



RIVEREAST

News Bulletin

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

Volume 43, Number 25

Published by The Glastonbury Citizen

April 5, 2019



Champion Cheerleaders... Pictured are the East Hampton High School cheerleaders, who were named the 2019 Shoreline Champions at the Shoreline Cheer Competition. From left, front row, are Alyssa Anderson, Autumn Cromwell, Grace Cronin, Jessica Chunko, Lauren Walton, Madison Uliano, Hailey Porter, Marissa Woodbury, Elizabeth Urban and Coach Holly White; back row from left, Assistant Coach Mary Brasile, Brandalyn Kauffman, Jenna Ledas, Emma Lanzi, Claire Lindsay, Ashley Stoeckle, Katherine Goodspeed, Savannah Sharpe and Vanessa Stewart.

Remembering Doug Knowlton

by Allison Lazur

Marlborough resident Doug Knowlton, who died of a heart attack Monday, was remembered this week as “a very, very special person” and “part of the fabric of this town.”

Knowlton, 75, was chairman of the town’s Board of Finance and also a rescue lieutenant with the Marlborough Volunteer Fire Department. He had recently returned home from a fire call when he suddenly collapsed, fire officials have said. He was rushed to Middlesex Hospital Marlborough Medical Center, where he was pronounced dead, Knowlton’s daughter Deborah Fitzsimmons said.

Retiring in 2011 from Financial Services Technology Solutions (Fiserv), where he was project manager for 10 years, Knowlton continued to be immensely involved in the community.

From 1982-2006, Knowlton served as the emergency management director in town and helped coordinate efforts during emergency situations.

He was both an EMT and firefighter, first joining the department in 1989 after being



Doug Knowlton

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Budget Compromise Brokered in Belltown

by Elizabeth Regan

A potential budget compromise brokered by East Hampton Superintendent of Schools Paul Smith was disclosed at a Tuesday evening finance board meeting.

But members of the finance and school boards both expressed reservations about the possible deal.

Finance board chairman Richard Brown told fellow members the compromise would require the \$15.73 million general government side of the proposed budget to absorb a possible \$151,185 increase related to a plan from Gov. Ned Lamont for municipalities to pay a portion of teacher retirement costs. In exchange, the Board of Education would reduce its \$31.58 million budget by \$323,232.

Brown attributed the compromise proposal to Board of Education Chairman Christopher Goff, but Smith the next day told the *Rivereast* he was the one who met with Brown to broach the idea.

“I’m a person who likes to help others find answers, and I was really working with Chris [Goff] to find an answer that would be palatable to our Board of Finance,” Smith said.

The issue at hand is the difference between the 2.5 percent budget increase initially recommended by Smith and the 3.05 percent increase ultimately approved by the school board earlier this month. The change came after education officials decided to incorporate the possible teacher pension payment into their budget proposal as a contingency after Gov. Ned Lamont announced his plan in February.

It’s currently unclear if Lamont’s plan will become law. It’s also not yet known if the expense would show up as a bill to the school

district or if the state would deduct the sum from the municipal aid checks sent to the town each year.

Smith said a history of failed budget referendums in East Hampton gave him serious concerns about putting forth a 3.05 percent increase this year. The compromise represented his efforts to come up with a bottom line that would be palatable to the finance board and to voters.

Smith said he and Goff discussed approaching the finance board to ask if the town would take on the responsibility for the possible teacher pension payment, which would bring down the education spending plan to a 2.5 increase. That’s when the idea of further reducing the education proposal to a 2 percent increase came up, according to Smith.

“Since the town’s going to get less money, I was willing to take less money in the budget to kind of cover that,” Smith said.

Goff on Wednesday said his only conversation with Brown about the education budget happened after a finance board workshop last week. That’s when Goff told Brown he’d be out of state for Tuesday’s night’s budget meeting, but that he’d discuss any finance board proposals at the subsequent school board meeting scheduled for Monday, April 8.

“I don’t speak for the board – unless we talk about something and agree, then I’ll speak for the board. But I would not make a decision like this on my own,” Goff told the *Rivereast*.

He said he’s “still mixed” in his personal feelings on the compromise.

“That’s why we would discuss it in public as a board, so we could all get on the same page and support it,” he said.

Brown at Tuesday’s meeting was supportive of the effort to come to an agreement.

“I was just glad the Board of Education was very cooperative and reasonable in pursuing a compromise rather than saying ‘we want it all,’” Brown said.

Based on the governor’s budget proposal, the town’s \$151,185 contribution in the coming year would grow to an approximate payment of \$600,000 by fiscal year 2023.

The *Connecticut Mirror* reported on March 29 that members of the state legislature’s Education Committee eliminated Lamont’s teachers’ pension plan when members approved the governor’s two main education bills.

But Smith characterized the move as a political one designed to shield lawmakers from criticism back in their districts. He said the committee removed the language from their approved bill because they “were afraid to show which way they were going to vote.”

He said the measure “is still lingering” at the state Capitol, where it can reappear at the end of the legislative session in the implementer bill.

Implementer bills contain the language that explains budget numbers and puts them into action. But the dense documents can also be a way for lawmakers to insert measures at the last minute outside of the traditional committee and public hearing process.

It means budget-related bills that failed previously during the session – and some that were never voted on at all – can show up as policy in the implementer. All the policies included in the uncompromising implementer bill are voted on as a single package.

STEM on the Chopping Block

Smith told the finance board reducing the education budget from the amount approved by the school board would require the elimination of a Science, Technology, Engineering and Math coordinator position recommended as part of his initial budget proposal.

The position costs \$90,000, including benefits.

The STEM coordinator position was one part of Smith’s focus on the sciences that included advanced placement classes in physics, computer science and forensics at the high school, a new robotics team at the middle school, and a technology-centered “makerspace” at Center School.

Smith recommended the elimination of the STEM coordinator instead of the sixth-grade world languages teacher being reinstated in the proposed budget because taking away the teacher would result in a study hall period for all sixth graders every day of the week.

“Even though in all my presentations I have talked about this being the year to move forward with science, technology, engineering and math, I figure I have to provide the basic curriculum. And the STEM coordinator is a giant leap forward, but I’ll make that giant leap forward next year if I have to,” Smith said.

He emphasized the other STEM-related programming enhancements would remain in the budget.

“All the new courses will be there; I just won’t have that champion that will be talking STEM five days a week, every single hour of work,” he said.

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Doug Knowlton cont. from Front Page

coaxed by fire department members to join four years into his EMS career, said Rescue Captain Mark Merritt.

Knowlton became an EMT and a member of the Roy B. Pettengill Ambulance Association in 1985.

“He loved driving the ambulance – even more driving the fire trucks. If he wasn’t driving, he wanted to be in the front seat running the lights and sirens,” Merritt said. “At 75, we can all hope to do what we love to do like he was.”

Up until his death, Knowlton continued to respond to both medical and fire calls regardless of what time the call came in or how far away he had to travel, Merritt said.

“I did the math a few years ago and he did well over 10,000 calls in his career,” he said. “I could always count on him.”

Knowlton’s wife Judy called him kind, patient and always concerned for her safety.

The couple had two daughters, Fitzsimmons, who resides in Marlborough, and Sandra Dorn, who lives in Minnesota.

Knowlton enjoyed scuba diving and cooking, Judy said, and the two traveled to Alaska and Israel – two of Knowlton’s favorite places.

He also enjoyed UConn women’s basketball and would coach them from the living room, Judy said.

“If they weren’t listening to him while he was sitting down, he would stand up,” she added chuckling.

Fire Chief Kevin Asklar referred to Knowlton as his “answer guy,” someone who always had or would be willing to find the answers.

“He was a huge asset and helped me tremendously in day to day operations with the fire department and being treasurer,” Asklar said. “He loved helping the community.”

Knowlton could be seen with his signature black cowboy hat and cowboy boots around town and at Board of Finance meetings, where he served since being elected to the board in 2011.

Judy said Knowlton owned three cowboy hats – and even wore one as he walked Fitzsimmons down the aisle at her wedding.

As finance board chairman, Knowlton regularly worked with neighbor and friend Ruth Kelly, who is also Board of Education chairman.

“Doug was very measured in terms of his Board of Finance [role],” Kelly said, adding, “He always tried to be fair and definitely had the best interest of the town in mind.”

Kelly said he “always did his homework” researching state statutes and the town charter to form a fair and reasonable conclusion.

First Selectman Amy Traversa referred to Knowlton as “part of the fabric of this town.” Through chuckles, she also talked about Knowlton’s love of spreadsheets and how he voiced with amusement just how much he enjoyed creating them.

“Doug was a self-professed computer geek long before it was fashionable,” she said laughing.

Traversa said she’s known Knowlton for over 25 years, working with him in his role as Board of Finance chairman for the past three.

Despite not always agreeing, Traversa said both “had a deep mutual respect for each other.”

“He was so good-natured about everything,” Traversa said. “I’m going to miss his friendship and I’m going to miss his work. It will take a number of people to fill his shoes.”

Knowlton also served as the municipal representative for the Tolland Exchange dispatch center and as liaison for various emergency management committees.

In addition to his professional dedication, Knowlton will be remembered as someone who could always be counted on.

Kelly recalled a time when her husband was five hours away in New York with a medical issue while she was in Marlborough.

Knowlton, without being asked, drove Kelly the five hours to New York.

Resident and friend Richard Denno said Knowlton was “a very, very special person and one of the people that had the most impact in town. He was a dear friend and a joy.”

Board of Education member Louise Concodello called Knowlton “a gentleman.”

“He was very kind-hearted and a great listener,” she said.

Board of Finance member Ken Hjulstrom called the loss “devastating to our community.”

“I can honestly say that Doug was one of those people who I would consider irreplaceable.”

In the midst of budget season, the board’s Vice Chairman Susan Leser will serve as interim chairman until a new chairman can be elected by the finance board and the vacancy can be filled by selectmen. Knowlton’s term runs until November.

“Doug was easy to talk to and had an excellent sense of humor,” Leser said. “I will miss him deeply.”

Budget Compromise cont. from Front Page

Smith hasn’t yet determined what else he will cut to make up the remaining \$60,000 of the roughly \$150,000 reduction in the compromise, he said. He’ll know more once he finds out if there are going to be additional teacher retirements this year.

No Vote

A move by Brown to bring the education budget up for a vote at Tuesday’s meeting was met with resistance from some members of his own board as well as a school board member in the audience.

Republican Board of Education member Nancy Oakley asked the finance board to consider holding off on a vote until next week. The school board is scheduled to meet Monday and the finance board again on Thursday.

Oakley said she was concerned the issue seemed to be coming to a vote before the school board could discuss it in a public forum.

“I just ask that if it’s possible, if you would refrain from voting on it now until we have our meeting on Monday. That way everybody could discuss and possibly, in a public forum, agree to this idea,” Oakley said.

Republican finance board member Janine Jiantonio also expressed concerns a vote would be premature. She said she had questions about the likelihood of Lamont’s teacher pension plan coming to fruition and about the impact on the town budget if it does.

“I just feel that \$151 [thousand] could get us another police officer, which we need,” she said.

Town Manager Michael Maniscalco’s proposed town operations budget includes an additional police officer to be hired mid-year for \$45,970, which will bring the force to 16 officers. But East Hampton Police Chief Dennis

Woessner had requested two new officers in his department request.

One full-year, full-time officer costs \$91,940.

Jiantonio and several other finance board members spoke in favor of Woessner’s request.

The officers are necessary to augment a force that regularly has only a couple officers on patrol during a shift, according to officials. They said if even one officer becomes incapacitated for an extended period, it results in a more stressful workload for the remaining officers and more overtime expenses for the town.

Jiantonio said financial issues don’t just affect the town’s ability to pay for more officers; they also increase the need for officers. She pointed to the societal impacts of a dragging economy combined with more taxes at the local, state and federal level.

“That creates tension and stress and all sorts of crazy-ass stuff that happens in people’s homes. And who handles that? [Police officers] do,” she said.

Democrat Barbara Moore said Jiantonio was right. The other Democrat, Ted Turner, said he agreed.

Jiantonio brought the discussion back to education when she said funding great schools and new buildings doesn’t make sense if you can’t keep the public safe.

“I’m saying \$90,000 gets us a teacher or it gets us a police officer. My vote is for a police officer,” she said.

The Board of Education will meet Monday, April 8 at 6:30 p.m. in the East Hampton High School T-Bell. The Board of Finance is scheduled to meet Thursday, April 11 at 6:30 p.m. in the East Hampton Middle School library.

Observations & Ruminations

by Mike Thompson

First off, some very sad news to report. As you probably saw on the cover, Marlborough Board of Finance Chairman Doug Knowlton passed away suddenly Monday evening, after suffering a massive heart attack.

I never met Doug, but my reporters did, over the course of the seven-plus years he was on the finance board in town. And they all loved him. I remember over the years them often talking about how helpful Doug was, and how nice he was – and how well-liked he seemed to be. “He meant a lot to a lot of people in Marlborough” was how one former reporter put it when I told her the news of his passing.

In addition to his time on the board, Doug was also a longtime, devoted firefighter and EMT. In fact, he had just returned home from duty Monday night when he suffered the fatal heart attack.

From what I’ve gathered from the folks I’ve talked to, Doug’s sudden passing will leave a big hole in the town. It’s not hard to see why. To find someone as devoted to his town as Doug Knowlton was to Marlborough.....well, those types of people are fewer and farther between these days.

My heart goes out to Doug’s family, friends, colleagues. I know he’ll be incredibly missed.

* * *

Well, it doesn’t appear that regionalization of schools in the state will happen anytime soon. And that’s a shame.

According to the *CT Mirror*, Gov. Ned Lamont last week backed off a school consolidation bill that would have required small districts – defined as districts with fewer than 10,000 residents, fewer than 2,000 students, or with fewer than three schools — to share a superintendent with another district or name a chief executive officer to oversee the schools.”

The bill further stated that if such a district declined to share a superintendent and instead kept their own, then funding could be withheld from the state in an amount equal to the superintendent’s salary, the *Mirror* reported.

The bill was met with much loud objection at a public hearing in Hartford last month, from folks who worried about the loss of local control should their school district be forced to merge with others.

So, Lamont revised the bill, removing every instance of the words “redistricting” and “consolidation,” and also empowering a newly-formed commission to make only recommendations regarding regionalization, and not specific plans.

The consolidation of schools with less than 2,000 students, you may recall, was one of two school regionalization ideas proposed by legislators earlier this year. State Sen. Martin Looney had also suggested consolidating school districts in accordance with the state map of probate districts. I never thought that

one was a great idea; it was too large of an undertaking. School systems like those in Manchester and Glastonbury are big enough to stand on their own; you don’t need to add, say, Andover or Hebron to the mix.

But the other proposal – originally pitched by the *Rivereast’s* own state Sen. Cathy Osten, who knows a thing or two about small towns – seemed like a good one; it was an idea worth considering.

This part of Connecticut is chockfull of small towns that, frankly, could do without their own school systems. The student populations are just too small. When an entire school system is composed of just one school – as is the case in Andover and Marlborough – there’s no reason why you can’t consolidate, and share resources.

Indeed, just look at the older grades in those two towns. Middle and high school students from Andover and Marlborough go to RHAM, which is a terrific example of how regionalization can succeed.

In my reporter days, I covered the RHAM district, and was always impressed by the quality of the education the kids were receiving. In addition to loads of high-quality extracurriculars, test scores were uniformly excellent – often times higher than at the elementary schools in Hebron, Andover and Marlborough.

And RHAM has also shown the cost savings that can be realized through regionalization. For example: let’s look at East Hampton and Hebron. They have similar populations, and their K-12 students are educated in exactly four schools in each town – Memorial, Center, East Hampton Middle and East Hampton High in Belltown, and Gilead Hill, Hebron Elementary and the RHAM middle and high schools in Hebron.

The proposed East Hampton schools budget for 2019-20 is \$31.58 million. However, what Hebron’s paying for its K-12 students totals \$26.38 million — \$11.43 million for the elementary schools and \$14.95 million for Hebron’s share of the RHAM schools budget.

I know the comparison isn’t completely apples to apples; there are different expenses for each school system, differing levels of debt service, etc. But that’s \$5.2 million less Hebron’s paying than East Hampton. That’s a real, substantial difference. It’s not just the cost of one less schools superintendent.

RHAM is a great regionalization success story – both on the academic level and the financial level.

Look, the state is in a financial mess. It doesn’t matter who put us there; we’re there. What matters now is finding ways out of it. Regionalization was a creative way to help that I think really could have worked. It’s a shame more people didn’t see it that way.

* * *

See you next week.

\$25.99 Million Budget Sent to Public Hearing in Marlborough

by Allison Lazur

After opting not to make any reductions to the proposed town and school budgets, the Board of Finance last week voted 4-2 in favor of sending a proposed \$25.99 million budget, an increase of 5.54 percent or \$1.36 million over current year spending, to public hearing.

Also at the March 26 meeting, the Board of Finance decided to utilize \$375,000 of the undesignated fund balance to offset the mill rate, resulting in a 2.01 percent tax increase, or .73 mills.

The proposed spending package includes operations and capital expenses for the town, local Board of Education and Marlborough's portion of the RHAM budget.

In one of his final statements to the *Rivereast* before his sudden death Monday night, Knowlton after the meeting said he believed the boards of selectmen and education presented "pretty tight budgets" when they went before the finance board in March – so he didn't see the need to make any reductions.

"Both boards really worked hard to present a trimmed down budget in the first place," he said.

The proposed town government budget totals \$6.19 million, or an increase of 6.23 percent for the 2019-20 fiscal year.

The town 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.

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

Driving the over 6 percent increase is the capital improvement budget, an increase of \$209,846 from the current year and 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 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.

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.

The school's operating budget totals \$7.41 million, an increase of 1.59 percent, as well as a \$315,735 capital plan which includes the paving all of the school parking lots and funds set aside for the replacement of two boilers and the school's roof.

Contractual obligations – which include salaries, benefits, electricity, sewer, water, student transportation, magnet school tuition, diesel, gasoline, propane and heating oil – account for 91 percent of the total budget.

Salaries and benefits occupy 84 percent of the contractual obligations or \$6.13 million.

Teacher salaries saw an average general wage increase of 2 percent over the current year and medical insurance rates saw an estimated 6.8 percent increase.

The school board has no capital budget in the current year's spending plan after making the decision last budget season to cut its entire \$118,000 capital improvement plan to satisfy a request by the Board of Finance to further reduce the school budget by \$132,000.

The proposed capital budget includes replacing two of the school's four boilers at an estimated cost of \$70,000 spent over three budget seasons with \$15,000 in the 2019-20 proposal.

The Board of Finance made the decision to approve paving all the school's parking lots at once, instead of over the course of three years, to save \$15,300, bringing the total cost of the paving project to \$290,735.

Marlborough's contribution for RHAM operations totals \$9.88 million, an increase of 5.78 percent or \$539,543 over the current year, as well as an additional \$172,308 for capital.

"RHAM has a heavy impact on Marlborough not due to the increase but due to the portion of students [who attend RHAM]," Knowlton said last week.

The town of Marlborough sends 485 students to RHAM, while 734 students attend from Hebron and 236 students come from Andover.

The majority of the Board of Finance also backed Knowlton's proposal to utilize \$375,000 from the undesignated fund balance to offset the mill rate and discussion over the plan monopolized the meeting.

Knowlton said last week the idea is to utilize a portion of the undesignated fund so that there isn't "a yo-yo," or constant increase and decrease, in property taxes from year to year.

Under the current budget proposal, the mill rate would see an increase of .73 mills bringing the mill rate to 37.25.

One mill is equivalent to \$1 in tax per \$1,000 of assessed property, meaning a 37.25 mill rate would result in a resident paying about \$9,312 in taxes on a home assessed at \$250,000.

Utilizing \$375,000 brings the undesignated fund balance to 13.48 percent of the entire town budget or about \$3.5 million.

Knowlton said a healthy undesignated fund balance is typically between 11 and 15 percent of the total budget.

Board of Finance members Richard Shonk and Dieter Zimmer were not in agreement of using the portion of the fund balance Knowlton proposed.

Both also voted against the budget.

Zimmer said he would like to see about \$200,000 to \$250,000 utilized, while Shonk expressed concerns for future years.

Shonk said he "would prefer that we be honest with everybody" and explain that costs are increasing and in turn causing an increase in

property taxes. He said if the finance board continues to offset the mill rate with money from the undesignated fund balance, people will expect a figure that is lower than what it actually costs to live in Marlborough.

First Selectman Amy Traversa, who was also in attendance at last week's meeting, said if the finance board decided to use more than \$375,000 of the undesignated fund balance, she would be "publicly opposed."

"I think it's dangerous for us to artificially deflate what it costs to live in this town," she said. "If we can use money up to the 13 or 13.5 percent I'm fine with that."

The proposed budget also accounts for the possibility that municipalities may be responsible for funding at least 25 percent of teacher pension costs as proposed by Gov. Ned Lamont.

Marlborough's contribution is estimated to be \$47,411 in the proposed budget and roughly \$92,000 in 2020-21 and climbing to \$100,000 in 2021-22, Knowlton said last week.

"This 47,000 is just the beginning is the only way I can say it," he said.

"It's brand new; We don't know where it's going to be in future years," Knowlton said, adding that he's "recognizing it as an expense and hoping it goes away."

The Board of Finance also approved including three exit poll questions for the first time. The questions at this year's referendum budget scheduled for May 7, will ask whether the town and local Board of Education operating budgets as well as the capital budget for the town and school are too high or too low.

Residents will be able to voice their opinions on the proposed budget at a public hearing scheduled for Monday, April 22, at 7 p.m. in the Marlborough Elementary School cafeteria.

The Board of Finance is also scheduled to have a meeting Wednesday, April 10, at 7 p.m., in the school's library.

RHAM Budget Plan Seeks to Catch Up on Capital Projects

by Sloan Brewster

RHAM Superintendent of Schools Pat Law on Monday presented a \$30.15 million budget proposal with an emphasis on capital improvements.

The \$29.63 million operations budget combines with the \$516,976 capital budget for an increase of 2.86 percent over the current year.

If approved by voters at May referendum, the \$29.63 million budget will be spread between the three towns in the district. Hebron's levy will be \$14.95 million; Marlborough's will be \$9.88 million and Andover's will be \$4.47 million.

The Board of Education has been entreating the public to fill capital needs for years, Law said. Each year, the expenses are put off.

Law's \$516,976 capital proposal is an increase of \$273,690 over the current capital budget.

In particular, problems with the media center's heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) unit need to be addressed, as Law said the unit does not properly humidify the air – which has led to an odor in the room, as well as a constantly-damp carpet. Replacing the unit will cost \$325,100 and the carpet must be replaced at the same time for an additional \$85,000.

At a sparsely attended district meeting held immediately before the public hearing Monday, voters approved a plan to put the \$269,494 surplus from the current RHAM budget toward the HVAC unit.

The vote was 10-1.

The entire \$410,100 project was previously included in Law's proposed capital budget. After voters approved using the surplus funds, the remaining \$140,000 is slated to come out of the capital budget.

"We're at a point where we can no longer

ignore the issue," Law said. "The media center smells."

Law went through the list, which also includes a \$132,000 air conditioning unit for the basement weight room and two classrooms. Gym students swelter from heat and humidity during the hot seasons, Law said.

Putting the overall budget proposal into context, Law said she was anticipating about 60 less students at the high and middle schools in the coming year.

"That's not a significant decline," she said.

Law told the scant audience that taxpayers get a "wonderful return" on their investment in the school as it offers a "globally-competitive, world-class education" and produces students that go on to higher education, including at the Ivy Leagues.

The district spending plan includes \$54,000 to add a guidance counselor Law cut in the current budget. She said she found that students' needs were not being met with the reduction, which left a counselor split between the two schools.

"Last year as part of the 'right-sizing' process we did eliminate two guidance counselors," she said. "We found we really do need one back."

Law is also proposing bringing on one full-time athletic director to oversee sports at the middle school and high school rather than using the two part-timers who now each cover one school. The new position would cost about \$24,000 more due to the need for increased certifications, she said.

Law also spoke about a new Special Education Transition Program to further develop life skills for special education students aged 18 to 21. The program would include educational

opportunities and work experiences for the students, she said.

Law is asking for two additional paraprofessionals at \$22,000 each for the program, which, she said, represents an overall savings to the district as it currently outpaces such transitional services.

Siobhan Peng, one of only two speakers to comment at the hearing, said her daughter will be in the program in the fall.

"I don't know how you can create a program with only two paraprofessionals that would meet those goals," she said.

Peng also said the state prefers that programs of this sort be in the community and not in schools.

Law said the paraprofessional would not be running the program but would be an addition to it. It would also utilize current RHAM staff. As to Peng's concern that it would be in school rather than in the community, Law said that was only the plan for the first year.

"I have spoken with the state and they are supportive of a single-year pilot program before we move it out of the district," she said.

Law also wants to make some changes to after-hours security, namely locking the doors between 3:30 p.m. and 11 p.m., while athletic teams and outside organizations are using the building.

"It's very important for me to make sure that we are locking our building, that we are monitoring who is coming in," she said.

The new monitor would admit people during scheduled events and would run \$28,618 at the high school and \$2,560 at the middle school.

The plan would be that coaches and certain individuals would have key fobs and a non-cer-

tified staff member would be present to monitor the doors and let folks in.

Law added \$10,000 to the capital nonrecurring fund to pay for a crack sealing project that would have been included with the modifications, saying the sealing still needs to be completed.

She also included \$56,000 to make the baseball and softball fields compatible with the American with Disabilities Act, and \$10,000 for a feasibility study to look at the possibility of putting a turf field at the school.

The nonrecurring fund is not part of the budget request and is not voted on, Law said.

After the public hearing was closed the board reconvened in the high school music room and voted to forward the capital and operating budgets to the towns.

Law also announced that a campus-modification project at the high school would be pushed back until the 2020 summer, as the district is waiting for the state to approve a permit from the Department of Transportation [DOT] Office of the State Traffic Administration.

In January, the school board said it hoped to have the work completed before the start of the next school year.

"The DOT project unfortunately is going to be put off another year," Law said.

The district meeting on the RHAM budget is scheduled for Monday, May 6, at 6:30 p.m., in the RHAM High School chorus room. Assuming the budget is sent to referendum by voters at that night's meeting, the referendum will take place in each of the three RHAM towns on Tuesday, May 7.

Funding for Fire Inspections Inadequate, East Hampton Marshal Says

by Elizabeth Regan

The budget allotted to the fire marshal's office each year could get people killed, according to fire marshal Richard Klotzbier.

He addressed the Board of Finance at a budget workshop last week to warn them the town is opening itself up to lawsuits by failing to adequately fund fire inspections required by state law.

He cited a 2009 fire in Bridgeport that claimed the lives of a mother and her three young children. The resulting civil case made its way through the court system until the state Supreme Court in 2017 decided municipalities can be held liable for failing to inspect buildings.

The underfunding in the local budget is putting "life safety at risk for the residents of East Hampton," Klotzbier wrote in a letter to the finance board accompanying his testimony.

The fire marshal and his deputy fire marshal, Joey Guest, completed 10.8 percent of required annual inspections in 2018, according to department statistics. They said that's because there's only enough money in the current budget for them to work about 18 hours per week combined.

The department is asking for an additional \$70,060 in the coming budget year to bring Klotzbier to full-time and Guest to part-time. But Town Manager Michael Maniscalco's recommended budget only gave Klotzbier 4.5 additional hours per week when presented to the finance board last week.

Klotzbier at the March 28 budget workshop

asked finance board members to heed Bridgeport's warning by approving his department's full request.

"[The case] put all the towns in the state on notice that failure to properly fund the fire marshal's office doesn't keep you away from being liable for injuries or damages," Klotzbier said. "Bridgeport wrote a huge check and had to hire a whole bunch of fire inspectors to solve that issue."

The fire marshal's office completed 36 of 333 required inspections last year on properties that must be evaluated on an annual basis. While all daycare centers, schools and nursing homes were inspected, only five out of 184 apartments and three out of 66 commercial buildings were inspected. Among other uninspected properties are four medical offices, two mixed-use developments, one bed and breakfast and one manufacturing facility.

According to minutes from the Jan. 14 meeting of the Board of Fire Commissioners, a full-time fire marshal with a part-time deputy would theoretically increase the number of inspections 85-90 percent.

There was no further discussion and no official endorsement of Klotzbier's budget request by the fire commission, according to a review of February and March meeting minutes.

State statute gives the town's Board of Fire Commissioners the authority to appoint, supervise and, if necessary, dismiss a fire marshal for cause. The day-to-day operations of the East Hampton fire marshal's office are overseen by

the town manager.

Board of Fire Commissioners Chairman Brett Salafia declined to comment on the budget discussion.

"I trust that the Board of Finance and the [Town] Council will do what is best for the town," he said.

Reiterating the town manager maintains operational oversight of the fire marshal's office, he said Maniscalco would be "better versed on the hours issue."

Maniscalco said this week the low rate of completed inspections is common throughout the state. He pointed to legislation under consideration in the state legislature that is designed to reduce the number of annual inspections required by fire marshals.

A broad bill backed by Gov. Ned Lamont concerning "municipal and regional opportunities and efficiencies" would require fire marshals to inspect three- to six-family buildings once every three years and seven- to 16-family buildings once every two years.

A public hearing was held on the bill in Hartford on March 20. It has been referred to the legislature's Joint Committee on Planning and Development for consideration.

According to written testimony submitted for the public hearing, the Connecticut Fire Marshals Association opposes the bill. The letter said it is those multi-family residences that experience the majority of fires in the state: 1,474 in 2017, 1,440 in 2016 and 1,362 in 2015.

The state Fire Marshals Association said

changes to the state fire code should be made through the public code-making process – not by state lawmakers.

According to the state Department of Administrative Services (DAS), the fire code is typically updated by DAS staff and members of the Code Amendment Subcommittee with input from the public.

Maniscalco noted the 4.5-hour increase to the East Hampton fire marshal's office brings the salary budget back to where it was before a significant cut in the 2016-17 budget.

The salary line item in the budget for the fire marshal's office dropped from \$39,000 to \$30,162 between fiscal year 2016 and 2017. It's \$33,765 in the current budget.

The number of completed annual inspections dropped from 229 to 44 between fiscal year 2016 and 2017, according to department data.

Klotzbier told finance board members Maniscalco's recommended increase would allow him to complete roughly 15-20 percent of required inspections.

He said daily inspections of the town hall and police department complex currently under construction will increase his workload significantly once the building is enclosed.

Klotzbier said approving new construction projects and renovations also makes up a large part of his responsibilities.

"Fortunately for the town, we've got a huge construction boom going on – and plan reviews take an inordinate amount of time," he said.

East Hampton Town Manager Seeks Solutions to Water Woes

by Elizabeth Regan

Town Manager Michael Maniscalco has addressed a letter to three main players in the utility sector asking for definitive answers to these questions: Do you believe you can provide East Hampton with water and how will you do it?

The March 21 letter from Maniscalco to Don Morrissey of Aquarion Water Company, Craig Patala of Connecticut Water and Scott Jellison of the Metropolitan District (MDC) referenced "countless conversations" with each company as East Hampton officials look to develop a comprehensive public water system.

Maniscalco said the companies have had sufficient time to inquire about the town's needs.

"At this point, I believe we have answered all your questions related to what can and cannot be done and how things work in East Hampton," Maniscalco wrote.

He asked for a proposal outlining such details as the water source, phasing, cost and projected water rates for prospective customers over five years.

MDC is a quasi-public agency; Connecticut Water and Aquarion are private. Aquarion was acquired in 2017 by Eversource Energy.

East Hampton officials going back five decades have tried to bring a reliable public water supply to town – but three small, town-operated water systems currently in use have not gone far enough in solving water concerns that have disrupted the lives of residents and hindered economic development throughout town.

The informal request for proposals specified a May 20 deadline. The companies were asked to attend the June 11 council meeting to present

their plans.

Maniscalco told the *Rivereast* this week he hopes the council will be able to make a decision by June or July.

Maniscalco last Tuesday announced he will be resigning on July 14 to take over as the South Windsor town manager.

He noted it's possible none of the companies will make a proposal – "in which case, now we know definitively the town of East Hampton's got to take care of itself."

Discussion with MDC has revolved around a plan to create a pipeline along Route 66 from Grove Street in Portland to the current East Hampton Town Hall to bring in MDC water. The first phase would cost roughly \$32 million.

But the plan involves cooperation from Portland, and officials there have not been moving as quickly as Maniscalco would like to come to an agreement.

That's why he started conversations with Connecticut Water and Aquarion as well.

Those discussions have involved using the town's wellfield in the Cobalt section of town and "cobbling together" smaller wells in order to create a water system that can deliver enough water to satisfy demand, according to Maniscalco. He said they've also talked about exploring new sources for water.

A 2017 study and a 2018 update by the Tighe and Bond engineering firm – as well as the Water Development Task Force charged with making its own recommendation – all called for the town to consider putting the dormant

Oakum Dock wellfield to use or piping in water from MDC.

Tighe and Bond estimated it would ultimately cost about \$81 million to fully outfit a new water system to bring MDC into East Hampton.

The report estimated the cost would be similar if East Hampton instead decided to construct a water system around the two high-yielding wells on Oakum Dock Road.

Maniscalco told the *Rivereast* in January he was hopeful the state legislature would authorize \$40 million in bond funding that had already been endorsed by the state Department of Health. He also requested an \$80 million long-term, below-market-rate loan through the state.

The \$40 million in bond funding would be used to pay half of the loan, he said at the time; the remainder of the loan would then be paid off by "whatever water company" is chosen to serve the town.

Maniscalco this week said the bond funding request is on hold while local officials figure out how to proceed.

He said it's possible officials could decide to divide the project into even smaller chunks to be phased in over the coming decades.

"You've got this \$81 million project," he said. "We could do part of it at \$40 million and it meets some of the need, or we could do an even smaller project at \$18 or \$21 million and it meets some of the need. Nowhere does it say we have to do the whole kit and kaboodle today."

Portland First Selectman Susan Bransfield said this week that officials on the Board of Selectmen's water and sewer subcommittee have also been meeting with MDC, Connecticut Water and Aquarion to talk about Portland's needs.

The town currently buys water from MDC based on a 30-year contract signed in 1996 to supplement the town's public well supply.

She acknowledged Portland is taking a careful approach as it considers a combination of factors including its aging infrastructure, the impending expiration of the MDC contract, the effect on Portland ratepayers, and East Hampton's significant need for water.

"The interconnection [with East Hampton] is a possibility, but we were concerned about the management of our system," she said. "The system is over 100 years old and we need to make sure we're addressing the needs that we have – and if that includes the ability to have an interconnection and that improves our viability, then certainly we're looking at that."

Bransfield is currently investigating the possibility of state funding for an in-depth study that looks at water needs in the context of a regional approach to the essential utility.

She said she plans to reach out to Maniscalco, whom she said she has not spoken with regarding water in several months. But she noted his resignation will be effective in mid-July.

"With Mr. Maniscalco leaving, I don't know whether things are going to change a little bit in East Hampton," she said.

Hebron Schools Superintendent to Leave for Suffield

by Sloan Brewster

Schools Superintendent Timothy Van Tasel has taken a job as superintendent of Suffield Public Schools.

In an email Tuesday night, Van Tasel, a resident of Ellington, announced his decision to depart from Hebron at the end of the school year “with a heavy heart.”

“I feel very fortunate to be appointed the superintendent for the Suffield Public Schools, but the many wonderful moments I have shared with everyone in Hebron over the past four years are making my impending departure very difficult to process,” he wrote. “The positive impact the entire district has had on me professionally and personally is significant to say the least. It goes without saying that I will greatly miss serving as your superintendent.”

Van Tasel went on to say he would provide a formal letter of resignation to the Board of Education at its meeting next Thursday, April 11.

For Van Tasel, the move represents the chance to oversee a K-12 school system. The Hebron school system is grades K-6, with the middle and high schools part of RHAM.

“Over the next three months, I will be working with the Board, the administration, and the faculty and staff in preparation for my transition,” he wrote. “I am confident that our planning for the future will go very well, and that the Hebron Public Schools will continue to be tremendously successful in meeting the needs of our children and families.”

Van Tasel, who was hired by Hebron in 2015 at a base salary of \$142,200, now earns

\$152,383. On Thursday, Laura Guerrette, the superintendent’s secretary at Suffield Public Schools, said the district had not yet finalized Van Tasel’s contract and did not have his salary.

Board of Education Chairman Erica Bromley said Van Tasel would be missed.

“We’re definitely sad to see him leave,” she said. “I feel like over the last few years that he’s been here that we’ve accomplished a lot and moved forward a lot.”

In his tenure in the district, Van Tasel has made accomplishments in relationship and communication, Bromley said.

During the search for a superintendent four years ago, Van Tasel was unanimously chosen by the search committee, she said. In the interview process, the committee saw something positive in his personality.

“I think that his personality was very inviting, he certainly portrayed himself as being able to communicate well,” she said. “That was something that we could tell early on.”

Carol Connolly, who was on the education board at that time and was part of the search committee, also said Van Tasel would be missed.

“This is a great loss for Hebron,” she said.

While he has been with the district, Van Tasel has incorporated more Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math [STEAM] Education into the district, according to Bromley.

“I certainly think that he was able to bring the district to a really great place in terms of STEAM,” Bromley said.

STEAM, according to educators, provides for an integrated approach to learning.

When school opened in the fall, Van Tasel and Don Briere, director of educational services, spoke to the *Rivereast* about the district’s continued focus on STEAM.

In particular, students were working with 3D printers, Briere said.

The printers were purchased through a \$10,000 American Mold Manufacturing Advancement Grant to expand the STEAM program from the American Builder Association that the district received with Webco Plastics, Inc. of Middlefield, he said.

Van Tasel has also brought a focus on leadership to the district, “both in the student body as well as cultivating leaders in the staff,” Bromley said.

Meanwhile, in Suffield, school board chairman Susan Mercik Davis said she’s excited about Van Tasel’s impending arrival. She said Thursday that Van Tasel stood out from all the candidates from the beginning of the search process. He showed a “breadth and depth of education” knowledge and his understanding “a well-functioning school system was unapproached.”

“It was just unparalleled,” she said. “His demeanor is calm and he has, honestly, he has an authentic desire to connect with people and our district needs that. We were searching for that.”

Davis said she has spoken to many people who have worked with Van Tasel and everything she has heard was positive. She added



Van Tasel

that Van Tasel was concerned that Hebron find a replacement that was equal or better than he.

“His biggest concern was for Hebron; [it] was to find a good interim superintendent,” she said.

The Hebron Board of Education hasn’t met since Van Tasel made his announcement to leave and plans for a search for a new superintendent have not yet been made, but Bromley said she expects the board will hire a consultant to help with the search and will establish an interview panel.

Plan Would Shift Police Funding, Reduce Mill Rate in Hebron

by Sloan Brewster

To the apparent dismay of local parents, the Board of Finance on Tuesday cut the Hebron Board of Education budget by \$90,000 after the Board of Selectmen last week added \$70,000 to the town’s proposed police budget.

While finance board members touted the move as a way to achieve a Board of Selectmen directive to reduce the mill rate, not everyone was buying it. Some suggested it was an effort to prevent the school board from hiring a school resource officer [SRO] in spite of the fact that doing so falls outside the finance board’s authority.

State statute specifies 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 total \$35.66 million budget proposal will go to a public hearing next week. The spending plan – representing a decrease of \$138,799, or 0.39 percent, from the current budget – includes a \$11.34 million school board budget proposal, a \$9.04 proposed town operations budget, and an estimated \$15.21 million for RHAM.

Before the finance board meeting, the proposed education budget included approximately \$82,000 to fund four part-time SROs for the two schools in the district.

As sworn police officers, though, the SROs would be under the Board of Selectmen’s purview and the plan requires approval by selectmen before it can be moved forward, Town Andy Tierney said last week, adding that the

town would actually staff the new officers.

Then, last Tuesday, at a joint meeting with the finance board, selectmen added \$70,000 to the town’s local police budget for three additional part-time officers, one of whom would be an SRO who would work 35 hours a week, with the hours spread between the two elementary schools. The plan was that the additional funds would be offset by the \$82,000 that had been allotted for the part-time SROs in the school budget.

To get to the bottom line approved by the finance board this week, the board unanimously agreed to move \$90,000 from the proposed local school board budget to the town’s budget proposal in an effort to put all policing funds in the same line item.

They then cut \$85,000 from the town’s budget.

While board members for the most part resisted the temptation to specifically discuss the SRO proposal, members did allude to it.

Diane Del Rosso made an initial motion to reduce the town operations budget by \$40,000, saying she wanted “to leave a little extra in there but not a lot extra” for the police department.

Board member Mal Leichter cut her off.

“Point of order,” he said. “We should not be talking about individual items.”

The Finance Board has the authority to discuss numbers but not policy or individual line items, Leichter said.

In discussing Del Rosso’s motion, the board decided to increase the cut from the town bud-

get to \$85,000 and approved the motion 3-2, with Leichter and Peter Kasper opposed.

The finance board repeatedly stated it was making the cut to drop the mill rate at the behest of selectmen.

Veschi pointed out that selectmen, at the joint meeting last week, had “unanimously put in front of us” a budget with a requested mill rate of 37. He said he wanted the finance board to be “in sync with the Board of Selectmen.”

At the joint meeting, selectmen discussed lowering the 37.44 mill rate. Selectman John Collins suggested that a lower tax rate would make it easier to attract businesses to town. The board recommended that the finance board take funds from the unassigned fund to do so.

The finance board did some math, determining that with the \$85,000 cut, plus \$50,000 from the unassigned fund balance, it could get the mill rate to 37. The board made a motion to add the \$50,000 to the budget.

Leichter, who said he was not in favor of “artificially lowering our mill rate by taking out of fund balance,” was opposed to the motion.

Shortly after the vote, posts began to appear on the Hebron Community Facebook page.

A resident who spoke in favor of the SRO program at the meeting posted the news about the vote, stating that the finance board, in cutting the \$85,000, cut the SRO proposal. He told voters the only way to overturn the decision was through public opinion.

In a phone call with the *Rivereast* Wednesday, school board chair Erica Bromley, who also

spoke in favor of the school board’s SRO proposal at the meeting, said that while during the board’s discussion she was hopeful the \$85,000 would be added to the selectmen’s budget and remain intact for the public hearing, the reduction effectively cut the SRO proposal.

“Despite the fact that the Board of Finance is not supposed to make cuts on certain line items, it’s obvious that the discussion revolved around the SRO proposal,” she said “That’s in effect what happened.”

Bromley said the public should be able to comment on the board’s proposal and vote on it, but added that the public could discuss it at the hearing nonetheless.

Bromley said she did not think a small reduction in the mill rate was worth the safety of the children and that she would prefer that the school board’s SRO plan had remained fully funded.

In a phone call Wednesday, Town Council Chairman Dan Larson said the numbers could still change.

“First off, that was just a suggestion, nothing has been finalized and will not be finalized until after that [public hearing],” he said. “I’m not putting any credence in any dollar amount until after that budget hearing and then we’ll have to decide what steps need to be taken ... There’s nothing cast in stone.”

The budget hearing will be Tuesday April 9 at 7 p.m. in the RHAM High School auditorium.

East Hampton Officials Struggling to Unload Town Hall, PD

by Elizabeth Regan

Efforts by East Hampton officials so far to unload the current town hall and police department have been unsuccessful.

The move to sell the building comes amid construction of a new municipal hub just over a mile east on Route 66.

The window for proposals from interested buyers closed on March 20 with no responses, according to Town Manager Michael Maniscalco. He said the request for proposals was issued in February.

Officials expect staff members to vacate the undersized and outdated space next winter in favor of the \$18.98 million, colonial-revival inspired town hall and police department dominated by brick, metal and glass. Maniscalco told the *Rivereast* this week he expects the new complex to be finished in February or March 2020.

Maniscalco said last week at a meeting of the Town Council that the next step involves finding a commercial real estate agent to list the property.

Maniscalco told the *Rivereast* this week the council was trying to avoid real estate commission fees by seeking out buyers through the bid-

ding process.

He said he will be reaching out to at least three agents before making a selection.

Officials going back decades have decried the deteriorating foundation, persistent flooding and undrinkable water in the current town hall. Numerous studies led to very little visible progress until the most recent plan for the new town hall complex was approved by voters in 2017.

Eversource Energy in late 2014 offered to buy the property for \$1 million as the company expanded its East Hampton presence, but the Town Council never took any action on the offer.

Maniscalco said he spoke with two representatives from Eversource before issuing the request for proposals; they both told him the company was no longer interested in buying the building.

The current town hall was built in 1946 for Eversource, known then as Connecticut Light and Power. It was purchased by the town in 1971 and was renovated in 1975.

According to assessor's data, the building has

an appraised value of \$982,870.

Maniscalco recommended that the council ask the selected real estate agent to list both the town hall building and a town-owned property at 1 Watrous St. at the same time.

The vacant building on Watrous Street was acquired by the town in 2016. A former thread factory, the 10,627-square-foot building sits on 0.51 acres. The water tower was removed in 2015 for safety reasons.

Maniscalco said the town spent \$200,000 to remove the water tower and roughly \$5,000-\$10,000 to clean up the site.

One building Maniscalco did not recommend putting on the market is the 1866 Board of Education building at 94 Main St.

The school district's central office will be among the departments moving to the new hub on Route 66.

"I don't think you want to sell it," Maniscalco told councilors at last week's meeting. He said there are numerous options for the space under the town's ownership, including programming space for the school district's special education efforts, office space for the Chatham Health

District or even a rest area for the Air Line Trail.

"You'd have a bathroom and a water fountain and maybe you'd put some historic pictures up of the Village Center. [With] a couple benches, then people on their way through the Village Center could at least have a place to stop," Maniscalco said.

Superintendent of Schools Paul Smith told the *Rivereast* this week the historic building, which served as the first Center School, is part of the burgeoning Village Center.

"The aspect I love about this building is it's nice to be on Main Street as it starts to come alive," he said. "I hope it remains an actively used building for the sake of Main Street."

He said he has no specific ideas yet, but suggested the first floor would make a good space for a new special education program that could bolster offerings for East Hampton students while increasing revenue by bringing in tuition-paying students from other towns.

"When the time comes, I hope to be involved in those conversations if the town feels there's a potential to keep the building," he said.

Andover to Continue with Transfer Station Fee

by Sloan Brewster

The Board of Selectmen has decided to continue to charge residents a \$40 fee for stickers to use the transfer station.

The decision, which was made at Wednesday's meeting, did not come without disagreement.

First Selectman Robert Burbank said he wanted to take the notion to a public hearing before making any decision and that the board had agreed to do that last year. Selectman Cathleen Dersosiers disagreed.

"No," she said. "We said we'd review it."

Burbank reiterated the need for a public hearing, calling the transfer station a "service most people feel they're being taxed for."

In June, selectmen nixed a motion to cancel the fees after resident Debbie Scanlon presented the board with a petition to reconsider them.

In March, the board voted to incur \$40 fee for the first two cars per household and \$20 for every additional car. After that, Scanlon repeat-

edly attended meetings and asked selectmen to pull the fee. In June, she said no one in town, as of that week, had purchased a sticker, and beseeched members, yet again, to eliminate the fee.

"We oppose the fee that is for the sticker," she said. "There's a lot of emotion to this."

Folks eventually started buying the stickers, lining outside the town clerk's to get them on more than one occasion when the *Rivereast* was at Town Hall over the summer.

The June vote to deny the elimination of the fees came in 3-1 with Burbank opposed. A suggestion Burbank made a month earlier to reduce the fees was knocked down by the rest of the board.

The motion this week to extend the fee for another year passed. Again the numbers were 3-10, with Burbank opposed.

As she has at previous meetings, Dersosiers said other towns with similar demographics

charge to use transfer stations. Usually the cost is more than \$40 with added fees to dump specific items, while in Andover there are no additional charges. She also pointed out that the fee has given folks from out of town a reason to find another place to dump their unwanted junk.

"The sticker program worked; we cut down on out-of-town people using the dump," she said. "It's \$40. I think it's a deal."

* * *

In other board news, selectmen authorized Town Administrator Joseph Higgins to schedule a meeting with the Board of Education to discuss the feasibility study on the proposal to convert the third- and fourth-grade wing at Andover Elementary School into a senior center.

Silver/Petrucci & Associates, the architectural firm selectmen hired in February to complete the study and Amanda Cleveland, a prin-

icipal at the firm, last month presented the Board of Education with a 40-page report with several options for shifting the space into a senior center.

The six options – two of which were in the report and two that were additions brought by the architect – included schematics and plans for rearranging the 5,400-square foot wing with four classrooms, a conference room, two restrooms and a nurse's office.

Each option came with an estimated price tag, all of which were in the same general range between slightly below \$400,000 to the mid-\$500,000s.

Selectman Julie Haverl, who presented some details in the two of the options – the most expensive and the cheapest – said selectmen should inform the education board that the "price needs to be as low as possible."

Town, School Budgets Presented in Colchester

by Allison Lazur

Tuesday night First Selectman Art Shilosky and Superintendent of Schools Jeff Burt presented both the town and school budgets to the Board of Finance and residents.

The proposed budgets – which will be voted on separately at referendum – total \$57.12 million and saw an increase of \$1.75 million over current year spending.

At the current budget proposal residents will be looking at a 1.83 mill increase, bringing the mill rate to 34.11.

One mill is equivalent to \$1 in tax per \$1,000 of assessed property, meaning a 34.11 mill rate would result in a resident paying about \$8,527 in taxes on a home assessed at \$250,000.

The town budget, at \$15.55 million, saw an increase of \$731,340, while the \$41.57 school spending plan drove the increase with a proposal to climb \$1.02 million over the current year.

General government costs, at \$3.74 million, saw an \$89,911 increase, and account for the majority of the proposed town budget.

The increase is driven by an additional \$43,192 in health insurance costs and an increase in legal of \$15,000 because of the negotiation of four union contracts in the police department, public works, library and fire department.

Public safety saw a \$224,340 increase bringing the total to \$3.15 million, with the increase driven by the paramedic program approved to be included in the 2019-20 budget by selectmen last month.

The \$191,754 program cost was determined based on an anticipated start date of Jan. 1, 2020 of paramedic services.

The program's cost also includes \$74,442 in the capital budget for monitors that perform a number of functions including checking a patient's vital signs, heart health and performing defibrillation.

Highway road improvements increased by \$50,000, an amount that Shilosky said is in-

cluded in the budget "so we can expand and keep going with the roads."

The addition of two full-time grounds maintenance positions totals \$87,089.

Shilosky said the reason for the additional positions is because of the increase in the removal of dead trees and the need for continued general ground maintenance.

An increase in dead trees that need to be removed is not unique to Colchester. The eastern portion of the state is handling the aftermath of gypsy moth devastation, resulting in dead trees that can fall at any time, posing a safety risk to residents.

"The reason for that is we just can't keep up with it. We can't keep up with the grounds. We can't keep up with the problems with the trees," he said.

Shilosky said an \$18,000 increase in transfer station fees is because "recycling doesn't work right now."

"China is not buying plastic so now the town is being charged to haul from the transfer station to the processing plants," he said.

The position of the Colchester Youth and Social Services coordinator is proposed to increase from a part-time position to a full-time one, resulting in an additional \$10,315.

"We have been trying to do this for maybe three years. It's time. There's more work; there's more people that need our help and in order to do that we need to have [staff] to handle that," Shilosky said.

A contribution to vehicle reserves totaled \$42,400, while the buildings/grounds reserve saw an additional \$10,000 set aside in the proposal for future needs.

Money set aside for capital projects saw a \$81,508 decrease as a result of being able to purchase items at a cheaper rate, resulting in less money set aside annually.

Shilosky cited self-contained breathing apparatuses for the fire department that are replaced every 15 years.

The 40 units will be replaced in the next year at a total cost of \$300,000 with \$20,000 in the proposed budget, as opposed to \$54,000 in the current spending plan.

Other capital expenses include the replacement of a police cruiser at \$60,000; Shilosky said every seven years a cruiser is replaced.

Under Gov. Ned Lamont's proposed budget, Colchester is projected to take a hit, Shilosky said.

The town could potentially lose \$20,411 in Local Capital Improvement funds as well as \$1.08 million in Education Cost Sharing money.

"That's going to hurt," Shilosky said. "I don't think that's going to be the final figure. We don't know what it is."

Despite the projected "hit" Colchester may take in state funding, the town is projected to see an increase in revenue.

Delinquent taxes and interest is estimated to increase \$205,000, while building permit fees will yield an additional \$20,000.

The new paramedic program is projected, after its roll out Jan. 1, 2020 to bring in an additional \$50,000.

* * *

Superintendent of Schools Jeff Burt's proposed \$41.57 million budget saw a \$1.02 or 2.51 percent increase.

The spending plan saw an increase in salaries of \$76,730, or .30 percent, bringing the total to \$25.57 million.

The current budget proposal includes 4.6 full-time staff reductions and 3.0 reductions in paraprofessionals and office staff, projected to offset the salary increase.

The reductions are created by reorganization in staff and retirements and total a \$261,272 savings.

Benefits also increased by \$561,108 or 8.75 percent – a total of \$6.97 million.

Utilities saw a large increase of 12.08 percent, or \$152,918 – which Burt said cannot

entirely be blamed on the new, larger William J. Johnston Middle School building.

"The cost of doing business has gone up tremendously for all of our buildings," he said.

The proposal also included a request for \$130,000 for new curriculum implementation utilized not for the writing of curriculum, but for "materials to support" new curriculum, Burt said.

A new program for developmentally-disabled 18-21 year olds was also proposed, with a request of \$57,501 for a full-time teacher and program supplies.

Burt said the program would "strengthen what we offer in district."

"There was some misconception going around [about] this program that we were removing students from other college like programs; that is not the case," Burt said. "This would not replace any kind of college experience."

The school budget proposal also focused on technology which saw a \$175,036 increase bringing the total line item to \$274,842.

The increase will introduce to the high school a framework, known in educational parlance as "one-to-one technology," that provides a dedicated laptop for each student to use during the school day. The one-to-one program has already been implemented at the middle school and will be maintained through the proposed funding increase.

The technology increase will also bring new technology to the elementary and intermediate school, though not at a one-to-one ratio.

Burt said the goal is to have "technologies that support innovated instruction" not replace it."

* * *

The Board of Finance will discuss and dissect the budget over the next few weeks at a number of budget workshops with the goal of finalizing the budget for public hearing at its May 1 meeting.

Shilosky, Coyle Offer Update on New Senior Center in Colchester

by Allison Lazur

Colchester seniors will likely have a new center by 2022, according to First Selectman Art Shilosky and Selectman Rosemary Coyle.

On Tuesday, Shilosky and Coyle went to the current senior center to update seniors on the project that has been in the works since 2007.

"Rosemary and I have been working on this for the last three years, and she's been working on it for the last seven years," Shilosky said. "We keep on telling you 'we're gonna have a new senior center, we're gonna have a new senior center,' and we have a timeframe."

The town purchased the senior center building in 2016 from the Bacon Academy Board of Trustees for \$275,000 after the sale was approved at referendum.

Since then the town has also purchased the land behind Town Hall, accessed by Lebanon Avenue, Coyle said Tuesday.

The land is adjoined with the back of the Town Hall property on the corner of Lebanon Avenue and Lewis lane.

"Essentially when that is open it'll be an entire town hall and senior center campus; it's very exciting," said Director of Senior Services Patty Watts.

The approximate 1.7-acre parcel cost the town about \$90,000 and was owned by an estate based out of New York, Shilosky said.

The selectmen are proposing a 2022 completion date for the new senior center, with the next steps happening this summer.

The Board of Selectmen will appoint a five-to-seven-person building committee by June, according to Shilosky.

By June 2020, an architect will have been

chosen and the design and construction document should be complete, he said.

Fall 2020 is estimated to bring a referendum where the project will have to be approved by voters, Shilosky said. Groundbreaking will occur in April 2021 and a year later a new senior center should be complete.

"We're going to get it done, but it's not just us, it's everybody in this room," Shilosky said. "We have to get the vote out saying you want it. If it doesn't pass [at referendum], we just put in all that hard work for nothing."

Although still in the early stages, the project is estimated to cost approximately 3.5 million and includes a new 12,000-sq. ft. building.

Watts said Wednesday she hopes the new space includes "a main great room with adaptable space" for a variety of events, as well as a fitness room.

"A fitness room would be very important; we have a lot of very active members," Watts said, and added, "We are in an antique building, so we are limited in space and configurations. Having a modern design would just open up the possibilities."

The current square footage of the senior center building is about 5,200 sq. ft.

Watts said the senior center membership has seen a growth of 120 percent in nearly six years, currently catering to a total of 1,247 members.

"I think once we have a new building, we will have even more continued growth," she said.

By 2030, 40 percent of Colchester's population is projected to be 55 and up, Watts said.

Obituaries continued

East Hampton

Linda Nichols Collins

Linda Nichols Collins, 58, of East Hampton, passed away peacefully at Yale New Haven Hospital Thursday, March 28, after a courageous battle with leukemia.

Born Oct. 23, 1960, to the late Yolanda Baker, she is survived by her beloved husband of 40 years, Cliff Collins; two daughters, Kim Collins-Horner and Tori Collins; son-in-law, Scott Horner; two grandchildren, Chase Horner and Raya Horner; and many brothers, sisters, in-laws, nieces and nephews.

She grew up in Hartford and attended Prince Technical High School where she studied the printing trade. She met her husband Cliff, also a Hartford resident, at age 16 and they married two years later. After high school, Linda went on to work at the *Bristol Press*, a job that she always recalled fondly.

In 1989, Cliff and Linda moved to East Hampton. Linda loved being a mom and stayed home with her two daughters for 10 years. In 1998, she started working in the East Hampton school system in various roles before finally settling in the Board of Education office in 2007. She really enjoyed her job and of all people she worked with.

She was deeply loved by all that knew her. She could light up a room with her cheerfulness, endless energy and sense of humor. She will be most known for her huge capacity to give to others, take care of others and show kindness to everyone. She had the biggest heart and was completely selfless.

The most important thing in her life was spending time with her family. With her husband, she loved to go running, bike-riding, and hiking. She loved going to the gym with him, doing tree work with him and recently they had begun visiting Block Island together. With her daughter, Tori, she enjoyed shopping, and going to car and truck shows. Nothing brought her joy like spending time with her 4-year old grandson, Chase. She was the best Grammy and loved to read to him, play with him and take care of him. She was looking forward to doing the same with new granddaughter Raya, who was born in December 2018.

She was the light of our lives, the glue that held our family together and a beloved member of the East Hampton community. She will be forever missed.

In keeping with her wishes, services will be private.

In lieu of flowers, please donate to the Linda Collins Memorial Scholarship Fund. Donations can be sent to East Hampton High School, Linda Collins Memorial Scholarship, c/o Linda Malavasi, 15 N. Maple St., East Hampton, CT 06424.

To leave online condolences, visit spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.



Marlborough

Douglas A. Knowlton

Douglas A. Knowlton of Marlborough died Monday, April 1. Doug was born April 26, 1943, in Bellows Falls, Vt. After graduating from Tufts University with a BA in English in 1966, he joined the Army and married Judith L. Brewster. They moved to Connecticut to start their family upon Doug completing his service as a first lieutenant.

While living in Marlborough, Doug was an active member of the community. He became an EMT and member of the Roy B. Pettengill Ambulance Association in 1985 and a member of the Marlborough Volunteer Fire Company in 1989. More recently, he served on the Board of Finance for Marlborough, including holding the position of chairman.

Doug also spent time over the years as a member of the Red Cross, the civil defense preparedness director for Marlborough, a ham radio operator, supporting emergency management services, and managing the local dispatcher services.

He retired in May 2011 from his role as director for Investment Services IT Development for Fiserv. Doug enjoyed an active life outside work and his many volunteer activities including scuba diving, traveling and spending time with his family. He spent many vacations on cruises visiting locations around the world.

Doug is predeceased by his parents, Dorothy and Raymond Knowlton, and his brother, Thomas Knowlton. He leaves behind his wife, Judith; daughter, Sandra Dorn and her husband Chris; daughter, Deborah Fitzsimmons and her husband Ryan; three grandchildren, Sarah Lynn Dorn, Caleb and Tiernan Fitzsimmons; and his sister, Barbara Knowlton; and close family friend Karen Woods.

Calling hours will be Sunday, April 7, from 4-6 p.m., at Mulryan Funeral Home, 725 Hebron Ave., Glastonbury. Funeral services will be held at 11 a.m. Monday, April 8, at St. James Episcopal Church, 2584 Main St., Glastonbury. Burial will follow in St. James Episcopal Church Memorial Garden.

In lieu of flowers, please consider donations in his honor to Roy B. Pettengill Ambulance Association, P.O. Box 308, Marlborough, CT 06447, Marlborough Volunteer Fire Department, P.O. Box 237, Marlborough, CT 06447 or St. James Episcopal Church, 2584 Main St., Glastonbury, CT 06033.

For online condolences, visit mulryanfh.com.



Portland Police News

3/17: Frank Micali, 54, of 74 Rosewood Dr., Rocky Hill, was charged with DUI and failure to obey traffic control signal, Portland Police said.

3/26: Christopher Gomez, 47, of 21 Palmer Rd., was charged with probation violation, police said.

Colchester Police News

3/28: State Police said Justin Edison, 19, of 64 Linwood Ave., was arrested and charged with second-degree failure to appear.

Vehicle Rolls Over on Bull Hill in Marlborough

State Police said a vehicle that crossed the double yellow line on March 29 left the driver with possible injuries.

At approximately 5:32 a.m., a Honda Accord driven by a 17-year-old male was traveling south on Bull Hill Road near the Marlborough-Colchester town line when the vehicle crossed the center line and into the northbound lane, police said.

The Honda Accord then traveled off the shoulder, subsequently striking an embankment and rolling over onto its roof.

The 17-year-old boy was transported to Middlesex Hospital Marlborough Medical Center by the Marlborough Fire Department with possible injuries and was issued an infraction for traveling too fast for conditions and failure to drive right.

Two-Vehicle Collision, One Injured in Hebron

State Police said failure to grant right of way is to blame for a two-vehicle collision on March 26.

At approximately 8:10 a.m., a Honda Civic driven by Angie Ribeiro, 32, of 41 Brennan Rd., Amston, was traveling north on Route 85. A Toyota Rav4 driven by Colin J. Jakacky, 19, of 16 Richardson Dr., was traveling south on Route 85 and turned left in front of the Civic, attempting to turn onto Daly Road,

police said.

Ribiero was unable to stop before striking the Rav4, police said.

She was transported by the Hebron Fire Department to Hartford Hospital with a complaint of neck pain.

Jakacky was found at fault and issued an infraction for failure to grant right of way at an intersection.

Obituaries

Andover

Ivan Levi Fournier Jr.

Ivan Levi Fournier Jr., of Manchester, formerly of Andover, passed suddenly at home Tuesday, March 26. He was 43 years old.

Raised in Andover, Ivan graduated from Windham Technical High School and went on to own his own business before joining Mechanical Insulators Union Local 33.

Ivan's priority was always his daughter, Isabella, whom he loved with all his heart. In addition, he loved the outdoors and could always be found tending his garden or making his salsa or banana and zucchini bread, using his own home grown fresh ingredients. He also loved to fish and hunt. A good friend to all, Ivan was always willing to give a hand whenever asked.

He will be missed and always loved by his daughter, siblings and their families and his parents: Isabella Fournier of East Hartford, Carson and Stephanie Fournier of Enfield, Eric and Lorna Blackman of Marlborough, Rachel Cormier of Andover, Ivan Fournier Sr. of Amston, Judy Anniti of Vernon; and numerous extended family and friends.

We will be gathering to share some of our favorite memories, our stories, to laugh, to cry and remember a wonderful man who is really missed. A memorial service and celebration of Ivan's life will be held on Sunday, March 31, from noon-2 p.m., at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester.

For online condolences, visit auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.



Marlborough

Richard Eric Crowley

Richard Eric Crowley, 67, of Marlborough and Moodus, husband of Marilyn Goss, died Wednesday, March 27, at Middlesex Hospital. Born May 11, 1951, in Hartford, he was the son of the late Leo and Ida Crowley.

Richard drove a truck for Arbor Acres before his retirement. Richard lived in Marlborough for 57 years and Moodus for five years. He was a past member of the Marlborough Volunteer Fire Dept., a member of the Old Saybrook American Legion, and was the director of the Marlborough Junior Ancient Fife and Drum Corps for over 20 years and was a member as a child.

Besides his wife he is survived by his son, Ryan Crowley and wife Tonya of East Hampton; a daughter, Carrie Adii and husband Louis of Jeffersonville, Vt.; stepson, Kevin Smith; stepdaughters, Michelle Lee and April Jacobson; a brother, Gerald Crowley; 10 grandchildren, Irian Adii, Devin Crowley, Koiya Adii, Kailyn Crowley, Tristan Lee, Ava Lee, Riley Jacobson, Kaitlyn Jacobson, Mathew Smith, and Emmitt Smith.

Friends called at the Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton, Tuesday, April 2, with a memorial service that evening. A celebration of Richard's life will be held on his birthday, Saturday, May 11; the location and time will be posted on Facebook.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to the Marlborough American Legion Post, 128 East Hampton Rd., Marlborough, CT 06447.

To leave online condolences, visit spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.

East Hampton

Raymond Frederick Reynolds

Raymond Frederick Reynolds, 67, of East Hampton, formerly of Trumbull, died Saturday, March 30, at his home in East Hampton. Born July 24, 1951, in Bridgeport, he was the son of the late Raymond L. and Mary A. Reynolds.

Ray lived in Trumbull for over 40 years, where he was a volunteer fireman with the Long Hill Volunteer Fire Department for seven years and with the Trumbull EMS for five years. Ray had been employed by both the Bridgeport Post Office and then the Stratford Post Office for 18 years and then for the law firm of Hersh & Crockett as a paralegal for the last 11 years.

Ray is survived by his sister and brother-in-law, Mary Ann and Dr. Brian Huda of Monroe; brother, John F. Reynolds and his wife Elaine of Seymour; nieces, Dena Reynolds, Heather Huda; nephew, Brian Reynolds; aunt, Edna McNamara; and several cousins and friends.

Friends called at the Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton, on Thursday, April 4. A funeral service was held that evening. Burial will be Friday, April 5, at 10 a.m., in Long Hill Burial Grounds in Trumbull.

To leave online condolences, visit spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.

Colchester

Thomas Walter Lenkiewicz

Thomas Walter Lenkiewicz, 87, of Colchester, passed away suddenly at home Saturday, March 30. Born in Norwich Feb. 18, 1932, he was a son of the late Walter and Josephine (Zizulka) Lenkiewicz.

Tom was a hard-working man from a very young age. While in high school, attending Norwich Free Academy, he worked for the fish market and delivered groceries for Nate Jacobsen in Norwich, as well as drove the Good Humor truck for a couple years for a summer job. Right out of high school, Tom joined the U.S. Navy. He served proudly for 44 months on the aircraft carrier USS Midway during the Korean War. After serving active duty, Tom went to work for the Yantic Grain Company in the art department. Tom was a member of the Connecticut Civil Defense, where his job was to protect the East Haddam Bridge during times of high danger. In later years, Tom belonged to the VFW Adler Boluck Post 6990 in Colchester.

Tom married his beloved wife Jennie Boluck on Aug. 15, 1953. The couple settled in Colchester, where they built their home and raised their family. Tom was an active member of his community. He drove the ambulance for 13 years, acting as driver and emergency care giver before a time when EMTs were available. He was also a former active member of the Colchester Lions and a Gold Badge Commander for the Connecticut State Police Auxiliary for many years. Tom was a man of strong faith. He was a communicant at St. Andrew Church, where Tom often served as an usher and also served on the finance committee that worked to build the new church on Norwich Avenue.

Tom retired several years ago after a successful career as an insurance agent and financial adviser for the Prudential Insurance Co. He also worked as a funeral associate for the Belmont Funeral Home. In his free time, Tom enjoyed bowling, hunting and fishing, especially with his children and friends. He will be remembered for his great sense of humor but more importantly, as a hard-working man, devoted to God, family, community and country.

He will be sadly missed but always remembered with love by his wife Jennie of 65 years; children and their spouses, Lori (Peter) Desautel of Colchester, Thomas (Kathleen) Lenkiewicz of Hebron, Dave Lenkiewicz of Lebanon; a brother, Donald Lenkiewicz of Florida; five grandchildren, Matthew, Jennie and Adam Desautels, Jason and Allison Lenkiewicz and numerous extended family and friends.

Calling hours were held Wednesday, April 3, at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester. The funeral Mass was celebrated Thursday, April 4, at 10 a.m., directly at St. Andrew Church, 128 Norwich Ave, Colchester. Burial will follow in Linwood Cemetery with full military honors.

Donations in his memory may be made to the Colchester Vol. Fire Department, 52 Old Hartford Rd, or the Colchester Fish and Game Club, P.O. Box 257, Colchester, CT 06415.

For online condolences, visit auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.



East Hampton

Patricia H. Coleman

Patricia (Hynes) Coleman, 82, of East Hampton, formerly of Killingworth and Haddam, wife of the late Robert N. Coleman, died Monday after a courageous battle with cancer at Middlesex Health Clinic, Marlborough. She was born in Pittsfield, Mass., daughter of the late Francis J. and Agnes (Powell) Hynes.

After raising her family, Pat went back to school earning her bachelor and master degrees in library science from Central Connecticut State University. She put her degrees to use working as a media coordinator and librarian for Burr Elementary School and later with Brainerd Library. Pat was an avid reader and loved family game nights and playing cards. She also taught catechism at St. Peter Church.

Patricia is survived by two sons and two daughters, Robert P. Coleman and his wife Terri of Middletown, Thomas P. Coleman and his wife Wendy of Salisbury, N.C., Lauren Marica and her husband Jeffrey of Jacksonville, N.C., and Mary Gould and her husband Donald of East Hampton; 12 grandchildren, 17 great-grandchildren (one on the way); and several nieces and nephews.

She was predeceased by her son, Michael Coleman; a sister, Ellen Bisailon; and a brother, Robert Hynes.

A funeral liturgy will be held Saturday, April 6, at 10:30 a.m., at St. Peter Church, Higganum. Burial will be held at Burr District Cemetery. Calling hours will be held today, April 5, from 5-7 p.m., at Biega Funeral Home, 3 Silver St. Middletown.

Memorial contributions may be made to Brainerd Memorial Library, 920 Saybrook Rd., Haddam, CT 06438.

Biega Funeral Home has care of the arrangements. To share memories or express condolences online, visit biegafuneralhome.com.

Portland

Michael Thomas Love

Michael Thomas Love of Portland passed away peacefully Friday, March 15, after fighting many battles of cancers.

Love, originally from southern California, was a U.S. Navy Veteran, stationed in New London. He served on the USS George Washington Carver, a nuclear submarine, from 1965-69.

Love enjoyed the East Coast so much, he decided to make Connecticut his home. Owner of Rite-Way Welding in East Hampton, CT., he designed and installed the Lake Pocotopaug sign on Route 66.

Love, an artist of European lost waxed bronze, copper and various metals designed many sculptures over the years, with showings in NYC.

Love was known as Mikee by the "boaters" at Meriden Motor Boat Club in Portland. An avid fisherman and captain of a 36' Chris Craft, he loved the Connecticut River and called it home.

Love is preceded in death by his grandparents, Wes and Blanche Mullens, Mary Richards, and his father, Donald Love.

He is survived by his mother, Cleo (Don) Hansen; sisters, Donna (Paul) Hartman, Mary (Bill) Brown, Diana (Randy) Bell, and brother, John (Jenn) Love; and many nieces and nephews.

Love was a kind and gentle man with a wild sense of humor. He would check in for a doctor's appointment and ask the receptionist if "she was looking for love!" Love also handed out small homemade cards with ink drawings of a tree or of birds, etc., thanking everyone for being there. He will be missed by all.

Love's final resting place will be at the VA Cemetery in Phoenix, Ariz.

A memorial service "celebrating his life" will be at Meriden Motor Boat Club this spring.

Memorials can be sent to Smilow Cancer Hospital at Yale New Haven, 35 Park St., New Haven, CT 06511.

Colchester

Stanley Jello

Stanley Jello, 90, of Colchester, formerly of Lebanon, passed away Wednesday, March 27, at Harrington Court in Colchester. Stanley was born Jan. 1, 1929, in Norwich, the son of the late Andrew and Mary (Mazurkiewicz) Jello.

He grew up on the family farm in Lebanon. He married the late Rose Marie (Renaldi) June 15, 1957 at St. Patrick Cathedral in Norwich. She passed away Aug. 25, 2009. He worked for the State of Connecticut Department of Transportation for 23 years, retiring Jan. 1, 1989.

Stanley was a simple, hard-working man. He was very kind and gentle and would help anybody. He will be deeply missed by all who knew him.

Stanley's family would like to thank Harrington Court for the love and care they gave him over the past three years.

Stanley is survived by his brother, Raymond Jello of Lebanon; sister, Dorothy Beaudoin of Franklin; by his special niece, Linda Farrell and her husband Bill and their family; and by several nieces and nephews.

In addition to his wife and parents, he was predeceased by his brothers, Henry, Edward and Richard Jello, and by his sister, Frances Hiltz.

A funeral service was held at the Labenski Funeral Home in Norwich Saturday, March 30. Visitation was held before the service. Burial will follow in New Lebanon Cemetery.

The Labenski Funeral Home, 107 Boswell Ave., Norwich, is entrusted with arrangements. Visit labenskiFuneralHome.com to leave a message of condolence for Stanley's family.

Colchester

Alfred R. Marotta

Alfred (Al) Marotta, 92, of Colchester, passed away peacefully at home Wednesday, March 20. He was born March 31, 1926, son of late Carmella (Macri) and Alfred C. Marotta.

Al was predeceased by his beloved wife of 66 years, Olive (Clark) Marotta. He is survived by his five children, Patricia Moran of Colchester, Raymond Marotta of Arkansas, Robert Marotta of Colchester, Janice Hutchins and husband Donald of Colchester, John Marotta and wife Darlene of Florida; numerous grandchildren, great-grandchildren, nieces and nephews.

Originally from West Hartford, Al graduated high school from Admiral Billard Academy of New London in 1944 and served in the Navy during World War II. Married November 1948 in Hartford, Al and his wife Olive then resided in Rocky Hill for many years and settled in Colchester in 1964.

Al was a man of many talents. He worked and had a business as a tool and die maker, worked at Underwater Sound Lab in New London as a mechanical engineering technician, built his home in Colchester and ran a chicken farm with his wife and children for many years.

In retirement, Al enjoyed life with his wife, family and friends. He also took pleasure in spending time in his workshop and was always up for a good debate. Al was a strong-minded man with high integrity and strong principles. He will be missed by all who knew him.

The family expresses a sincere thank you to Middlesex Hospital and also its hospice services for all the care they provided in Al's last days.

Funeral arrangements were handled privately.

