

RIVEREAST

News Bulletin

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

Volume 41, Number 33

Published by The Glastonbury Citizen

May 12, 2017



Have a Cow, Man!... Portland Historical Society volunteer Martha Lutecki helps unpack donated items for tomorrow's Town-Wide Tag Sale. She holds a kitchen canister in the shape of a cow, one of a set of three. Among the variety of items received are craft supplies, holiday decorations and small tools. See related story on page 29.

Portland Couple Files Discrimination Complaint

by Elizabeth Regan

The Town of Portland and the family of a disabled Main Street woman are involved in a legal battle that includes two separate lawsuits in the state Superior Court and a discrimination complaint through the Connecticut Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities.

The case hinges on a 20-foot by 24-foot gravel parking lot in front of the 484 Main Street home of Cathy and Richard O'Keefe. The couple said they erected the parking area last fall after consultation with the local public works department and the state Department of Transportation.

Portland Zoning Enforcement Officer Dan Bourret said the O'Keefes should have gone to the building department with their request. Their permit from the state applied only to the portion of the property on the state's right-of-way.

Local zoning regulations prohibit parking in front yards and prevent homeowners from constructing parking areas there. Despite the local law, cars have long been seen parked in front of homes on Main Street, especially in the area between Arvid Road and Russell Avenue.

The O'Keefes' parking area riled numerous neighbors, who complained the parking area is unsightly, dangerous and a drain on property values.

Bourret issued a Nov. 18 notice of violation and a Dec. 23 cease-and-desist order.

The couple applied for a variance to the zoning regulations on Jan. 27, according to court documents. Five days later – and weeks before the Zoning Board of Appeals heard the variance request – the town filed suit against the O'Keefes.

The town, through attorney Kari Olson of Murtha Cullina, asked a judge for an injunction to force the couple to stop parking in front of their home, remove the parking area and pay both fines and attorneys' fees.

Meanwhile, the Zoning Board of Appeals denied the variance to allow the gravel parking area to remain in front of their house in a 2-2 vote on Feb. 23.

The O'Keefes then appealed the ZBA decision to the state Superior Court through Melissa S. Harris of Dowley and Associates on March 17. The board is being represented by Franklin G. Pilicy, of Watertown.

Most recently, the couple filed a complaint with the state Commission on Human Rights (CHRO) and Opportunities on May 1 alleging the town violated the federal Fair Housing Act, used ordinances to discriminate in zoning, and failed to allow reasonable accommodation and modification.

Legal documents frame the issue as one family's fight for reasonable accommodation for disability versus the town's right to enforce

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Picnic to Celebrate Family Resource Center

by Geeta S. Sandberg

Mark your calendars: next week, present and past families who have been involved with the Family Resource Center offered through the Andover Hebron Marlborough Youth and Family Services Bureau (AHM) are invited to attend a potluck picnic and ice cream social in celebration of the center's 18 years of service – a milestone reflective of the number of years AHM tends to serve children.

During that time, the Family Resource Center (FRC) has provided programs meant to support the entire family – starting when children are infants – and it all began after then-Executive Director Joel Rosenberg (who now serves as the director of fund development) noted there were no other FRCs in the area, and recognized just how beneficial one of these centers would be to local families.

As a result, he worked with a committee of educators and parents to secure a Family Resource Center grant through the state Department of Education – something usually offered to individual school districts, not regional. But the group's efforts paid off, and AHM and the Hebron Board of Education were awarded one of the grants and able to open the FRC; it is

now one of 74 across the state.

These centers, according to the state Department of Education, "provide access, within a community, to a broad continuum of early childhood and family support services which foster the optimal development of children and families," and operate around the philosophy that all families, regardless of geographic or socioeconomic status, need support and help with parenting.

FRC Coordinator Rebecca Murray elaborated on that this week.

"Family resource centers support the entire family with a single point of entry that links schools, families, and communities," she said in an email. She added the centers "serve all families in the area regardless of socioeconomic background because everyone can use support in raising their kids!"

Family resource centers are based on the "Schools for the 21st Century" concept developed by Dr. Edward Zigler of Yale University. The concept has several components which, according to an AHM press release on the FRC, "are all meant to reach and assist families in obtaining support around parenting, child de-

velopment, gain comfort within the school setting, and get children ready for school."

The programs offered by the AHM center that assist in those areas include home visits, developmental screenings, Play and Learn groups, parent and early provider trainings, and KinderRHAMA Preschool.

Some of these programs – such as KinderRHAMA and the developmental screenings – help AHM reach families with infants and toddlers who are not yet in school, thereby ensuring the parents are getting up-to-date information on how children are progressing developmentally.

According to the AHM release, "Being able to serve families with infants is the beginning of forming a relationship and network of support that families will have throughout their children's growing up years."

AHM Executive Director Michelle Hamilton said this week that a 2009 study on the impact of family resource centers on child development found that such programs "are highly-effective" and "well-aligned" with the state's "Ready by 5 & Fine by 9" childhood development initiative, and also contributes to several other pro-

grams and initiatives within the state Department of Education and other state agencies."

She added, "At AHM, our families, moms and grandmothers come to network with each other while increasing parental knowledge and skills related to child development and behavior, which allows parents to prepare their children for school."

In addition to that preparation, the FRC also acts as a service bridge between the center and the Youth Services Bureau, which in turn offers programs to address prevention, positive youth development and intervention including Summer Youth Theater, the Lanterns Mentoring Program, Project Graduation, CHOREs work programs for teens, Peer Mentors, substance abuse prevention and support groups.

Murray explained, "It is our privilege to have known many families for years. We met them when they signed up for Play and Learn groups, home visits, or preschool with their little ones. We have watched as their children grew from infants to toddlers to school aged children to teenagers. Children and families stay involved with other services at AHM long after aging

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its own zoning regulations.

The couple stated in their application for a zoning variance, and then in subsequent legal filings, that Cathy O'Keefe has been disabled since 2003 through "different injuries that have made it so that there are days when she is unable to get out of a chair, no less walk." They said she receives Social Security disability benefits and has a handicapped parking sticker from the state.

The couple also said they have a daughter living with them whose respiratory problems sometimes make it impossible for her to manage the stairs.

Harris argued in court documents that the town should not have filed suit before the ZBA hearing was held, citing case law that says the town must exhaust its own procedures for resolving land use disputes before a court can take the case.

The town, in response, said it's "factually and legally unsound" to assert the court doesn't have jurisdiction just because the Zoning Board of Appeals process hadn't yet played out.

Municipalities must have the right, Olson argued in court documents, to ask a court to force a defendant to stop a certain behavior "regardless of what avenues for appeal or alternative solutions may be available."

Olson said that if the town can't file a lawsuit in cases like this, "it would put every municipality at the mercy and whims of those who violate the zoning regulations."

Harris responded that Olson's argument ignores the right to due process outlined in state zoning statute, which gives people the right to appeal an order of violation or to apply for a variance.

Olson's filings also stated that an application for a variance "to alleviate one family member's disability does not resolve the town's claims against the rest of the family and their invited guests who have parked in the front yard."

According to Harris, the parking area was identified in the variance application as benefiting both Cathy O'Keefe and her daughter. She went on to say the argument does not take into account the ZBA's discretion in granting a variance based on "hardship unique to the property," and that, if granted, the variance "runs with the land" – not with the applicants – and would apply to all of the property's owners.

The O'Keefes' lawsuit against the ZBA asks a judge to instruct the board to reverse its deci-

sion and not to enforce its regulations in a way that would impede the couple's ability to pave and maintain the parking space in their front yard.

Their discrimination complaint through the CHRO states the town "has repeatedly refused and continues to refuse" to grant the couple's request for a parking accommodation. It also cites the town's lawsuit against the town as a way of interfering with the O'Keefes' "exercise of their fair housing rights."

The O'Keefes are being represented by attorney Greg Kirschner of the Connecticut Fair Housing Center, according to the complaint.

The complaint cites the couple's emotional distress and financial losses including local zoning fees and legal fees.

Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities attorney Michelle Dumas Keuler told the *Rivereast* in February the federal Fair Housing Act requires a municipality's policies, practices and services to reflect "reasonable accommodation" for disabled homeowners and tenants "so they can live as readily as anyone else who does not have a disability."

According to documentation accompanying the complaint, the town must respond within 10 days of receipt by admitting or denying each separate allegation. The case will then be assigned an investigator to make a finding of reasonable cause or no reasonable cause.

A finding of reasonable cause means the town must make efforts to eliminate the practices outlined in the complaint.

First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield said the town's insurance carrier is representing the town in the discrimination complaint.

"The town is very interested in making reasonable accommodations in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act requirements," she said. "We did offer a compromise to the owners of the property to the situation more than once."

Bransfield declined to elaborate on the nature of the offered compromise at the advice of legal counsel.

Bransfield said efforts to reach a global settlement that would resolve all the cases at the same time was unsuccessful.

The O'Keefes and their lawyer did not return calls for comment.

A status conference on the town's injunction action against the O'Keefes is scheduled for May 16.

Resource Center cont. from Front Page

out of the Family Resource Center. They become involved in other AHM programs throughout their growing up years. It's always exciting for us to see children as they get older participating in AHM programs."

Indeed, the FRC is said to also offer an environment where longstanding friendships are formed between both parents who met in the center's programs when their children were young, and the children who got to know each other in Play and Learn groups then see each other again in elementary school, or when they filter into the same middle school at RHAM.

According to the AHM release, "The FRC is unique in that it is the families' first point of entry to many services, and a safe, nurturing way to access information about child development and parenting. It is also a way for parents to connect with each other, various services, and to get involved in the community."

And now, in celebration of the FRC's 18 years, a picnic has been planned for next Thursday, May 18, at Veterans Memorial Park, located on Wall Street in Hebron across from RHAM High School. The potluck picnic and ice cream social will take place from 5-7 p.m. and is for all families who have participated in any Family Resource Center activities in the past or present.

Attendees are asked to bring a blanket or chairs to sit on and a dish to share; RSVPs are requested to Murray at 860-228-9488 or beckym@ahmyouth.org. The rain date for the event is May 25.

Speaking to the upcoming celebrations, Murray shared, "I am always happy to see kids who we knew as babies and toddlers go on to other AHM programs. We have teens who assist in KinderRHAMa preschool who used to come to Play and Learn group, in this really cool time warp! Our hope for the picnic is that families get to relax and enjoy each other's company and feel part of the community, and that we may see some of the little ones from the past!"

Hamilton, meanwhile, said, "We hope to see many past parents and new parents come together at our picnic and see the teachers they had over 10 years ago in preschool or even 18 years ago in the FRC's Play and Learn groups."

She added the FRC continues to have "amazing teachers who provide a wealth of knowledge for childrearing and readiness skills for kindergarten. If I had children in this school district, I would want my child to go to KindeRHAMa. That's how much I believe in our staff and program."

To learn more about the FRC or other AHM programs go to ahmyouth.org.

Observations & Ruminations

by Mike Thompson

Before I get into the focal point of this week's column – my beloved, maligned Mets – a bit of news area Catholics may be interested in.

As most of you I'm sure have heard, many parishes in the Hartford Archdiocese are merging with other parishes, and some churches are closing altogether. The massive reorganization plan, which affects churches in Hartford, Litchfield and New Haven counties, will take effect at the end of June.

There is only one *Rivereast* town in the archdiocese – Marlborough. I'm happy to report the only Catholic church in that town, St. John Fisher Church, was unaffected by the consolidation plan. It will neither close nor merge with another parish. It will continue to stand alone.

One of the Catholic churches in my hometown of Manchester is closing. While it's not my regular parish, it's a church I've attended on some Sundays over the years, and I know it's definitely got its regular parishioners – folks that in some cases have been there for decades. I know the closing will be a difficult event for those longtime parishioners. I'm glad St. John Fisher parishioners won't have to go through the same thing.

* * *

Okay, now on to the Mets. This was supposed to be the year – the season when the Mets solidified what they started doing in 2015, and fully Take Back New York. The Yankees were supposed to be in a rebuilding year, and the Mets, buoyed by one of the best power-hitting outfielders in the game and an elite young pitching staff, were going to, if not exactly dominate their division (the Nationals were expected to be a very tough foe), at least play some excellent baseball and, hopefully, come away with a division title.

And I admit it's only mid-May; anything can happen. But, for the moment anyway, the Yankees are once again the toast of the town, as they've amazingly not let rebuilding keep them down at all and have compiled what is, as of Tuesday evening, the best record in baseball. (Holy cow, do I hate them.) And the Mets...well, they've certainly dominated the NY back pages as of late, but not for the reasons you'd want.

The Mets made headlines Sunday when they suspended their former ace, Mystic's own Matt Harvey, for three games – including a scheduled start of his – for violating team rules. The team didn't want to expand any beyond that, but, New York being New York, the truth came out before long. Harvey didn't show up to the game on Saturday. Nor did he call his manager to let him know he'd be in absentia.

Now, Matt wasn't pitching on Saturday, but he was still expected to show up, as being a member of the Mets is his job. And, as is the case with any other job, a no-call, no-show didn't exactly go over well with his bosses.

Over the next day or so, word trickled out about what really happened. Harvey had been out late Friday night, then went out golfing Saturday morning with some friends. He got back from golfing and by game time had a migraine and wasn't in any shape to go to the ballpark.

There's reportedly a clear protocol as to who players are supposed to call when they can't make it to the game: either call the manager or call the trainer. Harvey did neither; instead, he was in touch with the pitching coach, and reportedly even that came after the pitching coach contacted him to ask as to his whereabouts when he didn't show up at the appointed time.

This left management pretty incensed – as this reportedly wasn't the first time something like this had happened. And while those previous times had gone unchecked, the Mets couldn't let it slide this time. They suspended Harvey, without pay, for three games – even though that meant skipping his start on Sunday and having to call up a minor leaguer with little notice and even less sleep. The team was basically prepared to boot the game (which they did, losing 7-0), at a time when they could ill afford to do such a thing, all to teach Harvey a lesson – and to let him, and any other players who might be considering playing

hooky, that this won't be tolerated anymore.

As this is New York and as the player involved was Harvey – the "Dark Knight" who has made tabloid headlines during his time with the Mets for his love of all things New York, including dating supermodels – the media ate this up, and it was the lead story on seemingly every baseball-related newscast. All the analysts had their take – and that take largely seemed to be that Harvey was a selfish prima-donna and that the Mets were a poorly-run organization for putting up with his shenanigans as long as they did.

I don't think that's exactly fair to Matt or the Mets. Was it a selfish move of Matt's to stay out all night partying on Friday and then go golfing Saturday morning, all when he was expected to be at the ballpark in the middle of the afternoon Saturday? Yes, absolutely, and Harvey himself, in his apology to the media on Tuesday, didn't deny that.

But let's not forget the fact that he's human, and he's still only 28 years old. He's living in the biggest city in the world, and has been told, for years at this point, that he's a superstar. It would be tough not to get caught up in all that. Yes, plenty of folks with Matt's talent have played in New York and managed to *not* get caught up in all that, but does that make him a bad person? I don't think so. The important thing is he learns from this, he moves on, and he makes sure this never happens again – and means it this time. (He missed a workout in the 2015 postseason, and at the time also vowed for that to never happen again.)

As for the Mets, did they maybe let Harvey get away with too much? Probably. But it's easy to understand why. A talent like Harvey doesn't come around that often. From the second he broke into the big leagues, he was mowing down players with aplomb. In 2013, when he started the All-Star Game, he was a bright light indicating there was indeed a way out for the Mets and their seasons-long malaise. And the fans loved him, instantly.

So it's tough to fault the Mets too much for looking the other way when perhaps maybe they shouldn't have, to try to keep goodwill going with the guy and to try to keep happy a guy who could potentially be one of the best pitchers the franchise had ever had. Heck, they were probably thinking as well about 2018, when Matt would become a free agent. From the very start, the baseball industry predicted Harvey would sign elsewhere when he got the chance (probably his boyhood favorites, the Yankees), and maybe the Mets just didn't want that to happen.

That doesn't make the Mets right. Rules are rules, and people should be forced to follow them. At the end of the day the Mets are his employer; they're the ones who call the shots. But it's at least understandable why the Mets did what they did.

And the emphasis is on the word "did." ESPN reported earlier this week that the Mets' front office has been known to coddle its players somewhat – and that this ends now. After all, the Harvey fiasco was the second high-profile embarrassment the Mets dealt with in about a week and a half. The first came when their current ace, Noah Syndergaard, told the team "no" when they asked him to take an MRI. He said he knows his body, the Mets said "okay, fine," and they let him make his next start. By the second inning he'd torn his lat muscle, and now he'll be out until late July.

While Syndergaard looked the worst from this whole mess, as he was the one who declined the MRI, the Mets were viewed as weak in that instance as well – for not being able to talk Syndergaard into the MRI, or give him any kind of discipline, like skipping his start, when he said "no."

So, the Harvey situation following so closely on the heels of the Syndergaard one means that, for now anyway, it appears a new day has dawned in Flushing. The coddling is over. Yes, you want to keep your players happy, but you've also got a ship to run, and a business to maintain.

And a city to take back.

* * *

See you next week.

East Hampton Fracking Waste Ban Deemed Too Vague

by Elizabeth Regan

A draft ordinance to ban fracking waste in East Hampton is going back to the drawing board after the sole commenter at a public hearing expressed concern the wording was too vague.

The ordinance would prohibit the handling, treating, storing or processing of fracking waste in town. It would mean fracking waste cannot be used in the sewer treatment plant and transfer station or as a road de-icer.

But Scott Bristol, vice chairman of the Brownfields Redevelopment Agency and an environmental consultant, worried the ordinance could lead to a ban on asphalt products.

Fracking is the common name for hydraulic fracturing, the process through which natural gas is extracted from deep underground by pumping millions of gallons of highly pressurized, additive-laced water and sand into a well. The fluid “fractures” the rock formations and releases natural gas.

The ordinance language addresses the use of fracking waste, not the use of natural gas or oil itself.

“Asphalt is a waste byproduct of oil and gas exploration. What does that mean for the town if we ban asphalt?” he asked.

Bristol told councilors that while the town might not enforce the ban on those types of products, groups opposed to fracking could sue the town for enforcement of the ordinance.

Grassroots efforts surrounding the ban of fracking waste products at the local and state level have been prominently carried out by the Food and Water Watch local coordinator Jennifer Siskind. She visited East Hampton for a presentation to the Town Council in April.

On Thursday, Siskind emphasized the ordinance does not prohibit asphalt.

“The language very specifically defines what natural gas and oil exploration and extraction activities are,” she said in an email. “Wastes that come directly from these activities, byproducts from treating these wastes, and wastes associated with underground and liquefied gas storage is prohibited, period.”

The ordinance defines oil extraction activities as “all geologic and geophysical activities related to the exploration for or extraction of oil, including, but not limited to, core and rotary drilling and hydraulic fracturing.”

She said the language was developed by legal counsel for the prominent New York-based environmental organization Riverkeeper and is considered “the gold standard” for banning fracking waste.

“It was passed by several county legislatures in New York years ago, and I can assure you that towns there continue to pave their roads,” she said.

The nearest fracking operations are along the Marcellus Shale region in New York, Ohio and Pennsylvania.

Various studies show the wastewater that returns to the surface can endanger humans and the environment if not recycled, properly disposed or treated.

The Environmental Protection Agency said on its website that some concerns associated with fracking are already “well known.” They include contamination of both surface water and underground water sources as well as air pollution from the release of “volatile organic compounds, hazardous air pollutants and greenhouse gases.”

Fourteen Connecticut towns – including Andover, Hebron, Portland and Middletown – have added such protections to their legal codes over the past two years.

At Tuesday’s public hearing, Bristol admitted people would probably expect someone who has made a career out of environmental restoration to support the draft ordinance.

But he doesn’t.

Bristol said existing ordinance and state statute ban the acceptance of out-of-town waste by the transfer station and wastewater treatment plant, respectively.

According to Siskind, the language for wastewater treatment and solid waste management facilities includes any future private facilities.

“Passing these prohibitions now would en-

sure they never get built in East Hampton if the state makes a wrong turn and rolls back environmental protections in the future,” she said.

The draft ordinance does not address the transportation of fracking waste because such language could conflict with the federal government’s power to regulate interstate commerce.

Penalties in the proposed ordinance include the power to issue a cease-and-desist order and to require remediation damage done to property – public or private – within the town’s borders. The draft also authorizes fines of \$250 per violation, with each day of the violation “constituting a separate offense.”

It would require all bids and contracts related to town-owned roads and property to include language specifying “no natural gas waste or oil waste will be used.”

According to Food and Water Watch, Pennsylvania alone has produced billions of gallons of fracking waste from 10,000 wells that is being shipped to eight states.

CT News Junkie reported Wednesday that the Connecticut House of Representatives voted 141-6 to ban fracking waste from Connecticut. The bill goes to the senate next.

A moratorium on the use of any fracking waste products in the state is already in effect. It will expire in July 2018. The temporary ban specifically precludes the sale, manufacture, and distribution of de-icing and dust suppression products containing fracking waste. The moratorium is in effect while the state Department of Energy and Environmental Protection comes up with its own regulations to control the substance as a hazardous waste.

A 2011 minority staff report from the U.S. House Energy and Commerce Committee identified 29 known or suspected carcinogens among the 750 additives used in the fracking process, including lead, diesel, benzene, ethylene glycol, methanol, hydrochloric acid and formaldehyde.

Fracking waste, however, is not regulated as a hazardous material under the federal Resource

Conservation and Recovery Act, according to the state Office of Legislative Research.

The U.S. Congress in 2005 modified the Safe Drinking Water Act to exempt hydraulic fracturing operations from its regulations, except when diesel fuels are used.

The EPA acknowledged on its website that the exemption caused regulators and the wider community to raise questions about how to ensure hydraulic fracturing is properly permitted.

Connecticut Department of Transportation spokesman Kevin Nursick confirmed Monday the state has never used fracking waste to de-ice state roads and he is not aware of any municipalities that are using the treatment.

“DOT has never considered it and we have no desire to go down the road,” Nursick said.

But the current moratorium on the use of any fracking waste products means the department couldn’t use fracking waste as a de-icer even if it wanted to.

Connecticut Petroleum Council Executive Director Steven Guveyan said in an email that much of the state’s natural gas supply comes from Pennsylvania, where hydraulic fracturing wastes are recycled on site.

“There is no hydraulic fracturing in Connecticut or anywhere in New England, so it is extremely unlikely that [hydraulic fracturing] wastes would ever be shipped from Pennsylvania to be processed in Connecticut,” he said.

Guveyan pointed to a 2013 energy plan of Gov. Dannel P. Malloy’s that he said relies heavily on natural gas.

According to Guveyan, about 50 percent of the electricity produced in New England comes from natural gas. He said the number is increasing as power plants – including a facility in Bridgeport – switch from coal to natural gas.

“Any rule banning [hydraulic fracturing] wastes is a symbolic attempt to slow down the use of natural gas at a time when the trend line is going the other way,” he said.

Town Manager Michael Maniscalco said he will work with Bristol to revise the draft ordinance and bring it back to the council.

Discussion to Continue on RHAM Budget Proposal

by Geeta S. Sandberg

Although the RHAM Board of Education met Monday to discuss the proposed 2017-18 budget – which failed in all three sending towns last Tuesday – no decisions have yet been made to make any reductions in the spending package, and those conversations will continue at the regular board meeting next Monday, May 15.

The proposal clocked in at \$28,863,321 for the operating budget – a 2.96 percent increase – plus \$289,960 for the capital budget for a total increase of 3.99 percent; it was defeated by a combined vote of 1,156-951.

If approved, Hebron would have been responsible for paying \$15,838,978 or 54.33 percent, based on the number of students from the town who attend the two schools. Marlborough meanwhile, would have been responsible for 31.16 percent or \$9,084,163; and Andover’s share of 14.51 percent would have amounted to \$4,230,141.

Schools Superintendent Bob Siminski explained this week there were a number of people who spoke at the meeting with differing viewpoints; for example, some were in favor of athletics, while others spoke against funds that were included for the athletics program.

The proposal included \$32,619 to bring seven

additional coaches to the district; a middle school cross country coach, two high school football coaches, and a full time strength and conditioning coach during all four playing seasons.

“There were people saying ‘When I went to school a fulltime athletic director was very valuable to me,’” Siminski shared. “One said he had problems with his kids at home when it wasn’t the athletic season, but when they do play they do a good job.”

Siminski added, “All the points of view were discussed and covered and obviously some of them were quite emotional and people were responding in a way they felt would be good for everybody with their particular point of view.”

Although the Board of Education made no decisions as to any specific cuts, Siminski said he provided members with “a lot of information before the meeting.”

“We’ll be supplying them with some additional reports [next] Monday evening, and hopefully the budget questions can be answered,” he started.

Some of the information Siminski presented showed an outline of what the budget would look like if funds for the fulltime athletic di-

rector were removed, and also shared there could be an increase in revenue taken into account because the bonds the district sold garnered \$12,000 more than the projected \$90,000.

The board, he furthered, also discussed pay-to-play, which is slated to increase in the current budget by \$15 for both middle and high school students; the cost is now \$165 for the middle school and \$200 for the high school which is expected to result in around \$10,000 in additional revenue.

“I think they were looking to say that, ‘look, there have been things in the budget that have impacted the total and the impact of athletics is not as great as you might think’ in counter to some of the people who are saying too much is being spent on athletics.”

At next week’s meeting, Siminski explained some of the information he’ll provide will include a possible change to the special education programs the district offers. He shared by bringing a behavior program back to the district and taking into account the cost for that program as well as what would be lost in Excess Cost monies, the district could still save about \$20,000.

“That’s the type of stuff we have to take into

account if we have to cut the budget,” Siminski said.

* * *

Siminski added Wednesday he’s concerned when the budget’s approval gets close to the summer months since it’s likely to mean people may not be around to cast a ballot “and that’s going to have a very bad effect.”

If the budget isn’t approved by the first of July, he explained the district will be required to use a contingency budget based on the current year’s spending.

“They [the state] take this year’s budget and they divide it into 12 months and you get to spend that every month, but when you look at our budget, it doesn’t account for increases in salaries, special education, et cetera,” he stated. “That means there will probably have to be some reductions of programming over the summer.”

If the budget proposal is approved by the board next week, a district meeting will occur May 30, and the next referendum will take place Wednesday, May 31.

Siminski said it was “important for the adults to get out there and vote and really speak about the school budget.”

A Tale of Two Excavations in Portland

by Elizabeth Regan

Last week's Planning and Zoning Commission meeting told the tale of two excavation sites in residential zones.

One operation, owned by Portland S&G LLC, is in the process of removing up to 562,000 cubic yards of earth material in accordance with the town's special permit regulations. The company received its first special permit for the site on Glastonbury Turnpike across from Isinglass Hill Road in 2008; the permit has been renewed by the commission every two years since then.

The commercial site is beholden to standards, procedures and requirements outlined in five pages of local regulations governing earth material removal, filling and excavation.

The other operation has been taking place for more than two years on the corner of Sage Hollow Road and Cornwall Street as Selectman Ben Srb clears out an unspecified quantity of material in preparation to build a house by 2019. He has a zoning permit to construct the residence on the roughly one-acre property, which is divided into two excavation areas.

Because of a special permit exemption that authorizes excavation activity to make room for residential construction, Srb is not subject to the rules and regulations governing Portland S&G.

Last Thursday's meeting included a discussion by members about possible zoning regulation changes. Planning and Zoning Commission chairman Bruce Tyler said there are "loop-holes" that make it possible for largely-unregulated sand pits to exist in town.

Tyler suggested amending the language in two exemptions to the excavation regulations in order to make one clearer and to erase "faulty assumptions" in the other.

The first exemption seems to refer to septic installation or repair in the first part of the sentence, but goes on to potentially allow "any excavation, grading or removal of earth products where the area excavated, graded or removed is half an acre or less in total area for any one parcel."

The other, which is the one town attorney Kari Olson credits with making it possible for Srb to sidestep the special permit regulations, exempts "necessary foundation and trench work on a lot for which a zoning permit and a building permit have been issued."

Tyler said the language assumes once a building permit is issued, it stays enforced – which he said is not necessarily the case.

Srb initially submitted both a building permit and zoning permit, but withdrew the building permit before the zoning permit was even issued. Olson has said the zoning permit and the site plan would be enough to satisfy the regulation in court.

Discussion also took place around a letter from Carousel Drive resident Dave Murphy, who lives near Srb's sand pit.

Murphy asked the commission to implement changes to ensure the "debacle" currently occurring at the sand pit "will not happen again, or at least the 'loophole' that has allowed this to occur is closed."

He took issue with the fact that a zoning permit allows five years to complete a project. He also suggested requiring any project in a residential area that requires the removal of a quan-

tity of earth material above a set limit be subject to the special permit regulations.

Commission members agreed the changes merit more discussion. The topic will be on the May 18 agenda, according to Tyler.

Srb declined to comment on Wednesday. "I should probably stay out of the paper for now," he said.

Also at last week's meeting, Glastonbury-based attorney Peter Alter represented Scott Dufford of Portland S&G during a public hearing on an application for a modification to his special permit. Dufford was asking the commission to lift a three-week restriction on earth material processing so his company could screen sand and gravel all year long.

Alter called attention to the underlying difference between Dufford and Srb's approach to zoning regulations when he said Dufford could have applied "under the fiction of proposing a development" and conducted a largely unregulated excavation operation.

But "that's not the way Scott Dufford does business," Alter said.

According to Alter, Dufford has complied with regulations and special permit conditions in order to address noise concerns.

Alter cited an acoustical engineering study conducted at Dufford's expense to identify and implement measures to "attenuate any noise that is emanating from the site" in accordance with a condition of the special permit issued in 2016.

A one-day study conducted in August 2016 by Geosonics of Cheshire found the site did not exceed the allowable 55 decibel limit for a residential zone outlined in state Department of Energy and Environmental Protection regulations and in town ordinance.

The activities being conducted on the site at the time of the study consisted of material screening, construction truck traffic, loading trucks and moving material, the report said.

As part of the application for year-round processing, Dufford commissioned Boston-based Acentech Inc. to come up with a plan to mitigate noise from the proposed screening plant by putting it within a 10-foot deep depression below the existing ground with an earthen berm extending five feet above.

Alter said Dufford also planned to retrofit trucks used on the site with a white-noise backup alarm to replace the traditionally loud sound of trucks as they drive in reverse. A circular loading pattern would also reduce the need to reverse the trucks.

Alter said he is aware of only one neighbor having lodged complaints against Dufford's operation.

That neighbor, former town planner Nancy Mueller, was at last week's meeting to say she and her husband object to the special permit modification to allow unrestricted screening.

While Mueller said Dufford has been accessible and cooperative when it came to her concerns, she pointed to a regulation in the local excavation regulations that prohibit what he is asking to do.

The regulation says screening of earth material in a residential zone is to be used "for site purposes only."

The regulation was put into effect in 2012. It was proposed by prominent local developer Wayne Rand and approved by the Planning and Zoning Commission.



An April 30 aerial view of selectman Ben Srb's property on the corner of Sage Hollow Road and Cornwall Street shows the extent of excavation being conducted in accordance with a zoning permit for a single-family home. The town's current zoning guidelines allow the work to proceed unregulated for five years. Photo by MetroDrone LLC.

In a May 3 email from Jacobson to Land Use Administrator Ashley Majorowski, Jacobson concurred with Mueller's reading of the regulation when he wrote it "seems clear" to him that screening in a residential zone may be permitted for site use only.

He said he recalled a developer who was permitted to crush rock on site for the Blackberry Ridge subdivision, but the rationale was to use the processed gravel material to construct a road in the subdivision.

Planning and Zoning Commission alternate member Michael Woronoff spoke during the public hearing to say screening earth material yields multiple products – and if one of those products is used on site, the regulation is satisfied.

"Every time you screen, you have some material that can be used on site and the rest would be removed," Woronoff said.

Alter added Dufford is open to certain conditions, such as the noise attenuation measures he spoke about as well as a prohibition on retail sale directly to the public at the site.

Alter reiterated he didn't think the regulation was written to stop screening as part of an operation like the one Dufford operates.

"This commission didn't want someone to have a backdoor excavation operation masquerading as a subdivision, and I think that's what that regulation was designed to prevent," Alter said.

Members voted unanimously to close the public hearing.

A subsequent motion by Chantal Foster to approve the application never received a second.

According to Town Attorney Kari Olson, that means "the motion to approve fails, so the application is not granted."

Woronoff, who was an alternate member not seated at the time, questioned the decision. He said applicants have a right to know why their request was denied.

According to state statute, a planning and zoning commission must "state upon its records the reason for its decision" when it grants or

denies a special permit or special exception.

Olson told Woronoff the statute was a "jurisdictional requirement," but did not go into detail.

When the legal notice was sent out by the land use department on May 8 for publication on May 12, it did not include a decision; the only notice related to Dufford's application announced the public hearing had closed.

Land Use Administrator Ashley Majorowski and Zoning Enforcement Officer Dan Bourret both said they had never seen a motion for a zoning application fail for lack of a second.

"There was a little confusion on that point," Bourret said Tuesday, adding the department would try to seek more information from Olson.

Majorowski said "it seems pretty clear that there needs to be an actual vote."

In a phone call Wednesday evening, Olson told the *RiverEast* the state Supreme Court has ruled that failure to approve a motion is the same as denying it. She said courts have also found a commission's decision is not invalidated if members do not state a reason for an approval or denial as required by statute.

Tyler, reached Wednesday afternoon, said the application will be discussed under old business at the commission's May 18 meeting.

"Our attorney suggests we bring that up again and actually vote on it," he said.

Olson said she stood by the advice she gave the commission at its meeting. But since the required legal notice was sent without acknowledging the decision, she felt the application should be added to the next agenda and voted upon.

Alter said this week he's never seen a planning and zoning commission fail to second a motion on an application.

"Without them doing that, we're left to decipher what it was they were doing," he said. "On the other hand, it certainly would be an indication of a lack of support for the proposal."

The next Planning and Zoning Commission meeting will be held at 7 p.m. Thursday, May 18, at Portland Public Library, 20 Freestone Ave.

\$33.65M Budget Passes at Portland Referendum

by Elizabeth Regan

Roughly 10 percent of eligible voters came out to vote on Portland's \$33.65 million 2017-18 budget, which passed by 339 votes to 249.

The budget represents an increase of 3.59 percent over current expenditures. The associated mill rate increase comes in at 0.47 mills, or 1.46 percent higher than the current mill rate.

Selectmen will set the mill rate at their May 17 meeting. Officials have predicted the mill rate of 32.51 will rise by 0.47 mills, to 32.98.

A mill is \$1 tax per \$1,000 of assessed property value. Under the proposed mill rate, taxes paid on a home assessed at \$200,000 for the 2017-18 fiscal year would be \$6,596. That's an increase of \$94 over the current year.

The referendum marked the inaugural budget vote held in the Portland Middle School band room. The location was first used for last year's presidential election.

Town Clerk Ryan Curley acknowledged numerous "Vote Today" signs in front of other town buildings – including the former polling

place at the Waverly Center – led some to believe voting was being held at those locations.

He said he received feedback from residents that the sign situation was a bit confusing.

The department will be working on more "appropriate" signage going forward, he added.

First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield said signage on the high school and middle school campus will be improved so people know exactly where to go when they arrive in the expansive parking area.

Voting happens in the band room, which is to the right of the middle school's main entrance.

The location allows the voting public to be separated from the school population on occasions when voting coincides with the school day, Bransfield said.

Despite the navigational hiccups, more people cast their votes than in recent years. This year's tally came in at 588 votes, including 17 absentee ballots. That's an increase from 482

people in 2015 to 495 in 2016.

According to Bransfield, it was a quiet year in terms of voter reaction to the budget.

The town was not hit as hard by Gov. Dannel P. Malloy's budget proposal as many other towns in the area, Bransfield acknowledged – but it's still important to keep a close eye on the state budget situation as it evolves.

The latest revenue figures show a \$5.1 billion deficit over the next two years, according to *CT News Junkie*.

Portland's proposed budget does not reflect a \$966,127 payment for public school teachers' pensions that Gov. Dannel P. Malloy said he wants the town to pick up. While the state currently funds the entirety of the Connecticut Teachers' Retirement System, Malloy's recommendation would make each municipality responsible for about one-third of the cost.

Local leaders are skeptical Malloy's plan to share responsibility for teachers' pensions will make it through the state General Assembly,

which is why many towns have chosen not to include the expense in their budgets.

Municipalities typically rely on the governor's budget numbers, released in February, to help craft their own budgets.

While the legislature votes on the budget in May or June during a good year, a state budget season like this one could last until the fall.

Neighboring East Hampton has put its own budget process on hold, in violation of a town ordinance, to wait for a better idea how the state budget will shake out. The town is looking at a possible 2.78 mill increase to its mill rate, with 1.49 mills of that increase directly related to the threat of reduced education funding in Malloy's budget proposal.

Bransfield, who serves as president of the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities, said she feels good about the Portland budget – "but we still need to be paying close attention to the state."

Colchester School Board Presents \$400,000 Reduction to Budget

by Julianna Roche

Last week, per the finance board's request, the Board of Education shared what a \$400,000 reduction could do to its proposed \$40.89 million budget – which stands at a 2.05 percent increase over current year spending.

The school board painted a dire picture of what the district could look like if the reduction were to pass, and the cuts were met with disapproval from the majority of residents present at the meeting – many of whom spoke during public comment to the importance of maintaining the same level of services in the school system.

Included in the \$400,000 reduction were items Superintendent of Schools Jeff Mathieu had shared in his initial budget presentation in January, which showed lists of level one and level two cuts that could be made to the budget, based on their severity.

According to Board of Education Chairman Ron Goldstein, Mathieu's initial presentation not only showed a budget to keep the school district providing "the same level of service" to students, but it also included "what would happen if we weren't to move forward with the budget."

He furthered that the "bombshell" of Gov. Dannel Malloy's proposal to reduce funding to the town would have an "extremely significant impact" on the school district and "would require wrenching conversations."

Taken from the level one cuts shared in Mathieu's presentation earlier this year, the school board chose to include two existing certified staff positions to get to that \$400,000 reduction including a 0.6 full time equivalent (FTE) world language teacher and a 0.4 FTE

social studies teacher from Bacon Academy.

In terms of existing classified teaching staff positions, the board also suggested reducing the Colchester Elementary School (CES) library media paraprofessional from 6.75 to 4 hours per day, delaying filling the vacant information technology position until October 2017, eliminating a regular education paraprofessional from Jack Jackter Intermediate School (JJIS), and reducing a library media paraprofessional position at William J. Johnston Middle School (WJMS) from 6.75 hours to 4 hours per day.

The staff reductions would save the district \$112,741.

Board member Roberta Lepore then questioned what losing a certified world language position would do to the language program.

According to Mathieu, the position eliminated would be a Spanish teacher and along with it would likely go world language electives students can take as opposed to the traditional Spanish classes.

Additionally, the proposal included cutting all athletic programs from WJMS, and a range of sports from Bacon – including freshmen basketball, freshmen soccer, indoor track, tennis, golf and non-sport specific athletic supplies – to a tune of \$78,638.

Among cuts from the level two list are one district bus, amounting to \$52,417 worth of savings; \$24,465 of certified salaries for substitutes used for district field trips; and \$5,615 of world language curriculum implementation and instructional supplies from WJMS.

The reduction of one bus, according to Mathieu, came highly un-recommended by the district's transportation coordinator, as it would

increase the length of bus runs for students – which he said is already a major source of complaints.

To reach the \$400,000 reduction amount, the finance board also suggested eliminating items from the list of purchases to be made with the Norwich student tuition revenue including furniture, supplies and other professional technical services for the Library Media Center, as well as \$35,000 to pay for all advanced placement (AP) tests for students in AP classes.

During the public comments portion of the meeting, many residents requested further cuts to the education budget not be made as they would be detrimental to the school district.

"It's frustrating to me because one of those teachers [to be cut] was personally one of my favorites, and he turned one of my most hated subjects into something I enjoyed and understood," said one Bacon Academy senior. "I'm a senior and I'm glad I'm graduating... I'm glad I'm not going to be in the school system because all of this stuff is deteriorating our school."

"I would ask [the board] not to make any of these cuts," resident Lisa Hageman agreed, adding the cuts were "chipping away at some of the core programs."

Resident Jennifer Bassett shared similar sentiments, explaining that she has two daughters – one of whom wants to leave the private school she currently attends and come back to the Colchester school system.

"I came to find out what she'd be coming back to... and there are things that really concerned me," she said, adding that her daughter

currently runs indoor track. "I'm going to have to go home and tell her there won't be indoor track at Bacon next year... [and] to eliminate all middle school sports... is there a middle school in the state that doesn't have any sports?"

Bassett furthered that the cuts "will set Colchester apart in a very negative way."

Resident Cindy Praisner also pointed out that she found it "interesting" that \$381,000 was set aside in the education budget to pay for students leaving Colchester to go to magnet schools and that it was the "same amount we're talking about cutting right now" and "almost the same number we're bringing in from Norwich [student tuition]."

"That Norwich revenue is not going to continue to come to us if we don't have something [for them] to come to," she said, adding "we are being penny wise and pound foolish."

Not all residents expressed support for the education budget however, including resident Jim Kelly.

"I would remind you, the Board of Finance, that you need to take into account everybody in town... yes you've heard a lot over the last four months from pro-parents. I don't blame them for doing it," he continued. "But I ask you to be fair to everybody... you know you're doing the right thing with the budget when nobody is happy... it should be a shared sacrifice by all."

The next Board of Finance meeting is Wednesday, May 17 at 7 p.m. in Town Hall, during which the board will decide on the budget number for the public hearing, which is Tuesday, May 23 at 7 p.m.

Colchester Teachers to Embark on Learning Journeys

by Julianna Roche

This summer, nine teachers from the Colchester Public School district will set out cross country and overseas to explore their personal passions and, upon returning, incorporate what they've learned into the classroom.

Last month the teachers – from Colchester Elementary School (CES), Jack Jackter Intermediate School (JJIS) and William J. Johnston Middle School (WJMS) – became recipients of this year's Fund for Teachers (FFT) fellowship, a program that provides grants of up to \$5,000 for teachers to embark on experiences that will help enrich their teaching practices and strengthen both their schools and communities.

CES teachers Colleen Bretthauer and Susan Hawkins, JJIS teacher Patricia Tedford and library media specialist Barbara Johnson, and WJMS teachers Victoria Fox, Jen Karcich, Marcy Lavoie, Kristen Magoun and Rachael Maginess were among the 210 teachers in Connecticut and 575 nationwide to receive the grant this year; since its establishment in 2001, FFT has invested over \$22 million in over 6,000 teachers.

Magoun, a language arts teacher, will be heading to the John Muir National Historic Site in California and Yosemite National Park, one of the many natural landmarks in the United States that Muir helped preserve.

Also known as the "Father of the National Parks," Muir was an American naturalist and author, who advocated for preserving wilderness in the U.S. through his writing.

Magoun explained however, that despite his success, Muir actually found writing to be very difficult – it was his passion for preserving the land that encouraged him to continue.

"He didn't really enjoy it, but he did it because it was a means to an end for him," she said. "He wanted to protect this land and he was really inspired by it, so he continued to dig in and do something that was hard for him."

Magoun said she hopes to share that lesson with her students – explaining that sometimes, reading and writing can still seem like "a chore" to them.

"They often don't understand that if you find something you're passionate about and you love it, you will continue to write about it even if it is hard work," she added.

To help incorporate her travels into the classroom, Magoun said she plans to have students pick a special landmark or place in the community to research and create a written product about it to be shared with the public.

"I want to plant the idea that you can have an impact on your community, how you start to think about that impact, and how you grow it into adulthood," she furthered.

Meanwhile, Johnson will travel to both Washington D.C. and San Antonio, Texas to attend the EdMedia and International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) conferences – where she hopes to gain new ideas and resources to help Colchester move closer to a more personalized-learning based district.

"Knowing technology is my passion and that personalized learning and making classrooms future-ready is where Colchester public schools really wants to position itself, I thought 'what better way to bring everyone's best interest and my passion to light than with these two tech conferences?'" she said.

During both conferences, Johnson plans to live stream her experience and post updates on Twitter. Her handle is @technojohnson.

"I hope to archive and curate a lot of resources and make connections to bring back to Colchester" she said, adding the conferences will help her network with other educators or innovators who have already fully integrated technology into their classrooms and have done so successfully.

As for Tedford, a math intervention specialist, she'll be traveling out of the country for her first time to visit Barcelona and Mallorca, Spain and study the geometry in the architecture and landscape to help foster students' ability to recognize geometry in manmade and natural structures in their own communities.

"What I've learned from teaching is that students need to experience concrete examples in order to solidify the skills we're expecting them to learn," she said.

Tedford explained that during her trip, she will set up a virtual Google classroom where students can follow along and sign up for lessons. She is also setting up an Instagram account, where she will post photos of various architectural structures during her trip.

"Then I'll ask students to find those same elements of geometry in buildings in their own community," she furthered, adding that with those findings, she plans to compile a book that would be available to JJIS teachers to use for a walking field trip around town, where students would be challenged to find the geometrical patterns and shapes in the book.

Bretthauer, a music teacher, will also travel abroad this summer – to various cities and



Nine teachers in the Colchester school district were awarded grants for this year's Fund for Teachers fellowship, which gives teachers the opportunity to travel and partake in a learning experience which they can incorporate into the classroom. Shown from left to right are Victoria Fox, Patricia Tedford, Marcy Lavoie, Barbara Johnson, Susan Hawkins, Rachel Maginess, Jennifer Karcich, Kristen Magoun, and Colleen Bretthauer.

towns, including Dublin and Belfast in Ireland, where she will collect information and research about the music and dance culture of the country to bring back to her students.

"I really loved the idea of music as being community-based," she explained. "The Irish still have community music-making in their homes, pubs... it's a seamless part of their culture [and] I want to continue that tradition."

While abroad, Bretthauer said she will be uploading live music performances she sees to a video blog (known today as a "vlog") so students can follow along. Upon her return, she will then incorporate what she's learned into the students' integrated arts class periods.

"For example, Irish dance is very much about patterns, so connecting that to the math curriculum," she explained. "Working on any kind of singing is in support of speech and language development, which is needed in those young ages."

In addition to the above experiences, the FFT fellowship will allow Karcich, a physical education and health teacher, and seventh-grade social studies teacher Lavoie to tour a variety of famous geographic sites across the western part of the U.S. to integrate both the history of the locations, as well as the physical activities

done in each area, which they hope will inspire students to become more active learners in their own communities.

As for the remaining teachers, reading consultant Fox will use the grant funds to head to Manzanar, Calif. and Hawaii to study historical events surrounding Japanese American internment camps and the bombing of Pearl Harbor, which she will turn into an interdisciplinary unit focused on increasing student engagement.

English teacher Maginess, meanwhile, will travel to California and participate in a workshop on a Colorado ranch to investigate the impact of the environment on Western American writers, which will help students learn more about the history of American literature.

And Hawkins, a first-grade teacher at CES, will attend a seven-day Little Flower Yoga and Mindfulness Training Program at the Earthrise Center in Petaluma, Calif. to become a certified children's yoga and mindfulness instructor. Hawkins explained that the program teaches practices that "focus on children's physical, emotional and social well-being."

"I look forward to learning, teaching, and sharing new practices that will promote mindfulness in my classroom and the CES community," she said.

Proposed Marlborough Budget Voted Down

by Julianna Roche

Town officials got their wish Monday, as residents voted down the town's proposed 2017-18 budget. The finance board then met Wednesday and settled on a slightly-lower spending package that would amount to \$24,536,130 – still a 6.66 percent tax increase.

The town's original proposed budget of \$24,584,816 – which would have amounted to a 6.96 percent tax increase – was shot down by a 139-45 vote at Monday's annual budget town meeting.

Townsppeople will have another opportunity to vote on the budget at the next town meeting, which Board of Finance Chairman Doug Knowlton said will take place Wednesday, May 24, at 7 p.m.

The \$48,686 reduction to the newer proposed budget arose from an updated assessment to the cost of sewer upgrades for Blish Park by engineers, which was initially estimated to cost \$64,475 and now stands at \$15,789.

The finance board met this past Wednesday night, where it continued to discuss the "uncertainty at the state level," Knowlton said, in regards to the drastic cuts to municipal aid and

added costs of teacher pensions proposed by Gov. Dannel Malloy.

"We talked a lot about possibly making some reductions [to the town budget], but if you don't know what the revenue side is going to be, you don't know what you might have to do for reductions," Knowlton explained.

The chairman said the finance board noted that the boards of education and selectmen "had already come in with pretty lean budgets."

The original spending package proposed Monday called for a 3.57 percent budget increase, or \$847,748 over the current year's budget. Included in that amount was \$4,940,050 for the town operations budget – an increase of 3.69 percent – and \$7,326,938 for the local Board of Education budget – an increase of 1.44 percent.

With the reduced cost for the Blish Park sewer upgrades, the new town operations budget stands at \$4,891,564. And while that may seem like a slight cut, First Selectwoman Amy Traversa stressed Thursday there wasn't much else the finance board could have done.

"I've said it before: the town operations bud-

get doesn't have any fat left in it," Traversa said. "There is no fat to trim."

She said ... the amounts suggested [to cut] were either so insignificant that they were not worth doing or the need [for the line item] was so compelling that it couldn't be cut."

As per town charter, town meetings will continue to be called every three weeks until a budget is approved. Once the budget is approved, the finance board will then set the mill rate.

This means that, if the budget fails again May 25, the town would get one more shot to pass before the new fiscal year starts July 1. If the new year begins without a budget in place, the town, as per state statute, the finance board will set the mill rate using whatever the most recently proposed mill rate was.

Also still unapproved is the RHAM schools budget – a topic the finance board addressed Wednesday.

Board members visited the idea of sending a letter to the RHAM board "suggesting significant reductions to their budget," Knowlton ex-

plained. The finance board has no direct control over changes to the RHAM budget.

"We talked a lot about giving them a dollar amount or a percentage, but it came down to nobody felt comfortable giving them a specific amount," he furthered.

Traversa shared similar sentiments Thursday, adding that all three towns – Hebron, Andover and Marlborough – were "encouraging significant cuts" to the RHAM budget.

At Monday's town meeting, Traversa said that if cuts needed to be made to Marlborough's budget, "it has to be done across the board."

"We need to continue to be fiscally restrained with our approach towards spending [and] we need a shared sacrifice for every population group," she said. "We can't sacrifice seniors for students and we can't sacrifice millennials for older folks."

The location of the May 24 town budget meeting has yet to be determined as of press time.

\$11.74 Million Andover Budget to Referendum

by Geeta S. Sandberg

Following its approval at the annual town meeting last week, Andover voters will have the opportunity to vote on the proposed 2017-18 budget of \$11.74 million this Tuesday, May 16.

The spending package, which was approved 43-8 last Thursday, includes \$2,311,350 for the general government operating budget, as well as \$4,275,821 in local Board of Education spending, and \$4,276,289 for the town's portion of the RHAM Board of Education budget.

The latter portion, however, which is determined by the number of students from town that attend the regional middle and high school, is subject to change as the RHAM budget failed at referendum May 2 in all three of the sending towns, including by a vote of 120-80 in Andover. The RHAM Board of Education met Monday to discuss the budget but did not make any cuts to the proposal – they meet again next Monday, May 15.

As the budget currently stands, if approved it will equate to a 1.62 percent increase – or \$184,259 – in the amount to be funded through taxes, and comes with an anticipated mill rate increase of 1.75 to 32.47 mills for real estate and personal property (state statute caps the mill rate for motor vehicles at 32 mills).

The mill rate is used to determine a resident's taxes and if the budget is approved, a resident

with a home assessed at \$150,000 will owe \$4,871 in real estate taxes, compared to \$4,608 under the current mill rate of 30.72.

In a budget message and summary shared at last week's meeting – and now up on the town website – Board of Finance Chairman Dan Warren explained, "This increase is almost exclusively the result of the anticipated decrease in state municipal aid, costs associated with a portion of Andover Elementary School and RHAM teacher retirement benefits, increased cost of the Resident State Trooper, and an increase in the RHAM budget."

The summary continues in bold, "All of these factors are beyond the exclusive control of the Board of Finance or Board of Selectmen."

Not including costs associated with the Resident State Trooper – which increased \$40,709 as the town is now responsible for 100 percent of the cost as opposed to 70 percent – the summary states the general government expenditures "slightly decreased" from the 2016-17 budget. In addition, the Andover Board of Education budget is a decrease of about \$45,000 from the current year.

"While this budget does not represent strict austerity, sacrifices at the town level have been incorporated to accommodate increased costs for services outside the town's exclusive control and reduced numbers," Warren stated.

The budget proposal for next year includes salary reductions for the first selectman and fire marshal and a wage and salary freeze for all non-union employees and other elected officials.

The first selectman's salary is listed as decreasing \$49,379 from the current year down to \$8,944. The Fire Marshal's salary, meanwhile, is set to decrease \$6,945 to \$4,015.

The massive drop in the first selectman's salary is because a new town administrator is coming on board. The newly-created position hasn't been filled yet, but whomever fills it is expected to begin in town July 1, and their salary for the 2017-18 fiscal year will be \$85,000.

In addition, a merit-based compensation adjustment pool of \$10,000 was created which, it was explained during last month's public hearing on the budget, will be used as incentive for employees who embrace cross training and the changes that will come under the town administrator.

The budget proposal also includes approximately \$665,945 for capital projects, which is a decrease of \$146,024 from the current year. Funding for the majority of the capital budget is expected to come from unassigned portions of the general fund along with previously committed grant funds; \$33,145 is proposed as com-

ing from taxes for the annual lease payment on a dump truck.

The rest of the capital projects on tap for next year include \$100,000 for the removal of an underground storage tank at the fire department along with upgrading the department's heat and hot water systems to propane; \$280,000 for road improvements; \$10,000 toward the cost of revaluation which is required to take place every five years; \$5,000 toward the cost of developing a Plan of Conservation and Development; \$232,000 for open space commitments; and \$5,800 for improvements to the pedestrian bridge over Route 316 – a bridge that was installed in 2012.

As proposed, it was explained in the budget summary the Board of Finance believes the budget will maintain the existing quality of services to residents, implement efficiencies, accommodate anticipated reductions in state municipal aid, address pressing infrastructure and other capital needs, "and provide a preliminary road map to guide future spending and support grant applications."

A detailed copy of the 2017-18 budget proposal is available online at andoverconnecticut.org. Voting on the spending package takes place next Tuesday, May 16, from 6 a.m.-8 p.m. at Town Hall, 17 School Rd.

Andover School Board Approves End-of-Year Projects

by Geeta S. Sandberg

At Wednesday's Board of Education meeting, the Andover school board unanimously approved several projects to be completed using unexpended funds from the 2016-17 budget.

Schools Superintendent Sally Doyen explained the items were included in the district's capital plan and spread out to be addressed over a number of years, but there was an opportunity to handle some of the items now.

"I'm going to propose we take what our projections are for unexpended funds for this current year and do these projects" she stated, which include replacing the controls on the elementary school's HVAC system with digitized controls for \$56,000; replacing carpeting in the library and the computer lab along with tiling in one of the hallways that's "coming up and is a trip hazard," for \$20,000.

In addition Doyen proposed the board approve \$20,000 for renovation work in the school's first-floor bathrooms.

"They wouldn't be completely renovated," she said, but new flooring is needed along with new urinals and partitions in the boys' bathroom, painting "and some other smaller types of repairs."

Several emergency items were also brought forward, including the replacement of a fire alarm panel for \$19,000, which Doyen said has a ground fault but is still working.

However, she added, "It's tentative in terms of deteriorating and possibly leaving us without an alarm system, and we wouldn't know until it's too late."

The replacement of two leaking air conditioning units was also proposed for \$17,400, as well as the installation of new hardware on five exterior doors for \$7,000, and the replacement of five broken cafeteria tables for \$8,500.

In total, the items presented for approval Wednesday amount to \$147,900 and join \$45,700 worth of projects the board approved in March for a \$193,600 total.

Doyen explained the projects would be funded from \$20,000 in savings from the magnet school account due to fewer students attending; \$25,000 in unemployment savings from a retired paraprofessional; \$30,000 in health insurance savings from the switch over to a high deductible insurance plan; and \$118,600 from the salaries account, which is the result of a teaching and paraprofessional position that wasn't filled.

"Again we have the opportunity to get some of these things done and quite frankly who knows what's going to happen next year," Doyen explained. "We don't even know what we're getting from the state next year, let alone years after that – so this is an opportunity to address some of these issues we talked about

earlier in the capital plan."

Also Wednesday, Doyen informed the board they'd received a letter from the state Department of Education regarding the late submission of the district's financial audit.

The letter, dated April 18, explains "a penalty of not less than \$1,000 nor more than \$10,000 may be assessed for late filing."

Doyen explained, "If you recall we had to have it done late; it was not completed by the designated [town] auditor so this is just a reminder from the state that the board can expect to be fined."

She added, "Once [the audit is] done – we anticipate that we should get it next week – I'll forward it on to the state and they will let me know what kind of report I need to submit to explain why it's late."

According to the letter, "the commissioner may waive the penalty for good cause."

The audit was due Dec. 31 but Stephen Hopkins, the auditor who had completed them for both the town and the school for more than 10 years submitted a letter terminating his most recent three-year audit engagement with the town May 26 of last year. In it he explained, "Certain aspects of the audit encountered during the prior fiscal year made it apparent that the number of hours contained within my most

recent auditing proposal were significantly underestimated."

And while he absorbed the additional hours during the prior year's audit, he said "I have been unable to create any feasible schedule" that would allow him to continue completing Andover's audit along with his other auditing commitments "and the desire to eliminate the need to file any extension requests with the state."

Board of Education Chairwoman Shannon Loudon explained to the school board Wednesday that as a result of Hopkins leaving and the town's inability to hire a new person in time to complete the audits, "Sally said, 'Well we may be late but we're not going to be held up by what the town didn't do,' so we hired our own auditor separate from the town and ours will be done."

Loudon added the school submitted all of their documents to the town on time, but the town didn't have the audits completed – and that may be something the state takes into consideration when deciding whether or not to waive the penalty fee.

The next Andover Board of Education meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, June 14, at 7 p.m. in the Andover Elementary School library, 35 School Rd.



A Monday crash at the intersection of Old Hartford and Amston roads resulted in the passenger of this vehicle being flown by LifeStar to Hartford Hospital, with several injuries.

One Flown by Life Star to Hospital After Colchester Crash

by Julianna Roche

Two people were rushed to the hospital after a car crashed into a pole in Colchester early Monday afternoon, police said.

According to police, at approximately 11:50 a.m., Alexa Laporte, 27, of 124 Tobacco St., Lebanon, was driving a Mazda CX-7 heading southbound on Old Hartford Road near its intersection with Amston Road, when she reported falling asleep at the wheel and driving off the curb line, before subsequently striking several utility poles and coming to a final stop against a large, metal utility pole.

Police said both Laporte and the passenger in the vehicle, Jaquan T. Gibson, 23, of 25

Norman Dr., Gales Ferry, suffered injuries, with Laporte appearing to have several broken bones in her left arm and Gibson having possible broken bones in his right leg and lacerations to his face from striking the windshield.

Gibson was flown by LifeStar to Hartford Hospital, while Laporte was transported by Colchester Hayward Volunteer Fire Department to Backus Hospital. The two were both reported Wednesday to be in stable condition.

Police said the Mazda was towed from the scene, and that its insurance policy had been canceled in April.

East Hampton Police News

4/21: Jose M. Lebron, 35, of 29 Roberta Dr., Middletown, was issued a summons for traveling unreasonably fast and operating while under suspension, East Hampton Police said.

4/27: Vincent Mann, 45, of 91 West Fort Dr., Meriden, was issued a summons for misuse of plates and operating an unregistered motor vehicle, police said.

4/29: Eric N. Markham, 46, of 43 Chestnut Hill Rd., was taken into custody pursuant to an active warrant for his arrest stemming from a one-car crash that occurred Sept. 22, 2016, police said. Markham was charged with failure to drive right, operating under the influence, possession of drug paraphernalia and possession of narcotics, police said.

5/4: Laura Leith, 49, of 20 Chapman Rd., was arrested and charged with disorderly conduct and reckless endangerment, police said.

Marlborough Police News

5/2: State Police said Edwin J. Lewis, 34, of 180 McDonald Rd., Colchester, was arrested and charged with operating a motor vehicle under the influence of drugs/alcohol and failure to drive right.

Portland Police News

5/2: Gregory Young, 60, of 326 Main St., was charged with violation of a restraining order, Portland Police said.

Colchester Police News

5/1: Colchester Police said Thomas M. Soboleski, 26, of 70 Cato Corner Rd. was arrested and charged with interfering with an officer: simple assault, breach of peace: threatening, and threatening.

5/3: State Police said Summer Forbes, 24, of 30 Sterling St., Floor 2, Hartford, was arrested and charged with speeding, criminal impersonation and interfering with an officer: simple assault.

5/4: State Police said Michael J. Wozniak, 38, of 1D Westchester Hills, was arrested and charged with third-degree assault, disorderly conduct: threatening, threatening, and third-degree strangulation.

Hebron Police News

5/4: State Police said Joseph Lanford, 26, of 444 Wall St., was arrested and charged with violation of probation/conditional discharge, illegal possession of a narcotic, use of drug paraphernalia, and narcotics kept only in original container.

Car Crashes into Tree in Andover

by Julianna Roche

An SUV crashed into a tree just off Hebron Road Friday, leaving the driver with minor injuries, police said.

According to police, at approximately 1:20 p.m., Inok Choi, 55, of 27 Kristem Ln., Hebron, was driving his Honda Pilot EX southbound on Route 316 near its intersection with Gilead Road.

Police said Choi then crossed over to the northbound lane, subsequently traveling off the right-hand shoulder of the road and striking a small tree with its front end.

Choi was transported by Andover Fire Department to Manchester Hospital for suspected minor injuries, police said.

Vehicle Slides Down Embankment on Route 2 in Colchester

by Julianna Roche

A vehicle slid down an embankment on Route 2 during last Friday's rainstorm, leaving the passenger injured, police said.

According to police, at approximately 2:16 p.m., Ryan A. Menders, 29, of 53 Sachem Dr., Plainfield, was driving his Honda Fit Sport heading westbound in the right-hand lane on Route 2, when the vehicle started to hydroplane, spin out of control into the right-hand shoulder of the road, and slid down the grassy

embankment before colliding with a tree.

Police said the passenger in the vehicle – Jordan M. Silva, 23, also of the same address – was transported by Colchester EMS to Marlborough Clinic for suspected minor injuries.

The vehicle was towed to Marvin's Auto and police said they found Menders to be at fault for the incident.

Route 2 Crash Leaves Two Injured in Colchester

by Julianna Roche

A car crash during heavy rain and winds Friday on Route 2 left two with possible injuries last Friday, police said.

According to police, at approximately 12:48 p.m., Thalia A. Rivera, 21, of 19 Gem Dr., Willimantic was traveling westbound on Route 2 in a Hyundai Elantra with a one-year-old passenger somewhere between exit 15 and exit 16, when she suddenly lost control of the

vehicle and it subsequently went off the right side of the roadway.

Police said the vehicle then rolled over as a result from the accident.

Rivera and the passenger were alert and conscious when police arrived, but were both transported by Colchester Fire Department to Marlborough Clinic for possible injuries, police said.

Obituaries continued

Colchester

Karen Hollingsworth

Karen Hollingsworth, 60, of Colchester, passed away Monday, May 8, at Lawrence and Memorial Hospital in New London, after a courageous struggle with cancer. Karen was born in Summit, N.J., April 11, 1957. She was a daughter of the late John and Edith (Peterson) Soderberg.



She married her beloved husband, Greg, on July 23, 1983. The couple moved to Colchester in 1986, where they made their home and raised their family.

Karen worked as a math teacher at RHAM and East Lyme public schools. She also worked for the American Lung Association doing smoking cessation classes. Karen was a communicant of St. Andrew Church, where she was active with the ACTS retreat program. Most importantly, she will be remembered by her family as a devoted and loving wife and mother.

She will be sadly missed but always remembered by her husband Greg of 33 years; two sons, Andrew of Boston and Eric Hollingsworth of New London; a brother, Douglas Soderberg of Rogers, Ark.; two sisters, Kristen Zimmerman of Franklin, Mass., Alison Whiting of Ridgecrest, Calif.; mother-in-law, Gail Hollingsworth of Montville; brother-in-law, Jeff Hollingsworth and wife Dee; sister-in-law, Susan Pauls; nieces Emily Austin and husband Brian, Hillery Hollingsworth, and Tara Largent; nephews David and Mathew Zimmerman.

In addition to her parents, Karen was also predeceased by a brother, Eric Soderberg.

Calling hours were held Thursday, May 11, at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester. The funeral Mass will be celebrated on today, May 12, at 9:30 a.m., directly at St. Andrew Church, 128 Norwich Ave., Colchester, CT 06415. Burial will follow at New Saint Andrew Cemetery.

Donations in her memory may be made to St. Andrew Church.

For online condolences, visit auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.

Obituaries

Andover

Nancy Carol Richards

Nancy Carol (Peters) Richards, 74, of Andover, passed away Sunday, May 7, in Branford. Born in Evanston, Ill., May 6, 1943, daughter of the late Ernest J. and Irene M. (Huberty) Peters, she had lived in Andover since 1965.

She graduated from Evanston Township High School and attended Northwestern University on scholarship before moving to Connecticut in 1963. She finished her undergraduate education at the University of Hartford with a B.A. in psychology, and went on to earn an MBA from the University of Connecticut graduating first in her class.

Before moving to Connecticut, Nancy worked as an endocrinology research lab assistant at G.D. Searle & Co. pharmaceuticals (now part of Pfizer, Inc.) in Skokie, Ill. As a stay-at-home mom raising her two sons, Nancy was active in educational, political and environmental activities in the community. Nancy's career then included Systems Analyst at Capehart Corporation, and ten years at the University of Connecticut Health Center in Farmington, as a research associate in the Department of Behavioral Sciences and Community Health. She was co-author of several research articles in professional journals and edited two books. She went on to spend 20 years at Aetna in various positions including healthcare network development, health program management, and medical informatics before retiring in 2006 as Director of Business and Competitive Intelligence in Strategic Marketing. She then formed her own company, Nancy Richards Associates, and did consulting and market research for a number of health plans, retail and finance firms.

Nancy relished a life of quiet pleasures and comforting routines. She loved caring for her house, gardens and woodlands through all the New England seasons – spring wildflowers, the wood thrush singing in the summer dawn and dusk, golden hickory foliage in the fall and new fallen winter snow. Nancy was an avid gardener, hiker and nature enthusiast. Together with a group of Andover friends, she helped to start Andover's glass recycling program by crushing bottles in a barrel with a sledge hammer. She played the piano and 12-string guitar and performed as a member of the Rainy Day folk trio group for over a decade. She loved to cook holiday meals for her family, and cherished memories of hosting dozens of family vacations in scenic locations all over the U.S. She enjoyed reading, writing, genealogy research, classical and folk music, sewing and needlework, as well as the company of her Labrador retriever, Kona.

She participated in the University of Connecticut Center for Learning in Retirement, and especially enjoyed the Memoir Club. She had recently joined a drum circle at the Unitarian Universalist Society East in Manchester. She was a member of the League of Women Voters, Alpha Gamma Delta Sorority, Beta Gamma Sigma Business Honorary Society, University of Connecticut Alumni Association, Aetna Retiree Association, Andover Young at Hearts Club, Andover Friends of the Library, Sierra Club, was a past a member of the League of Women Voters, Appalachian Mountain Club and Manchester Ski Club.

She is survived by a son and daughter-in-law Christopher and Susan Richards of Brentwood, Tenn.; four grandchildren, Jeremy Rich of Middletown and Cameron, Bryanna and Diana Richards of Brentwood, Tenn.; numerous other relatives in Illinois and Wisconsin; and her much-loved companion and chocolate lab, Kona.

She was predeceased by her parents and her brother Jerome Peters, all of Evanston, Ill.; her son, Bryan Richards of Peabody, Mass.; and her loving partner and soulmate of 25 years, Norman Lindberg of Andover.

According to Nancy's wishes, funeral arrangements are private at the discretion of the family with interment at All Saints Cemetery in Des Plaines, Ill.

Memorial donations may be made to the charity of your choice.

Carlson Funeral Home, New Britain, is assisting with arrangements. Share a memory or note of sympathy at carlsonfuneralhome.com.



East Hampton

Carmine Michael Siracuse

Carmine Michael Siracuse, affectionately known as "Nutchie," went home to Heaven peacefully Thursday, April 21, at the age of 95. In his passing, he was reunited with his beloved wife, Catherine; parents, siblings and other loved ones that had gone before. Born Dec. 18, 1921, in Brooklyn, N.Y., he was

one of the 10 children of the late Giuseppe and Philomena Siracuse and the "glue" of the family.

Carmine served proudly with the United States Army as a radio operator during World War II. For many years, he worked on the docks of the Brooklyn waterfront as a longshoreman and later as a dock boss before his retirement.

He wed the love of his life, the former Catherine Burke on June 30, 1956, and at the same time welcomed into his heart her daughter, Winifred, whom he raised and loved as his own. The couple shared 43 years of marriage before she predeceased him Jan. 7, 2000. Carmine lovingly cared for her always, especially during her final illness.

In later years, they moved from New York to Connecticut to be closer to Winnie. Carmine was still able to enjoy the water from their home on Lake Pocotopaug and made many dear friends in the area.

He leaves to mourn his loss but cherish his memory his daughter, Winnie Siracuse Standish and her husband, Don of Colchester; two grandchildren, Melissa Dudzic and her husband, Robert of Colchester and Michael Standish of Stamford; two great-grandchildren, Rexford and Emily Dudzic; his sister, Anna DiGiovanni of New Milford, N.J.; and numerous extended family and friends.

Carmine was laid to rest with his late wife in Moravian Cemetery, Staten Island, N.Y., shortly after his passing.

A memorial service celebrating his life will be observed at 1 p.m. Friday, May 19, at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester. The family will receive guests starting at 11 a.m. until the time of the service.

In lieu of flowers, donations in his memory may be made to the Wounded Warrior Project, P.O. Box 758516, Topeka, KS 66675 (woundedwarriorproject.org/donate).

For online condolences, visit auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.



Colchester

Daniel Arthur Pothier

Daniel Arthur Pothier, formerly of Colchester, passed away peacefully in his sleep at age 69 Saturday, May 6. He was the son of the late René Pothier, whom he admired deeply, and Claire Pothier of Beach Pond in Voluntown. He often spoke of the many happy and memorable summers he spent with his family and friends while growing up on Beach Pond.

Dan was a retired toolmaker who always took much pride in his work, finding the simplest and most efficient solution to any job entrusted to him. He took whatever time he could to spend outdoors, hunting and fishing – and especially enjoyed fishing with his grandchildren and teaching them his skills. In winter, you would either find him up on his deer stand in his beloved woods – or on a frozen lake or pond, ice-fishing from a number of holes he had cut (with precision) into the ice.

Dan seemed to have a gift for remembering events in history and was always happy when his grandchildren asked him questions for school projects, as it gave him the opportunity to provide them with detailed answers. He was always very happy and proud to pass his knowledge and skills on to them.

"We will miss our Pepe."

Mr. Pothier is survived by his wife, Anita (Chandler) Pothier of Colchester; two sons, Dennis and Jason Pothier; two stepchildren, Daniel Tamburrino and Annette Eifler and their families, which include 10 grandchildren and three great-grandchildren; a sister, Denise and husband, Robert Lambert; sister-in-law, Rita Pothier; and numerous extended family members and friends.

In addition to his parents, Dan was predeceased by his brother, Eugene Pothier, his stepson, Joseph Tamburrino and Joe's wife, Peggy.

Per Dan's wishes, there will be no memorial services.

Colchester

Dennis Lee Corriveau

Dennis Lee Corriveau, 58, of Colchester, passed away peacefully Saturday, May 6, at home, surrounded by his loving family.

He leaves his beloved wife and best friend of 41 years, Roxanne (Truslow) Corriveau; their two daughters and sons-in-law, Nicole and William Comstock and LeeAnn and Gregory Liberty, all of Colchester; four grandchildren, Emma, Madison, Nolan and Reagan; his mother, Marie Jeanette (Pelletier) Corriveau of Florida; four siblings, Karon Boulter of Maine and James, Gary and John, all of Florida; his mother-in-law, Catherine Morin of Colchester; and numerous extended family and countless friends.

He was predeceased by his father, Roger; and a brother, Raymond.

Dennis was born Sept. 21, 1958, in Bristol, and raised in Plainville and graduated from Plainville High, Class of 1976. He went on to become a professional truck driver and was a member of the Teamsters Locals 671 and 493.

Dennis truly loved nature and the outdoors, be it hunting, fishing, gardening, camping and even as far as the stars in the sky, as he was an astronomy buff as well. Additionally, he was an avid fan of the Patriots, the Red Sox and NASCAR.

Even through his courageous battle with cancer, he still kept that positive, generous, patriotic and loving spirit and his contagious smile and laugh. Most importantly, Dennis will be remembered for his unflinching devotion for his family and friends alike.

A memorial service celebrating his life will be observed at 6 p.m. Friday, May 19, directly at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, 31 Main St., East Haddam. Burial will be private and there are no calling hours.

In lieu of flowers, donation in his memory may be made to the American Cancer Society, P.O. Box 22478, Oklahoma City, OK 73123 (cancer.org) or to Masonicare Hospice, P.O. Box 70, Wallingford, CT 06492 (masonicare.org).

For online condolences, visit auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.

East Hampton

Alicia Bermudez

Alicia Bermudez, 95, of East Hampton, widow of the late Federico Bermudez, died Monday, May 8, at Portland Care and Rehab. Born June 10, 1921, in Peru, she was the daughter of the late Miguel Aguirre and Gavina Garcia.

She was raised in Lima, Peru, and moved to Hartford before moving to East Hampton. She was a member of the Jehovah's Witness Church in Peru and in Hartford.

She is survived by her daughter, Rosario Dijer of East Hampton; her four sons, William Bermudez of Ohio, Raul Bermudez of Hartford, Jose Bermudez of East Hampton, Hector Bermudez of Cromwell; several sisters and brothers from Lima, Peru; 14 grandchildren; and seven great-grandchildren.

She was predeceased by her daughter, Edith Bermudez.

Friends may call at the Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton, Saturday, May 13, from 9:30-11 a.m. There will be a memorial service at 11 a.m. in the funeral home. Burial will be private at the convenience of the family.

To leave online condolences, visit spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.

Colchester

Phyllis Marae Wysoski

Phyllis Marae (Fellows) Wysoski, 85, of Colchester, widow of the late Raymond Wysoski, passed away Friday, May 5, at Middlesex Hospital. Born May 11, 1931, in Suffield, she was the daughter of the Alfred and Edith (Holcomb) Fellows.

Mrs. Wysoski had worked as a waitress in the area for many years. She leaves two children, Ron and wife, Kathy of Colchester and Linda Markie of Wolcott; two brothers, Bruce Fellows of Lisbon and Kenneth Fellows of Torrington; and numerous extended family and friends.

The family will receive guests from noon-2 p.m. today, May 12, at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester. A chapel service will be observed at 1:30 p.m. and followed by burial with her late son, Gordon, at the New St. Andrew Cemetery.

Hebron

Rozalyn Murphy

Rozalyn Grusauskas Murphy, 64, of Hebron, passed away peacefully at home Thursday, May 4, following a courageous five-year battle with cancer. She was born in Goshen Feb. 22, 1953. She was the daughter of Mary Perol Grusauskas and Michael Felix Grusauskas.

She was predeceased by her parents; a brother, Michael Grusauskas; and sisters, Judith Southard and Elizabeth "Beth" Grusauskas.

Rozalyn is survived by her best friend and husband, Gregory Sperry. She also leaves behind two daughters, Kelly Grace Murphy-Kennerson of Enfield and Kathleen Murphy Thomas of Wethersfield, and two sons, Bryan Gabriel Sperry of Higganum and Philip Eugene Sperry of Plainville. She is also survived by two sisters, Marianne Santo Domingo of West Hartford and Janice Bernard of Newtown, and a brother, Peter Grusauskas of Goshen. She also leaves behind seven grandchildren and several nieces and nephews.

She strove to live by the motto, "Family First" as she was always dedicated to the wellbeing of her family and friends.

Rozalyn was a graduate of the University of Connecticut. She was a certified Project Management Professional (PMP) and had been a licensed real estate agent. Her successful career centered on the insurance industry. She was employed by The Hartford Insurance Company for the past 18 years, where she last served as a senior specialist planning and strategy technologies project manager for the past 10 years. She had also been employed at AMS (Agency Management Systems) for over 10 years where she was an Assistant Vice President.

Although Rozalyn had an extremely aggressive form of ovarian cancer, she never lived her life as a glass half empty. Rather, she continued to trail ride with her beloved horse, Shamus. She traveled to her special "land of enchantment," New Mexico, with her husband Gregory. She continued to work full-time close to the end of her wonderful life. She gave love and encouragement to everyone and demonstrated how full a life can be in spite of waging a difficult battle against cancer. She taught us that no matter how difficult a life can become, there are always ways to live and experience happiness. She will serve as a role model to all and a hero to many.

The family would like to thank the following compassionate Hartford Hospital Healthcare service providers for the care she received: Women's Specialty Services, especially doctors Aaron Shafer, Amy Brown, and Laurie Scarpo, APRN; the wonderful and compassionate nurses at the Helen and Harry Gray Infusion Center and CB2; Hartford Hospital Health Care Palliative and Hospice nursing services.

In keeping with Rozalyn's love and passion for horses, please direct donations in Rozalyn Murphy's name to Mitchell Farm Equine Retirement, 300 East Haddam Rd., Salem, CT 06420 (mitchellfarm.org/donate.html).

The family utilized the services of the Glastonbury Funeral Home. A celebration of Rozalyn's life will be held at a later date that is convenient to the family.

