Chairman Joe Carbonell told councilors the commission recommends treating both sides of the lake this year and possibly another treatment next year.

Carbonell said the commission voted twice last year to apply for the permit, but the request didn’t make it to the council. He said he didn’t know what caused the lapse in communication.

A review of meeting minutes shows the council unanimously authorized a one-year permit on March 21, 2017. Town Manager Michael Maniscalco this week confirmed the permit application was submitted and the permit was granted by the state.

Carbonell told councilman at last week’s meeting that it was too late to treat the lake by the time the permit was received. But he said authorizing the permit application now should allow it to be processed in time to treat the lake once water testing by the town’s consulting lake expert begins to indicate a rise in blue-green algae levels in the summer.

A fact sheet from the state environmental

protection department cited an average processing time of about one-and-a-half months for the permit, though different variables could result in a longer wait.

Carbonell told the *Rivereast* this week that processing time should be shorter this year because the town successfully secured a permit last time.

A ‘Reset’ Button

According to Kenyon, the treatment could be effective “from just a couple weeks to potentially months.”

“You can think of it as hitting the ‘algae reset button’ because the copper kills cells in the water column, and then the algae and cyanobacteria have to start repopulating from very low numbers again,” the research scientist said.

She described the treatments as “an experiment” to determine exactly how long the treatment can stave off high cyanobacteria cell counts — and to potentially prevent beach closures and public health advisories for an entire swimming season.

It also buys time for the town to look at more comprehensive solutions.

Kenyon illustrated the safety of the treatment when she noted it is approved for use in drinking water reservoirs.

“People are often worried that copper treatments will harm other aquatic life, but the key thing to remember is that the dosage allowed for lake treatments is way too low to harm most

other lake organisms,” she said.

Councilor Mark Philhower expressed his own concerns at last week’s meeting when he compared the proposed copper sulfate treatment to disastrous aluminum sulfate treatments almost two decades ago that killed roughly 10,000 fish.

“Being the one who sat on the council that approved the alum treatment, and then watching the fish float the next day, you understand my reservations about saying ‘yeah, go ahead and do it,’” Philhower said.

A report from Northeast Aquatics Research said the alum treatments were applied in 2000 and 2001 with no effect on the seasonal blue-green algae blooms.

The SOLitude contract states a fish kill is unlikely, but notes the risk is greater in extremely hot weather due to low oxygen levels and high water temperatures.

Kenyon this week described a fish kill related to copper sulfate treatment as very unlikely, adding that the risk largely applies to shallow lakes with less oxygen. She said constant wind-mixing in Lake Pocotopaug supplies the top four meters with “plenty of oxygen” for fish during the summer.

The council will need to approve any copper sulfate treatment pending receipt of the permit.

Town Finance Director Jeff Jylkka said this week there is \$246,710 in the town’s capital budget for lake water quality infrastructure projects.

Money for Pensions Beefs Up East Hampton School Budget

by Elizabeth Regan

The East Hampton Board of Education last week approved a \$31.58 million budget proposal that takes into account preliminary action at the state level to require local governments to pay a portion of teachers’ pension costs.

The \$31.58 million proposal approved by the school board Feb. 28 is an increase of \$936,385 — or 3.05 percent — over the current education budget.

The vote was 7 to 0, with members Amanda Amtmanis and Lois Villa absent.

The proposed budget now goes to the Board of Finance for review; the Board of Education will present it to the finance board later this month. The finance board can make changes to the education budget’s bottom line but must leave it up to the school board to decide how the changes are itemized.

The school board’s proposed spending package includes an unanticipated \$151,185 to cover a proposal by Gov. Ned Lamont that could end up requiring the town to help fund retirement costs for its teachers.

Lamont announced the plan in his Feb. 20 budget address.

It’s up to state lawmakers to approve a final state budget before the governor signs it into law later this year. That means it’s not yet clear if Lamont’s plan for municipalities to share in the cost of teachers’ pensions will actually materialize this time around.

Teachers in Connecticut do not pay into the Social Security system. Instead, they make a mandatory contribution of 7 percent of their annual salary into the state retirement fund, according to the 2018 Connecticut Teachers’ Retirement Handbook.

But the state underfunded the Teachers’ Retirement System for decades and is now grappling with how to keep the spiraling costs in check.

One part of the solution Lamont wants state lawmakers to consider would have most cities and towns pay at least 25 percent of teachers’ retirement costs. Municipalities that give teachers more than the statewide median salary would pay more, while the 25 most economically “distressed” municipalities would contribute only 5 percent. The distressed designation currently applies to cities including New London, New Britain and Hartford as well as small towns like Montville, Sprague and Griswold.

Without the \$151,185 for teachers’ retirement costs, the school board had been looking at a 2.5 percent increase over the current budget. The spending plan, originally presented by Superintendent of Schools Paul Smith almost two

months ago, includes several new staffing positions and advancements in science and technology programming.

New Positions

According to Smith, three of the new staffing positions won’t cost the district any additional money. He told school board members in January that a budget compromise forged last year during a contentious and prolonged budget season provides “an additional \$140,000” in this year’s proposed budget.

He said \$140,000 in funding for the current year means the same amount can be used next year to introduce a Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) coordinator for grades 4-8 and a sixth grade world language teacher.

The supplemental appropriation resulting from last year’s budget compromise was used to hire a math and language arts remedial teacher in Memorial School, a middle school special education teacher and a high school English teacher. The teachers started work mid-year.

The proposed budget carries over the high school English and middle school special education positions restored in the current budget and adds a literacy specialist at the middle school and a special education teacher at Memorial School.

Smith said the “realignment” is possible because of a change to the middle school schedule that provides children with one English Language Arts class every day of the week instead of splitting one period between English and reading. The change freed up the four reading teachers to take positions elsewhere in the district, he said.

Smith requested the literacy specialist at the middle school to support struggling readers now that the reading classes have been removed from the schedule.

The cost of a new autism specialist for the district will be offset by tuition paid by out-of-district special education students, Smith said.

The 2019-20 budget proposal also includes a Memorial School psychologist to support the special education program, which is designed to provide a therapeutic environment and help to avoid costly outplacements. Smith said a psychologist was hired mid-year in the current budget at \$82,525 and will now need to be carried through into the next school year.

One of the largest budget drivers for the 2.5 percent increase are an estimated 6 percent health insurance hike, according to Smith. The district in 2017 switched to the Connecticut Partnership Plan, which allows municipal employees to become part of the same plan of-

fered to state employees.

Teachers’ Pension Contribution

At a joint meeting of the Board of Education, Board of Finance and Town Council held immediately prior to the school board’s budget vote, town Finance Director Jeff Jylkka said the governor’s proposed \$151,185 pension contribution to the state is a “relatively small” amount compared to what the state is paying for East Hampton’s teachers’ retirement costs.

Jylkka said the state last year paid \$5.6 million for the town’s teachers’ pension costs.

The state is paying a total \$1.3 billion into the teachers’ retirement fund this year, according to the *Connecticut Mirror*.

East Hampton’s “proportionate share” of the statewide pension liability for teachers is \$48.8 million, Jylkka said.

On the general government side of the budget, which includes town revenue, Town Manager Michael Maniscalco has already incorporated a projected decrease of \$263,925, or 3.7 percent, in education funding from the state. The cut was recommended as part of Lamont’s budget plan.

Maniscalco will officially release his budget recommendation in a presentation on March 25.

Preliminary numbers provided by the town show a requested 4.23 percent increase in general government spending over the current year.

Town Council Chairman Melissa Engel told school board members at the tri-board meeting it’s the town’s responsibility to adjust for the decrease in education aid from the state, which is designed to help offset the amount of money taxpayers must provide for schools.

But the pension contribution is not a decrease in revenue; it’s an additional expense being passed on to the town that should be borne by the Board of Education, according to Engel.

“Revenue is handled, quite honestly, by general government. It’s not your job. But we also don’t hire teachers — you do,” she told school board members at the meeting.

Councilman Josh Piteo described the governor’s proposal as governmental overreach.

“Towns never voted on this. We voted on contracts for teachers, but we never had a pension vote at any time. But they’re giving us a bill,” he said. “It’s like taxation without representation. It’s not cool at all.”

Smith this week told the *Rivereast* he is “distressed” by Lamont’s recommendation to push some of the teachers’ pension payments onto municipalities.

“Teacher retirement is something that was

determined by the state long ago,” he said. “Towns don’t have any negotiating aspects over teacher pensions, so this is an item that is blindsiding towns just as they’re finishing or have already finished their budgets for next year.”

Board of Education Chairman Christopher Goff this week said the school board decided to include the possible teachers’ retirement contribution in the education budget proposal in order to be proactive.

Addressing the possibility that state lawmakers might ultimately reject Lamont’s pension cost-sharing recommendations, Goff said he foresees a couple scenarios.

If the state budget is approved before the local budget referendum with no retirement cost-sharing component, the council can simply reduce the education budget by \$151,185.

The Connecticut General Assembly adjourns on June 5. A special session would be convened if the state budget isn’t approved by then.

If the state budget is approved after the local budget passes at referendum without the cost-sharing component, Goff said he hopes officials will “set aside” \$151,185 in a sinking fund to prepare for the likely re-emergence of such a pension proposal in the future.

“We were just trying to be proactive so if it happens this year, we’re covered. If it doesn’t, we’re planning for the future,” Goff said.

According to Goff, school board members discussed the possibility of reducing Smith’s original recommendation for a 2.5 percent increase by the amount of the potential retirement contribution. But he said that would mean reducing teaching positions, which would leave the town in the same position it was in last year when the threatened loss of three teachers prompted an outcry from the school community.

The 2018-19 budget was approved last October at the fourth referendum.

Goff said he hopes close cooperation and open communication between the school board, finance board and Town Council will help this year’s budget process run more smoothly.

“I’m hopeful the town puts forward a good budget and we work together to get both passed in one referendum,” he said.

The education and general government budget proposals will be presented to the Board of Finance on March 25 in the East Hampton High School T-Bell at 6 p.m. The spending plans must be approved by the Town Council before going to referendum as separate questions on the ballot.

East Hampton Taxpayers to Vote on \$1.80M Bonding Package

by Elizabeth Regan

Voters next week will be asked to approve a \$1.80 million bonding package at a town meeting on three separate projects affecting local emergency services, the fire department and Center School.

The package would fund \$845,000 in public safety radio upgrades, \$679,000 for a new pumper-rescue fire truck and \$277,000 to replace the failing boiler at the town's school for fourth and fifth grade students.

The town meeting will include separate votes on each project.

The largest expense will fund upgrades to the dispatch system used by police, firefighters, ambulance personnel and the public works employees.

The upgrades include critical infrastructure improvements to a system described in an independent 2018 public safety communications analysis as "substandard" due to a lack of in-

vestment by town officials over the years.

The roughly \$800,000 plan from Utility Communications – which comes to \$845,000 after financing fees and contingencies – would add a communication tower on Young Street and would ensure all responders have up-to-date radios. The new digital system could be encrypted when law enforcement officials deem it necessary to prevent public access to the communications, according to East Hampton Police Chief Dennis Woessner.

The plan was selected over options from another private communications company and a state-managed radio system.

Voters will also be asked to weigh in on the purchase of a pumper-rescue fire truck to help keep its fleet current.

Fire Chief Greg Voelker said the \$679,000 truck would replace Engine 212, a 1994 Pierce

Manufacturing pumper truck stationed at the Company 2 firehouse in Cobalt. Engine 212 would then move to Company 3 on White Birch Road, where it would replace a 1989 Pierce pumper truck the department plans to retire.

Fire Commission Chairman Brett Salafia in January told Board of Finance members the department is routinely getting 25-28 years out of its fire trucks when industry standard recommends 20 years.

In 2015, all of the roughly 200 voters at a town meeting voted to approve the purchase of an \$805,018 Pierce ladder truck. The council's decision to pay for the truck outright was made despite the recommendation of Jylkka and a unanimous Board of Finance vote to finance it over a 10-year period through a lease-purchase agreement.

Rounding out the trio of bonding proposals

is the replacement of the unreliable and inefficient boiler at Center School. The 34-year-old unit will be replaced by two smaller, natural gas-fired boilers.

The school district's director of facilities, Donald Harwood, said in January that the school relies on the single, outdated boiler for its heating needs. It has spent nearly \$200,000 in repairs over the past five years, according to Harwood.

Harwood said major construction work would take place over the summer break when the school is not occupied, but preparations and targeted work could begin when temperatures warm up in April. The project is estimated to take about 10-12 weeks.

The town meeting will be held March 11 at 6 p.m. in the East Hampton High School auditorium.

Few Details Available After Cyber Attack in Colchester

by Allison Lazur

A statement displayed on the town's website last Friday morning revealed a number of the town's computer systems have been infected with ransomware, but town officials are refusing to provide specifics.

Ransomware is a software virus that encrypts files, making them inaccessible to the user.

First Selectman Art Shilosky told the *Rivereast* this week he could not answer any questions regarding the incident, but said the matter has been turned over to an attorney.

The name of the attorney was provided through a Freedom of Information request submitted by the *Rivereast* after Shilosky would not divulge that information.

Attorney Paul McGurkin, of the Pennsylvania-based Mullen Coughlin cybersecurity law firm, declined to provide any specifics on the issue.

The town's IT systems administrator, Mario Colagiovanni, did not return multiple calls for comment.

Cyber security expert Sean Mehner, of Connecticut Information Security LLC, said users are often unaware files have been compromised until an attempt is made to open one of the encrypted files. That's when they'll see a message informing them the files can be recovered in exchange for money transferred to a bitcoin

wallet.

Mehner said ransomware attacks occur when a user either accesses an infected website or opens a fraudulent email containing an embedded virus that encrypts certain files, making them inaccessible. In a less common scenario, the virus can attack the entire computer system.

The statement released by the town reveals a "limited number" of the town's computer systems were recently discovered to be infected with ransomware.

"Colchester immediately began efforts to investigate the nature and scope of the attack. These efforts focused on mitigation and remediation of the virus to stop its spread," the statement reveals.

When the systems became infected with the virus is unclear, as Shilosky would not answer any timeline questions.

The statement issued last Friday stated the town's computers systems were "operational with minimal systems affected." But a notification on the town's website this Wednesday stated the town clerk's office would be unable to process any land record recordings "due to technical issues."

Town Clerk Gayle Furman told the *Rivereast* that notification was directly related to the

ransomware attack, as Colagiovanni was in the process of rebooting certain town computer systems.

Furman said she has generally been able to use her computer, but has had issues with recording certain information.

While Shilosky would not confirm which of the town's systems were impacted, the statement said "the Colchester School District network and all data housed therein was not impacted."

Mehner said the "good news" when it comes to ransomware attacks is that compromised data – and any personal information that comes with it – is typically not removed from the computers.

"[M]ost of the malware campaigns aren't analyzing data they actually have access to," he said.

Mehner said he does not recommend paying the requested ransom, as there is no guarantee the files will be unencrypted.

Instead, he advocates for restoring the data from the backup system or, in the event there is no backup, archiving the content and waiting on the possible discovery of a recovery key to unlock the files.

"There's a lot of research that goes into malware encryption and a researcher might re-

cover and offer the key," he said.

Mehner said there is no way to avoid a ransomware attack 100 percent, but that "computer hygiene" can protect a system almost completely.

Among the measures to help protect a computer system are up-to-date antivirus software and user awareness on how a fraudulent email and legitimate URL might look, according to Mehner.

Colchester is not alone in dealing with cybersecurity issues.

Earlier last month the town of Glastonbury approved \$25,000 to conduct its own cyber security audit of all the town's systems and security protocols.

Portland dealt with its own ransomware attacks early last year after the software infiltrated the town system through a single workstation, affecting four servers through a shared file system.

Mehner said this week if resolving the ransomware attack is taking more than a day, it's probably impacted "more than a handful of hosts."

"If it goes to a server or something that is centralized, it can be more complex to restore...normally it doesn't take very long if you have a good plan in place," he said.

Homicide on Colchester Reservation Remains Unsolved

Police are still looking for information related to the shooting death of 36-year-old James E. Stone, who was found dead just before midnight on May 18 at his residence on the Golden Hill Paugussett Indian Reservation.

Tribal leader Shoran Waupatukuay Piper said at the time that Stone was not a member of the tribe, but helped landscape, snowplow, and do secretarial work for the reservation.

At the time, the office of the chief medical examiner revealed the cause of death was gunshot wounds to the chest and lower extremity, ruling the incident a homicide. Police labeled the death suspicious.

Connecticut State Police released a statement on its social media page Wednesday asking for the public's assistance in gathering further information about the "horrific crime."

Anyone with information is asked to contact Detective David Bennett at 860-896-3201 or 860-896-3230 at Eastern District Major Crimes Squad or text TIP711 plus your message to CRIMES (274637).

All calls can be made anonymously.



Police are still looking for information following the "horrific" killing of James E. Stone on the Golden Hill Paugussett Indian Reservation last May.

Forum Saturday on Public Safety in Hebron

by Sloan Brewster

In light of an uptick in break-ins to area cars and homes in the past few months, the town will hold a public safety forum Saturday, March 9, at 10 a.m., at the Douglas Library.

Daniel Greenwood, who has been Hebron's resident state trooper for eight years, will give an informational update on the activity within the town and offer tips and general education on how to not to be victim while at the same time not becoming a vigilante and taking risks.

Greenwood will also discuss when to call 911.

Francis J. Carino, supervisory assistant state's attorney, will give an overview of juvenile laws and discuss current trends.

Town Manager Andy Tierney will speak on

how community watch groups can obtain signage for their neighborhoods. Tierney will also offer insurance coverage suggestions.

The forum is a response to resident concerns about a spike in break-ins and car thefts in town.

At a Feb. 7 meeting of the Board of Selectmen, residents packed the Town Hall meeting room to ask for a town-wide conversation about the break-ins.

Greenwood was at the meeting as well, and spoke about the increase in larcenies in town. He said that, at that point, there had been seven reported in town this year, whereas only 30 were reported in all of 2018.

He said he and local officers have been increasing patrols in response.

\$36.07 Million Town Budget Proposed in Hebron

by Sloan Brewster

Town Manager Andy Tierney this week proposed an overall 2019-20 town budget of \$36.07 million, an increase of .8 percent, or \$288,000, over the current year.

As is the case every year, education spending makes up the vast majority of the proposed budget, with \$11.43 million proposed for the local Board of Education and \$15.47 million for Hebron's portion of the RHAM schools budget. An additional \$71,039 is also included in the budget due to Gov. Ned Lamont's proposal to require local governments to pay a portion of teachers' pension costs. The pensions are currently paid for by the state.

Town government spending amounts for \$9.11 million of the overall budget – an increase of \$194,932, or 2.19 percent, over the current year.

The town government requests total \$9.11 million, including \$729,552 for capital improvement, \$140,000 for open space acquisition, \$2,000 for capital non-recurring, \$48,204 for capital projects, \$40,000 for revaluation and \$728,149 to debt service.

Included with the town's request is \$555,734 for the Public Works Department.

Of that, \$285,143 would come from the Capital Improvement Plan fund for road projects, including reconstruction and resurfacing and \$270,321 would be for the Road Repair Materials line item to cover road work needs, Director of Public Works Kevin Kelly told the *Rivereast* on Tuesday.

"Each year we try to maintain as many roads as we have funding for," he said.

At the Feb. 27 meeting of the Board of Selectmen, Kelly and Gordon Daring of VHB Engineering, of Wethersfield, gave a PowerPoint presentation on a pavement management study.

According to the study, the grand total to fix

all 77 miles of road in town would be \$15.07 million.

Each year the department tracks the condition of the roadway system, the maintenance performed, and the cost, Kelly said. The study was a deeper look at the roads by engineers.

"We can see the conditions of the roads slowly deteriorating due to lack of available funds and we are finding it difficult to keep them all in a condition that we would consider optimal," he said. "Realizing this and that we may have to consider bonding sometime in the future, we wanted to get a professional opinion from a pavement engineering firm to make sure we are maximizing the value or what we spend on extending the life of the pavement network."

As part of the study, VHB hired a subcontractor named Roadbotics that drove around town and took pictures of all the local roads, Kelly said. The information Roadbotics gathered was used to create a scoring system from one to one hundred that rates the condition of the roads.

On average, local roads scored 74, Kelly said.

Every year when the town looks at road condition, staff members find one or two roads that "really take severe winter abuse from frost heaving," he said. The worst road he ever saw was Scarboro Road a few years ago, a section of which had to be rebuilt due to heaving.

The plan is for the department to base a future maintenance program on the study, Kelly said.

Among the other budget drivers in town government is \$47,488, plus benefits, for the reinstatement of the assistant town clerk, Tierney said. The position had been cut from the current year's budget after former assistant Ann Hughes retired last May. However, selectmen decided in July – shortly after the fiscal year started – that the town needed a full-time assis-

tant, and hired a new one, Francesca Villani, in October. The town is paying for the position this year with money from the undesignated fund balance.

Another \$46,238, plus benefits, will pay for a new full-time Parks & Recreation employee. Contractual salary increases will cost the town \$35,735 plus benefits.

The restoration of part-time seasonal Parks and Recreation hours will cost \$6,482, Tierney said. The hours will be filled by an employee who will do grounds work for Parks & Recreation in the summer and drive a snow plow for Public Works in winter.

"We had cut some [Parks and Recreation hours] in the past budget but the tasks weren't getting done," Tierney said. "It was starting to show on our grounds."

The original plan was for the Parks and Recreation Department to hire a seasonal employee of its own and for Public Works to hire a subcontractor to plow the roads, but the two departments decided to share an employee because the parks department had past experiences with seasonal employees who did not return one year to the next, Tierney explained. That would have meant additional costs in training new hires. With a shared employee who returns each summer, there would not be a need for repeat training.

A Planning & Zoning/Building Department summer intern will cost \$2,800.

"That's something normal that a lot of towns do," Tierney said. "We have a lot of data that needs to be preserved."

A \$20,000 increase in the public safety line item, plus Federal Insurance Contributions Act [FICA] and medical insurance, will pay for an increase in police patrol hours, Tierney said. The patrol increase is based partially on a spike in car thefts and car break-ins in town, and in

part to a general request from residents to increase patrols.

The town will also see an increase of \$47,674 in Liability and Worker's Compensation Insurance, Tierney said. The town and Board of Education currently are under the same policy, with the payments proportioned between the two – and the insurance company "shifted the proportion," Tierney said.

Accordingly, a \$70,000 decrease in the school board's budget was made to the same line item last month, after the school board learned of the change.

The school board's savings are more than the town's additional expenses as the insurance company has reassessed the trends and risks so the percentages the town and board owe have changed, Schools Superintendent Tim Van Tassel said.

The Board of Education is requesting \$11.43 million, a 0.49 percent, or \$55,897, decrease below the current year's budget – and also a \$167,411 decrease from the budget request the board approved in January.

In addition to the \$70,000 decrease in the board's share of Liability and Worker's Compensation Insurance, other reductions made since the school budget was approved in January include a \$100,168 reduction to special education tuition and a \$16,384 reduction to health insurance, Van Tassel said.

The boards of selectmen and finance will deliberate on the budget on Tuesdays this month, with a public hearing scheduled for Tuesday, March 26, at 7:30 p.m. in the community room in the Douglas Library and a budget hearing Tuesday, April 9, at 7 p.m., in the RHAM High School auditorium.

A referendum on the proposed 2019-20 budget is slated for Tuesday, May 7, at Hebron Elementary School.

6.23% Budget Increase Proposed for Marlborough Govt

by Allison Lazur

Despite saying it is "as lean as we can be," First Selectman Amy Traversa still is proposing the town government budget to rise 6.23 percent for the 2019-20 fiscal year, to \$6.19 million.

The budget would be a \$362,949 increase over current year spending. The proposal includes a \$5.04 million operations budget and a capital improvement plan of \$1.15 million.

"We are as lean as we can be," Traversa said at a meeting Tuesday of the Board of Finance, and described the spending plan as "what we need to operate this town."

Driving the over 6 percent increase is a \$1.15 million capital improvement budget, an increase of \$209,846 from the current year. Traversa said Tuesday the "aggressive" capital improvement plan includes road and bridge construction, town hall and fire department equipment updates, and reserves.

Road and bridge construction totals \$701,513 and includes the replacement of the Fawn Brook and Jones Hollow Bridge – projects that are each estimated to cost over \$2 million and are a combination of federal and local responsibility.

The town is responsible for funding 20 percent of the project while the federal government funds the remaining 80 percent.

The town's contribution to the Fawn Brook Bridge totals \$100,470 while the Jones Hollow contribution clocks in at \$196,043.

When to fund the town's portion of the project is driven by the federal government Traversa said, adding Marlborough can either use the federal funds or lose them.

Other capital projects include a new phone

system at Town Hall totaling an estimated \$20,000, which would also include the phones at the library, senior center, public works department, transfer station and Blish Park, Traversa said.

Accomplishing ADA compliance at Blish Park will cost \$37,000 and will connect the parking lot to the pavilion to the beach and to the bath houses, Traversa said.

Thermal cameras and radio upgrades for the Marlborough Fire Department total \$52,300.

A number of reserve funds are also proposed in the capital budget in an effort to "stabilize what we are doing year to year," Traversa said.

Reserves include a proposed \$75,000 for equipment in public works; \$75,000 for general government reserves; \$50,000 for the fire department; and \$15,000 to go towards the replacement of the 11-year-old police vehicle.

'Conservative, But Realistic'

Overall, Traversa said, the Board of Selectmen took a "conservative, but realistic, approach" when crafting the local budget in the face of uncertain municipal aid projections from the state.

Year one of the state's bi-annual budget will be voted on in June, after Marlborough's referendum scheduled for May 7.

"We will be long done by the time we actually have real numbers to work with [from the state], so we need to take that into account," she said.

The operations budget, which saw a 3.13 percent increase over current year spending, includes general government, salaries and benefits and costs associated with public works, public safety and health and welfare.

Traversa called the operations budget "relatively stable," as there were not many changes.

General government totals \$2.16 million, or 43 percent, of the total town operating budget and includes items such as the salaries and benefits of appointed and elected personnel, supplies, software and equipment for town hall operations and custodial needs.

Salaries, benefits and all vehicles, equipment and maintenance costs associated with the public works department totals \$1.63 million.

Health and Welfare, which includes costs associated with the senior center, food bank, AHM and Chatham Health, totals \$203,868.

Public safety costs total \$621,093 and include the resident state trooper, the director of public safety services, the two part-time constables, fire department and fire marshal. Parks and Recreation Department costs totaled \$88,413.

Traversa said the changes to the proposed budget include a 1.75 percent increase of all union and non-union salaries, as well as an increase in legal and tree removal fees.

Funds for tree removal increased from \$15,000 to \$45,000, while legal increased from \$77,000 to \$90,000.

"We need an increase for legal and I'm saying that very candidly because we don't know what's going to happen primarily with the department of public works unit," she said, adding regardless of the outcomes the process will be "long, drawn out-and litigious."

The department of public works lost union representation as of Jan. 1, as a result of the decision by the Local 559 to disclaim the 8-

member unit. The department is currently operating without a union contract.

Traversa said as the town's aging population grows so does the need for filling the position of part-time social service coordinator at the senior center.

"Not only do we have an aging population, but we have a growth in a population of need," she said, mentioning those who need services like the food bank, the senior center, and senior transportation. "I think we're past a point where we can do without this position."

Traversa said efforts are continuing to be made to control spending by examining all fees and revenues, possible outsourcing of services if it proves cost effective, and applying for any possible grants.

"We are trying everything we can and we are open to any suggestions people have," Traversa said.

The Board of Finance had few to no questions for the Board of Selectmen with the questions asked pertaining to specific number clarifications.

Finance board Chairman Douglas Knowlton said "I know that myself and probably everyone else needs time to think about this and go through the [budget] books."

The Board of Finance will spend the next several weeks reviewing the proposed town budget. The board expects to finalize the spending at, or before, its April 10 meeting. A public hearing on the budget is slated for Monday, April 22, with a town meeting Monday, May 6, and a referendum Tuesday, May 7.

Andover Referendum Catches Some By Surprise

by Sloan Brewster

The Public Works Department is getting some new equipment... maybe.

Voters at a special town meeting last Wednesday approved the purchase of a \$141,875 Volvo payloader and a \$99,000 Peterbilt plow truck, triggering a March 12 referendum in accordance with the town charter.

But no mention was made of the referendum at the town meeting.

Voters at the town meeting overwhelmingly agreed to the two purchases. The vote on the payloader was 42-1 while the plow truck tally came in at 40-3.

Town Charter dictates any spending amounting to more than 0.5 percent of the current budget that occurs outside of the budget planning process must go to town meeting. If voters approve the supplemental appropriation, it must then go to a referendum on the "second following Tuesday."

In a phone call Thursday, Higgins said it was not necessary according to the charter to adjourn to a referendum but that folks should have been informed.

"Systematically it would have been proper to inform everybody in the room that there was going to be a referendum," he said.

The referendum was discussed briefly at Wednesday night's Board of Selectmen meet-

ing.

Town Administrator Joseph Higgins announced it in his Town Administrator's Report.

"We're going to have a referendum on March 12 on the purchase of the [pay]loader," he said.

Capital Improvement Planning Committee member Eric Anderson also mentioned it during the public comment portion of the meeting, when he presented a letter of explanation of the purchases to the board. He asked that the letter be placed on the town website.

"We're asking taxpayers to cough up a third of a million dollars," Anderson said. "We ought to at least tell them why."

In a phone call Tuesday, Vice First Selectman Jeff Maguire told the *RiverEast* the board did not know a referendum was needed on the purchases.

"After the meeting there was a discussion of the charter and what was required relative to the purchase," he said.

Maguire said Town Clerk Carol Lee reached out to the town attorney to get clarification.

"It was determined that a referendum would potentially be required of a purchase of that magnitude" because it is being made outside of the budget cycle, he said.

The town chose to purchase the plow truck

now rather than adding it to the 2019-2020 budget because it takes nine months to build and needs to be ordered to have in time for next winter, officials said at the town meeting.

Maguire said the board needs to be updated on the charter and that he will be interested to see how many people come out to vote at the referendum considering a room full of people already agreed to the purchases.

The truck will replace a 1996 truck that, according to Town Administrator Joseph Higgins, "is well past its useful life." With a three-person crew, the Public Works Department breaks up the 30-mile route through town between the three of them and they need three dependable trucks.

The town is coming to the end of a three-month lease on the payloader, which is used to load trucks with sand and road salt and move large amounts of snow, Higgins said at the town meeting. The town will be reimbursed for the lease if it buys the equipment outright when the lease expires.

The lease, which started in January, comes with an option to buy and, after trading in the town's 1992 John Deere payloader for \$5,767, the new one will cost \$136,108.

Using the lease funds toward the purchase leaves about \$122,000 on it, Higgins said.

"It's a good deal for the town and a critical piece of equipment that the town needs," he said.

The Public Works Department has requested the payloader for the past three years, according to Board of Finance member Adrian Mandeville. He said the finance board turned down the requests due to lack of information and because, at \$170,000, the one the department wanted "was too expensive." In addition, it was too big for the garage.

The old payloader is unsafe and rotted out, Mandeville said.

They will pay for the equipment using the fund balance.

Digging into the fund balance is a way to keep the state from reducing aid to the town, such as the Education Cost Sharing grant, Mandeville said at the town meeting.

"The state was targeting municipalities that had high fund balances," he said. "We need to have enough money that we have good bonding and not so much money that we look flush."

The town's current \$2.4 million fund balance is 16 percent of its budget, he said. Knocking it down with the purchase will bring it to 10 percent.

The referendum will take place in Town Hall on March 12 from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m.

East Hampton Police News

2/22: John Forbes IV, 32, of 205 West High St., was arrested and charged with disorderly conduct, third-degree assault and second-degree threatening, East Hampton Police said.

2/23: Scudder Evans, 25, of 17 Farview Run, Marlborough, was issued a summons for operating a motor vehicle with a suspended license and failure to drive right, police said.

2/24: Jessica Skuby, 40, of 6 Cedar Meadow

Rd., Moodus, was arrested and charged with DUI and failure to drive right, police said.

2/26: Benjamin Rosado, 46, of 49 Flanders Rd., was arrested and charged with second-degree threatening and disorderly conduct, police said.

Also, from Feb. 18-24, officers responded to 11 medical calls, two motor crashes and eight alarms, and made 14 traffic stops, police said.

Colchester Police News

2/28: Colchester Police said Nicole M. Brown, 43, of 22 Wood Acres Rd., was arrested and charged with DUI.

3/2: Colchester Police said David S. Jones, 52, of 14 Skylark Rd., was arrested and charged with violation of readable/lost plates, operating a motor vehicle under suspension, traveling unreasonably fast and DUI.

3/3: Colchester Police said Daniel E. Sullivan, 46, of 67 Ridgewood Dr., was arrested and charged with disobeying signal of officer, DUI and failure to drive right.

3/3: State Police said Brian T. Weaver, 38, of 90 Pleasant View Dr., Dayville, was arrested and charged with operating a motor vehicle without minimum insurance, DUI and failure to drive in proper lane.

3/3: Colchester Police said Stephen Labonosky, 54, of 55 McDonald Rd., was arrested and charged with operating an unregistered motor vehicle, improper use of marker/license/registration, operating a motor without minimum insurance and DUI.

Vehicle Loses Control on Route 2 in Colchester

State Police said a vehicle lost control for unknown reasons leaving the driver and two passengers with possible injuries.

At approximately 6:17 p.m. on March 1, a Audi A4, driven by Samuel Williams, 44, of 17 Harriet Tubman Ct., Hartford, was traveling east on Route 2 near exit 16 when the driver lost control for unknown reasons, police said.

The vehicle subsequently veered right where it contacted the wire rope guardrail on the right shoulder with its right side.

Williams complained of head pain and was transported by the Colchester Fire Department to Middlesex Hospital Marlborough Medical Center. He was also issued a misdemeanor

summons for failure to maintain lane, operating a vehicle under a suspended license, misuse of plates and operating a motor vehicle without minimum insurance.

Williams' passengers were also transported with possible injuries, police said.

Julia Hilson, 36, of 304 Garden St. Apt. 3F, Hartford, was transported by the Colchester Fire Department to Middlesex Hospital Marlborough Medical Center with a complaint of right leg pain.

Laron Brown, 33, of 23 Floradale Dr., East Hartford, was transported by the Marlborough Fire Department to Hartford Hospital with a complaint of head pain.

Vehicle Collides with Guardrail in Marlborough

State Police said traveling too fast is to blame for a vehicle's collision with the wire rope guardrail on Route 2 last Saturday.

At approximately 8:58 a.m., a Nissan Rogue driven by Dante Wesley, 46, of 6088 Raleigh St., Orlando, Fla., was traveling westbound on Route 2 near exit 13 when the ve-

hicle struck the median rope guardrail, police said.

Wesley complained of back pain and was transported by the Marlborough Fire Department to Middlesex Hospital Marlborough Medical Center and was issued an infraction for traveling unreasonably fast.

Man Arrested on Allegations of Sexual, Physical Abuse in Colchester

State Police said an "extensive" investigation of sexual and physical abuse of minors led to the arrest of 39-year-old Mark J. Graves on Feb. 27.

According to the state judicial website, Graves, of 17 Vernon Ave., Apt. D, Vernon, was arrested and charged with two counts of first-degree sexual assault, one count of third-degree sexual assault, six counts of risk of injury to a child and three counts intentional cruelty to a child under the age of 19 dating back to an April 2013 incident.

According to state police, the arrest warrant affidavit was sealed to protect the iden-

tity of the victims.

The only detailed information provided were the ages of the victims which were eight, five and three.

The state judicial website reveals Graves was convicted in June 2016 of risk of injury to a child in June 2016 and sentenced to six years in jail, which was suspended, and received five years' probation.

Graves is due in Danielson Superior Court on March 22 and is currently being held on a \$100,000 bond at Corrigan-Radgowski Correctional Center in Montville.

Crash Sends One to Hospital in Hebron

A two-vehicle collision last Saturday left one woman with possible injuries.

According to state police, at approximately 1:24 p.m., a Toyota Tundra driven by Jean E. Tulimieri, 54, of 110 Kinney Rd., Amston, was traveling in the area of 227 Route 85 when the vehicle was struck by a Chevrolet Silverado.

The Chevy was driven by David J. Sypher, 42, of 43 Antioch Rd., Colchester, police said.

Tulimieri complained of head pain and was transported by Hebron Emergency Medical Services to Middlesex Hospital Marlborough Medical Center and Sypher was issued a misdemeanor summons for failure to use turn signals, traveling unreasonably fast and operating a motor vehicle without minimum insurance.

Portland Police News

2/25: Xaria Taylor, 21, of 53 Rapallo Ave., Middletown, was charged with sixth-degree larceny, Portland Police said.

3/1: Carl Cloutier, 54, of 10 Lena Lane, East Hampton, was charged with speeding, police said.

3/4: Victoria Amenta, 32, of 183 Rose Hill Rd., was charged with failure to appear, police said.

Obituaries

Portland

Irene Scott

Irene (Magnuson) Scott, 102, of Portland, wife of the late James C. Scott, passed away Saturday, Feb. 2, at Middlesex Health. Born in Portland, she was the daughter of the late Frank and Ruth (Hallquest) Magnuson.



Irene was a lifetime member of Zion Lutheran Church where she served on the Altar Guild and various other committees. Irene was a buyer at Bunce's in Middletown, where she met her future husband. After two of their three children were out of school, Irene began her career working for the City of Middletown at the Russell Library for almost 27 years retiring at age 75. Her position was acquisitions assistant and former head of the circulation department. She also worked at the polls during elections for many years and volunteered with the American Red Cross in the 1950s and 1960s helping families of servicemen connect with loved ones stationed at foreign and domestic locations during times of family need.

After retirement, Irene enjoyed traveling both domestically and internationally with her sisters, other family members and good friend, Lorraine Taylor. She also was an avid gardener and a founding member of the Portland River Valley Garden Club.

Irene is survived by two sons, Douglas C. Scott and his wife Kathy of Portland and William E. Scott and his partner Cynthia Gardner of Battleground, Wash.; a daughter, Leslie S. Pringle and her husband Patrick of Olympia, Wash.; four grandchildren, Keith Scott (Kishori), Amy Burns (J. William), Cameron Scott (Haley) and Jessie Templeton (Adam); six great-grandchildren, J. William Burns, Ryan Burns, Mason Scott, Tyler Scott, Finn Templeton and Bridger Templeton; and many nieces and nephews.

Along with her husband and parents, Irene was predeceased by two sisters and their husbands, Pauline and Edmund Kidney and Helen and Victor Galgowski; and her sister-in-law, Anne S. Christopher and her husband Norman.

The Scott family would like to say a special thank you to the staff of Middlesex Health Hospice and the Village at South Farms for their kind, warm and compassionate care.

Funeral services will be held Saturday, March 9, at 11 a.m., at Zion Lutheran Church in Portland. Burial will follow in the Swedish Cemetery. Family and friends may call on Saturday morning before the service from 10-11 a.m. at the church.

In lieu of flowers, donations in Irene's memory may be made to Zion Lutheran Church, 55 William St., Portland, CT 06480.

To share memories or send condolences to the family, visit doolittlefuneralservice.com.

East Hampton

Frances Joan Jacobsen

Frances Joan Jacobsen (Fran), 81, formerly of East Hampton and Wethersfield, went to her heavenly mansion Friday, Feb. 28. She was born in Brooklyn, N.Y., on May 14, 1937, the only child of the late Horace and Ethel (Poach) Martin.



She graduated from Prospect Heights High School, Brooklyn, N.Y., in June 1955 and was married Jan. 14, 1956, to the late Robert W. Jacobsen, who predeceased her in February 2000. She spent her life caring for him and their eight children and his daughter from a previous marriage. She worked for her husband's business as bookkeeper and secretary intermittently as needed.

She was a member of several churches over the years. The first one, the Baptist Temple of Brooklyn, was where she met and married her husband. Both were baptized there. They joined the Gospel Tabernacle in New York City in 1959. They moved to New Hampshire in 1980. He was an elder and treasurer, and she was church secretary, at Hope Fellowship Evangelical Free Church in Newport, N.H. She also enjoyed leading ladies' Bible studies.

After her husband's death, she moved to East Hampton, where she joined Hope Church. She was an officer in the East Hampton Senior Center Belltown Club. She moved to Wethersfield in 2012 and attended Wethersfield Evangelical Free Church. She created a ladies' Bible study group at her senior living complex. She kept up her membership in the Daughters of the American Revolution (D.A.R.) in New Hampshire.

She is survived by her children and their spouses, Karen & Richard, Paul & Maureen, Peter, Antoinette, Lois & Thomas, Joy & David, David & Amanda, Stephen, Amy & Brian and stepdaughter, Randi. She is also survived by her grandchildren and their spouses, Katie, Samantha, Emily, Jennifer, Amanda, Robert, Erick, Hannah, Timothy, Lydia, Daniel, Catherine, Andrew & Nicole, Elisabeth & Brian, Ian, Kenneth, Matthew, Allison, Connor, Declan, Emery, Corinne and Kimberly.

A memorial service will be held at Wethersfield Evangelical Free Church, 511 Maple St., Saturday, March 16, at 1 p.m.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Wethersfield Evangelical Free Church and/or Hope Church, East Hampton.

Salem

James Williamson

James (Jim) Williamson, of Salem, entered into God's peaceful presence Friday, March 1, in the home he shared with his wife of nearly 50 years, Patricia (Sampson) Williamson.



Born Jan. 22, 1947, in Cleveland, Ohio, retired Masterchief Williamson was a highly-decorated and proud member of the Navy submarine service for over 20 years. His years of service included numerous deployments from bases up and down the Eastern seaboard. Honored to be selected to train others, he earned multiple commendations for his work and became Chief of Boat on the USS Sam Rayburn. He retired in 1986 having earned a position on the Admiral's staff in New London.

He went on to maintain some of Hartford's skyline buildings and serve as a church trustee, elder and teacher at The Congregational Church of Salem. His family was blessed to witness how he cared for others and to be inspired by his example. As a father and grandfather, he was quick to affirm his pride and love. Throughout his life was known for his deep consideration of the weight of his leadership positions and his desire to do right by those he was leading.

His impact on his community and sacrificial military service will long be remembered. He is survived by his wife, Patricia~ and loving children and grandchildren, who proudly remember his testimony and legacy.

Services will be held at The Congregational Church of Salem Monday, March 11, at 1 p.m.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to The Congregational Church of Salem Benevolence Fund.

For online condolences, visit auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.

"Jesus said to her, 'I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?'"

- John 11: 25, 26

Colchester

Dennis Paul Roberts

Dennis Paul Roberts, 67, of Colchester, passed away peacefully in his home Friday, March 1. He was born Dec. 7, 1951, in Putnam, to the late David Paul and Helen J. (Fournier) Roberts.



Dennis was a devoted military man, answering the call to enlist even before he graduated high school. He actively served his country for 20 years, and served in a voluntarily capacity when he retired. Dennis joined the Navy in 1971 and throughout his military career he was awarded many medals and ribbons for exemplary service. He retired from the service in 1991 to become more involved in his community. Dennis was a proud and active member of the American Legion Post 180 in Lebanon, having been elected commander for a time, as well as the 5th District commander from 1992-93.

Dennis was passionate about helping others. Even when he could no longer do it himself, he enlisted the help of others to accomplish the task he no longer could do. Those who knew Dennis knew that he was a force to be reckoned with, especially when it came to his family. He was a warm and loving soul with a huge heart who showed his love for friends and family through his actions.

He is survived by his devoted and loving wife Norma Jean (Tetreault) of 44 years, his two adoring daughters, Rhonda Avery and her Husband Conan of Lebanon, Renee' L. Roberts of Moosup; his two loving sisters, Dale Robbins and her husband Cephas of Fayetteville, N.C., and Louise Bray of Pawcatuck; his grandchildren, whom he adored and cherished, Zachary W. Avery of Lebanon, Casey C. Avery of Iowa, Michael J. Dyer of Lebanon, and Cassidy L. Trudeau of Moosup; as well as several nieces, nephews and extended family and friends.

In addition to his parents, Dennis was predeceased by his brother, Brian Roberts.

Service will be held at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester on Saturday, March 16. Calling hours will be from 1-3 p.m., with a service at 2:30 p.m. with honors, followed by a celebration of life at the American Legion Post 180 in Lebanon. Private burial to follow in the spring.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the Wounded Warrior Project in his honor: Wounded Warrior Project, P.O. Box 758517, Topeka, KS 66675-8517 or online at support.woundedwarriorproject.org.

For online condolences, visit auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com

Colchester

John Rota Sr.

John Rota Sr., 89, of Colchester, formerly of Bozrah and Niantic, passed away peacefully at his home Thursday, Feb. 28, with his beloved family by his side. Born in Bergamo, Italy, on Dec. 21, 1929, he was the son of the late Celeste and Clorinda (Mangili) Rota.



John immigrated to America at age 18 and served in the U.S. Army during the Korean War. John was proud to serve his country and reached the rank of corporal. He was a brick mason by trade, and worked both as an independent contractor and for the BAC Union. He married his first wife, Anne Benedetti, who predeceased him in 1967. He married his wife and life partner Carol Miller July 4, 1969, in Niantic, where they raised their family. The family relocated to Bozrah in 1985, where they remained for the next 33 years.

John was a member of the American Legion, Post 128, and the Knights of Columbus, St. Agnes Council 5633. He was a longtime member of the Bozrah Rod and Gun Club, where he was often found cooking for group events and fishing with his wife, kids and grandkids. He was an avid outdoorsman who loved hunting, fishing, gardening, and outdoor games such as horse shoes and corn hole. He relished frequent trips back to his birthplace in Italy, sipping cappuccinos, and spending time with his family and friends there. He loved bowling and was an accomplished duckpin bowler.

He will be remembered for his bright blue eyes, contagious laugh, love for red wine, and as an entertaining conversationalist. Most importantly, he will be remembered by all family and friends for his loyalty as a good husband, father, grandfather, and friend. John had a kind and generous heart and was always willing to lend a hand.

In addition to his beloved wife Carol, he leaves four children and their spouses, John Rota Jr. (Deborah) of Clinton, Linda Rota of Portland, Maine, Robert Rota (Cynthia) of San Diego, Calif., Michael Rota of Cary, N.C.; nine grandchildren, Nicholas, Rachael, Rebecca, Christopher, Joseph, Matthew and Lauren Rota, Annah Thayer, and Emily Rota Colello; six great-grandchildren, Kyla Larkin, Emma Rota, Madison Coombs, Elsie Thayer, Ralph Rota, and Jayson Mullen.

Calling hours were held Wednesday, March 6, at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester. The funeral Mass was celebrated Thursday, March 7, at Our Lady of the Lakes Church in Oakdale. Burial will follow in East Lyme Cemetery with full military honors.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made in his memory to the American Heart Association, heart.org, or Our Lady of the Lakes Church, 752 Norwich Salem Tpke., Oakdale, CT 06370.

For online condolences, visit auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.