

RIVEREAST

# News Bulletin

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

Volume 42, Number 36

Published by The Glastonbury Citizen

June 15, 2018



**She Spins a Good Yarn...** The East Hampton Yarners will meet Thursdays, June 21, July 5, July 19, Aug. 2, Aug. 16, Aug. 30, Sept. 6 and Sept. 20. All gatherings will be held at the Congregational Church of East Hampton, 59 Main St., in the green classroom, from 10 a.m.-noon. The evening group will meet at various sites those days. All knitters and crocheters are welcome to bring your own projects and to work on items for donation such as prayer shawls, chemo caps, baby hats, stuffed animals, lap robes, scarves and hats for winter. For more information contact Judy Hoffhine at [jhoffhine@gmail.com](mailto:jhoffhine@gmail.com). Pictured here is Rose Dijer winding skeins of yarn at Sears Park.

## Storage of Explosives Concerns Neighbor

by Elizabeth Regan

Portland resident Wayne Carini wants people to know there's an explosives storage facility hidden on a landlocked parcel off Isinglass Hill Road in town.

The operation will be the subject of a June 21 public hearing in front of the Planning and Zoning Commission as owner Richard M. Hosley Jr. of Connecticut Explosives Company Inc. seeks to update the way it stores hazardous materials on the site.

Carini, the star of Velocity Network's "Chasing Classic Cars" and the owner of F40 Motorsports on Route 66, is building a house next to Hosley's site.

"I'm going to guarantee you that 80 percent of the people that own homes around here have no idea what's going on," Carini said this week.

While Carini was aware explosives were being stored on the site when he made the decision to build next to it, he said he "didn't know the extent" of the operation.

"They put fertilizer and diesel fuel mixture in these shipping containers and store them in bunkers all over the site," he said.

He questioned why the town would allow the construction of homes around the site.

"The town has allowed this to happen," he said. "There's housing developments all surrounding the quarry."

Connecticut Explosives Company Inc. owner Rick Hosley said this week that he provides drilling and blasting services for construction sites and mines. Explosives are currently stored

at the Portland site in reinforced containment units called magazines. Explosive materials are kept separate as required by the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) and are not assembled on the site, he said.

Hosley spoke at length with the *RiverEast* this week, but cautioned that publicity surrounding the explosives business is a "sensitive situation."

"You don't really want to draw a lot of public interest," he said.

Hosley has operated the Isinglass Hill Road site since 1986, according to documents in the land use department. Testimony before the Zoning Board of Appeals in 1994 indicated explosives have been stored on the site since at least the 1930s.

Building Official Lincoln White said this week that the land use department must operate according to local zoning regulations and state statute. Those laws allow preexisting businesses to continue to operate even when zoning regulations are established that would otherwise preclude such activity.

The site is regulated at the federal level by the ATF at the state level by the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection; and at the local level by the fire marshal's office.

"We rely on the expertise of other entities – [like] ATF – to protect to the neighboring properties. If there's a minimum distance that must be kept, they enforce it. And they have," White said.

See Explosives page 2

## Changes Proposed for RHAM Parking Area

by Sloan Brewster

A plan for modifications to the parking area at the RHAM high and middle schools – drawn up following the 2014 death of a teacher who was struck by a car in the lot – was presented to the public Monday, and reviews were mixed.

Ron Dagan and Jeff Hopper, both of Luchs Consulting Engineers of Meriden, presented the preliminary plan at a public hearing held at the RHAM High School auditorium. The project is being funded by a state grant secured in 2015, following the death the year before of Dawn Mallory, 65, a teacher at the middle school.

Mallory, 65, who had taught seventh and eighth grade math at the school, was walking through the parking lot around 7 a.m. the morning of March 14, 2014, when she was struck by a vehicle. According to state police, the driver, Elizabeth Everett, 50, of Hebron, backed up and ran into Mallory after she realized she had driven into the bus lane.

Everett was later found guilty of misconduct with a motor vehicle by criminal negligence and unsafe backing, and sentenced in February 2017 to 20 months in prison.

The parking lot redesign and reconfiguration aspect of the plan would cost \$1.11 million; an additional proposal, to run sidewalks down Wall Street to Ridge Road, would cost \$375,000.

The state grant, awarded to the Town of Hebron in 2015, was for approximately \$1.3 million; \$1.1 million is for the RHAM project, with the balance going to an engineering study to address traffic issues at the intersection of Routes 66 and Route 316 in Hebron, Law said. The Town of Hebron and the RHAM Board of Education are working collaboratively on the RHAM traffic project.

The project goals are to improve the environment for students, teachers and parents as it relates to drop-offs and pickups, improve safety for students walking to and from Veterans Park and provide sidewalk access along Wall Street from Ridge Road, Dagan said.

"We saw about five major challenges and goals as we embarked on this study and design," he said.

Challenges included issues with the main entrance point where exiting school buses currently cross the path of entering parents' cars on their way to drop their children at the high school drop-off area, pedestrians being exposed to traffic, long lines of cars on Wall Street, congestion at dismissal and unsafe crossing of Wall Street, he said.

After looking at several possible solutions, Luchs presented the plan to emergency and

police personnel, "and they agreed with our choice," Dagan said.

The idea behind the plan is "to try and separate all the activities that happen" in the parking lot, Dagan said.

In the proposal, buses would have an exclusive lane.

"What we've done is we've totally separated those buses leaving from parents coming to drop-off," Dagan said.

The plan also requires a new driveway opposite the driveway to Veterans Park.

"That will solve congestion at dismissal," Dagan said.

Dagan stressed he felt the new driveway was necessary, although he noted the state Department of Transportation would have the final say.

There would also be a new pedestrian route from the park to the crosswalk and school entrance.

The plan includes making temporary traffic slowing measures already in place permanent, such as speed bumps, which would be made into permanent speed humps, Dagan said. The humps are better for plows yet achieve the desired result of slowing cars.

The plan also calls for a sidewalk from the school to Ridge Road and five-foot-wide side-

walks at the school.

"We are pushing the whole parking lot south ... in order to make room for the sidewalk," Dagan said.

One parent lauded the plan to put in the sidewalk to Ridge Road.

Jessica Petro thanked the presenters for looking into the sidewalk extension and described the unsafe conditions currently on Wall Street, including for cross-country team members who run to Ridge Road and circle back to RHAM through the trails in the woods at the end of the cul-de-sac.

On Tuesday afternoon, this *RiverEast* reporter saw a teenaged boy with a backpack walking from RHAM down Wall Street – along the narrow shoulder of the road – toward Ridge Road as traffic skirted past him.

Area neighbors have wanted sidewalks for years, according to Petro.

"It isn't safe," she said. "Thank you for thinking about RHAM and how it works in the larger context of our town."

Also as part of the plan, the two-way road through the school would be transformed into a narrow one-way. A permanent separation would also be created between the middle and

See Parking Area page 2

**Explosives cont. from Front Page**

Hosley said his pending special permit application before the Planning and Zoning Commission was spurred by a directive from ATF to reduce the quantity of explosives stored near Carini's newly constructed home.

Carini has not yet received a certificate of occupancy for the house.

ATF guidelines for the storage of explosive materials dictate specific minimum distances between the explosives and any inhabited homes. For example, 4,000 to 5,000 pounds of material must be barricaded at least 685 feet away from an inhabited building; a smaller amount, such as 900 to 1,000 pounds, can be stored 400 feet away.

Based on the ATF directive, Hosley said he has two options: either use more, half-sized units to accommodate the same amount of hazardous material "or seek a new technology that does not require the use or storage of explosives or blasting agents."

He went with the latter choice, he told the *Rivereast*. The plan involves removing the magazines closest to Carini's property – which he has already done – and applying for a special permit to build three silos to store ammonium nitrate, or fertilizer.

The silos would reduce the number of magazines on the site but would not eliminate all of them, Hosley said.

The silos would hold the fertilizer and release it by gravity into trucks sitting on the concrete pad underneath to allow for more efficient and less expensive transport to the mine or construction site being blasted, according to Hosley.

He said explosives are assembled on the job site – not on Isinglass Hill Road.

"This is going to help us save money and keep the environment [safer] because the hazard will be in the mixing and implementation, not in the storage or transportation," he said.

Hosley emphasized he is entitled to store explosives in the residential zone because that's what the site was used for before zoning regulations went into effect. Known as a "non-conforming use" in zoning parlance, the right is protected in state statute.

It's the construction of the silos and the concrete base for which he must get a special permit.

The two larger silos would be 59 feet tall and the smaller one would be approximately 40 feet, according to a review by town engineer Geoffrey Jacobson. The maximum allowed height is 35 feet. Jacobson said the application can't be approved by the Planning and Zoning Commission at those heights unless the Zoning Board of Appeals grants a variance.

Jacobson also said the application requires a more detailed narrative, which should include the type of material being stored, what precautions will be used, and operational information such as hours of business and how many employees will be on the site.

Hosley said he met with Jacobson and other town staff members this week for a tour of the site. He said he will provide the detailed narrative "as soon as possible."

Carini, for his part, said he's "in total disagreement" that there's nothing the town can do about the storage of explosives on the property simply because hazardous materials were stored there before zoning regulations went into effect.

"If there was a house of ill repute in a residential zone, do you think the town would still continue to allow it to exist? Absolutely not," he said.

A map submitted with the special permit application indicates the company currently stores explosives in nine magazines. The containers contain between 5,000 and 14,000 pounds of material, according to the map.

Carini referenced the Oklahoma City bombing to illustrate his concerns with the amount of explosive material on the Portland site.

The 1995 domestic terrorist attack was carried out using a truck with more than 4,800 pounds of ammonium nitrate, according to news reports.

"That was one van full of fertilizer. They have containers full up here," Carini said.

He said a major explosion could lead to "devastation for miles."

Hosley emphasized the site is subject to regular visits – including surprise inspections – from local, state and federal authorities. He said alarm systems and cameras are in place throughout the property.

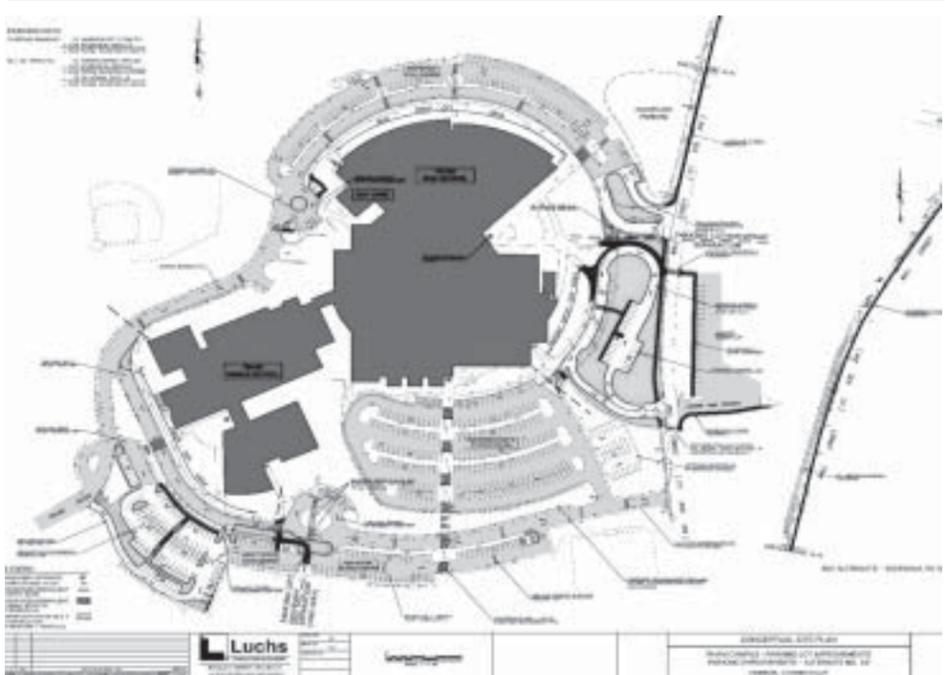
According to local Fire Marshal Raymond Sajdak, Portland officials have "never had any problems" with the site from a safety standpoint.

He also credited Hosley with providing resources and training for local emergency services. One example is the placement of a radio repeater on the property to strengthen radio communications among emergency responders.

Sajdak reiterated the site is under 24-hour security surveillance.

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The special permit application will be open for public comment during the Planning and Zoning meeting at 7 p.m. Thursday in the Mary Flood room of the Portland Public Library.



**Shown here is a preliminary design for campus modifications to clean up traffic patterns at RHAM. This design includes a separation between buses, parent drop-offs and teacher parking; a third driveway directly across the street from Veterans Park; a wider sidewalk on campus; and a sidewalk from the campus to Ridge Road.**

**Parking Area cont. from Front Page**

high school parking lots, and changes made to the flow to the drop-off area.

"The general situation in the middle school parking lot needs improvement, as vehicles come in at the main entrance and make a long trek to the parking lot," Dagan said.

Not everyone in the audience was satisfied with the plan.

"Unfortunately the plan doesn't go far enough," said Bruce Olmstead, who said he was an engineer for the DOT. "The primary thing we wanted to see here was teacher parking separated from parents."

Olmstead suggested there could be room to

create that separation.

"You could end up with full separation and no parents going with teachers," he said.

Rich Jacobson, who sat beside Olmstead, said he agreed.

This was the first of multiple public feedback sessions designed to provide the community and RHAM faculty a voice in the development of the project, Law said. The design would then need to be approved by the Board of Education and the Town of Hebron, and then go before the DOT for final approval.

The project is scheduled to take place in summer 2019.

# Hebron Pump Station Changes Coming

by Sloan Brewster

The town is looking into making some pump station changes.

At last Thursday's Board of Selectmen meeting, Clara O'Brien, who is also on the Water Pollution Control Authority (WPCA) and the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) Committee, gave an overview of a project that would upgrade the nine pump stations along the town's 17 miles of sanitary sewer.

All but one of the stations were built from 1990 to 1994.

"[They] are at the end of their life and in need of comprehensive repair," O'Brien said.

The project would have to go before voters in a town meeting before it could be funded.

According to a memo from Wright-Pierce Engineering, the total project would cost an estimated \$6.80 million and would be split into two separate projects or phases. The design portions of the projects would run about \$662,000 and would also be split.

"It appears that the best approach is to package the pump station upgrades into two packages," O'Brien said.

Staggering the project, with one phase down the road, breaks up the funding and will do the same thing in 20 or 30 years when it needs to be done again, O'Brien said. If approved, Phase 1 would begin this year and Phase 2 would start in about eight years.

The design portion of Phase 1 would take between eight and 10 months and is proposed for an immediate start, O'Brien said. The \$3.30 million construction would take 10 to 12 months and is slated for next year.

"The longer we wait the more pumps and

parts keep breaking," O'Brien said.

Phase 1 includes four pumps stations in need of immediate attention as they are in poor condition and risk complete failure and emergency generators for all nine stations, O'Brien said. The generators would be the first thing to do if the project is approved.

"When we are without power we are running around moving generators," she said. "The guys are running around with generators."

After the design phase is completed, there would be a competitive bidding process for construction, O'Brien said.

Phase 2, which would also have to be approved at town meeting, would be designed over eight to 10 months in 2025 and 2026 at a \$352,000 cost. Construction, which is time-tabled for 2027, would cost \$3.50 million. It includes upgrades to the remaining five pump stations.

The pump stations slated for upgrades in Phase 2 are not in need of immediate attention and can be put off to a future date, O'Brien said.

Cost estimates for the project are included in the 15-year Capital Improvement Plan, O'Brien said. For Phase 1 designs, the WPCA is recommending using its own money, and funds leftover from sewer installations.

The WPCA, which gets money through sewer usage fees and new hook-ups, has approximately \$891,000 in its account, according to Finance Director Diane Griffin.

Possible funding ideas for Phase 1 construction and the overall Phase 2 project include grants, loans and town funding, O'Brien said.

Pump stations are eligible for 20-year loans through the Clean Water Fund with low inter-



**Pictured here is a pump station in Amston on Route 85. The town is considering updating all nine pump stations in town as they are reaching the end of their useful lives.**

est rates of two percent, according to the memo from the engineering firm. The town is also eligible for USDA Rural Development 40-year loans with 2.75 percent interest.

"We're definitely going to try to seek grant monies," Town Manager Andrew Tierney said in a phone call Wednesday.

The town of Lebanon would also pay a small portion of the cost as it shares approximately 10 percent use of the system.

Sewage from the towns of Hebron, Colchester, Lebanon and East Hampton is processed through a joint facility in East Hampton. Since

sewage from Lebanon flows through Hebron, the town pays a usage fee to Hebron, which in turn pays one to Colchester, which pays to East Hampton.

Board members were on board with the plan. "I think this is something we need to get the ball rolling on," Selectman Brian O'Connell said.

"I don't know how we could not fund this," Tierney said. "We need it, its infrastructure."

Once there is a conceptual plan, the project will be a presented at a public hearing, Tierney said.

# Portland Fireworks Moving to High School Campus

by Elizabeth Regan

The Portland fireworks display will be held on higher ground this year.

The show will take place Saturday, July 14, at 9:30 p.m. on the Portland High School campus. The rain date is July 15.

Fireworks Committee Chairwoman Sharon Hoy said the move resolves issues that have plagued the flood-prone launching area on the Exchange Club fairgrounds since the tradition began. The summertime event was canceled in 2006 due to muddy conditions; last year, it was postponed until October to give the field time to dry out.

The river also had implications for the timing of the event, according to Hoy. She said moving to the high school gives the committee more flexibility to schedule the pyrotechnic display closer to Independence Day.

“We were never able to have them around the Fourth of July, when they should be held, because it was right along the river where the baby herons and eaglets were nesting,” Hoy said. “The state asked us if we could delay a few weeks because it gives the babies time to get out of the nest.”

The noise from fireworks could scare the

baby birds out of their nests, officials with the state Department of Energy and Environmental Protection have said.

First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield said the display will be set off at the rear of the baseball field. People will be able to watch from the track and the adjacent soccer field.

She noted that some residents won’t even need to go to the high school to get a good vantage point.

“They’re going to be seen from a lot of neighborhoods in the area,” Bransfield said.

This year’s venue change comes on the heels of much uncertainty surrounding last year’s display. The fireworks ultimately went off as part of the Portland Fair.

“The people who went to the fair liked it, but it was an entirely different show,” Hoy said. “So we started to look to see if there were any other alternatives, and someone suggested the high school.”

Bransfield said sharing resources with Portland Fair organizers saved money, which put the committee in a better place to pay for this year’s event.

“I’m grateful to the Fair Association for helping the fireworks group last year,” Bransfield said. “We had fun watching at the fair, but this year we’d like to follow the July tradition.”

Fundraising efforts for the display will continue through the event, with the committee working to secure roughly \$7,000 more to reach their \$30,000 goal. The funds pay for the display itself, as well as security, portable bathrooms and advertising.

The committee is also working to find a band to play before the fireworks go off and is lining up food vendors. Details about the pre-show festivities will be publicized in the *Rivereast* and on the town website, according to Hoy. The Facebook page “Portland CT Fireworks Extravaganza” will also include updates.

Hoy and Bransfield said the town is still investigating the possibility of a cooperative approach to the fireworks in the coming years. A partnership with Cromwell, which could include lighting off the fireworks from a barge on the Connecticut River, is in the discussion stage.

Portland’s fireworks show began in the early

1990s under the direction of retired Sgt. Mike Dapkus of the Portland Police Department. The fireworks aficionado provided the fireworks at cost and donated his time to carry out the display. Dapkus stepped back in 2008, after almost 20 years with the show.

Dapkus called for the creation of a fireworks committee before his departure to ensure the event’s continuity.

Since then, the show has been produced by Rhode Island-based Ocean State Pyrotechnics. Bransfield credited the Fireworks Committee with working hard to keep the annual celebration alive.

“It’s just a nice tradition to celebrate the independence of our country,” Bransfield said. “I think our families, from very young to those in their senior years, enjoy this celebration.”

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Those interested in becoming part of the Fireworks Committee can contact Hoy at 860-685-1265. Donations may be sent to the Portland Police Department, 265 Main St, Portland, CT 06480. Checks should be made payable to Portland Fireworks.

# General Government Budget Fails Again in East Hampton

by Elizabeth Regan

The second referendum on the 2018-19 general government budget has failed again, amid continued strife between education advocates who want more funding for education and town officials committed to keeping the rising mill rate in check.

With roughly 16.26 percent of eligible voters turning out, the \$15.17 million town spending plan was voted down 787 to 617.

The 170-vote margin is more decisive than the last referendum on the general government budget. That vote was so close it forced a recount, which ultimately showed that the question failed by five votes.

The education budget, presented as a separate question at referendum, passed on the first try by 125 votes.

The failed town budget would have represented a \$955,460, or 6.72 percent, increase over the current budget.

Combined with the already-approved \$30.50 million education budget for a total 2018-19 budget of \$45.67 million, taxpayers would have been looking at a mill rate of 32.41 – an increase of 1.09 mills, or 3.48 percent, over the current mill rate.

The Town Council Tuesday voted to set a temporary mill rate at the current rate of 31.32 mills in the event that the general government budget failed. The preemptive move was made prior to the closing of the polls at 8 p.m.

Taxpayers will receive their tax bills by July 1, according to Finance Director Jeff Jylkka. If the budget is eventually approved with a mill rate increase, the town can either send out a supplemental tax bill or incorporate the increase into the second installment of tax bills in January. Jylkka said rolling it into the January installment is his department’s preference because it would save money and time.

Council Chairwoman Melissa Engel said Wednesday that the Republican council majority is feeling “very bullied right now” by social media posts and messages sent to elected officials by education supporters who say they will continue to vote against the general government budget until some or all of an unexpected increase in revenue from the state is directed to the schools.

But she’s also weary of making further cuts to an already lean budget. She said ideas that have been “bantered around” so far – including reducing library hours from six days a week to three days a week and eliminating summer at-

tendants and lifeguards at Sears Park – are not palatable to her.

According to Engel, officials should take their time looking at the budget and the unique circumstances that have arisen in this budget cycle before sending the spending plan back to referendum.

Now that the council has set a temporary mill rate, Engel said the town will have enough money to cover expenses as they come in – though she acknowledged capital projects would have to be put on hold between July 1 and the eventual passing of a budget.

“The very few voters that came out – and it was disappointingly low – are concerned about this budget,” she said. “So we need to look at it. There’s no reason to rush. Let’s make the right choice at the right time.”

## The No Vote

Resident Tania Sones, a former Republican Board of Education member and parent of children in the school system, outlined her reasons for voting no on the Facebook page “Let’s Talk East Hampton” the day before the referendum with the hashtag “voteyourconscience.”

“I voted ‘no’ for the budget being presented because I do not find it to be a balanced budget that will move the town of East Hampton forward,” she wrote.

She shared similar concerns with the *Rivereast* on Wednesday.

One main objection held by Sones and other education advocates revolves around the unexpected announcement last month of an additional \$716,415 in education cost sharing (ECS) funds from the state. Since the announcement came too late to incorporate into the proposed budget at referendum, it remained unclear to voters what officials would do with the extra money.

Between the initial failure of the town budget at referendum and its second defeat this week, members of the finance board and council agreed to use the extra ECS money to pay outright for teacher laptops and student mini-laptops at a cost of \$117,000 instead of leasing them. That figure represents a \$5,000 cut compared to the Board of Education capital budget request for equipment and docking stations.

They voted to use the rest of the unexpected state funding to drive down the mill rate.

Sones said the finance board members and councilors should have made an additional appropriation to send some of the increase back

to education.

“The board deliberately chose not to use any of the funding to go back, and yes, I disagree. I do not feel confident this board sees education as a worthwhile investment,” Sones said.

Sones would like to see the extra education funding used to restore the eight teaching positions cut in the approved Board of Education budget. Three of the affected teachers were laid off; the remaining positions were left unfilled after teachers retired or were shuffled around elsewhere in the district.

## The ECS question

Board of Education Chairman Christopher Goff and Superintendent of Schools Paul K. Smith on Wednesday expressed differing opinions on whether sending a portion of the extra funding from the state back to the schools would be able to save teaching positions.

Goff said the district is already planning for the upcoming school year based on the approved 2018-19 budget, which was crafted under the assumption that the town would receive less ECS funding than it budgeted for the previous year.

“If we had known there was ECS funding prior to the referendum, that would definitely have changed everything. But it didn’t,” he said.

The three teachers identified for layoffs based on the education budget have already secured employment elsewhere, he said.

That means it’s unlikely the district would be able to retain those teachers even if more funding was directed to the schools, according to Goff.

With uncertainty surrounding the general government budget and ECS funding likely to continue into the summer, Goff said he didn’t think there would be a large pool of qualified candidates still looking for work.

However, Smith disagreed. Smith said he spoke with members of the finance board when the additional ECS funding was first announced to request that a portion be applied to the schools.

He said using \$170,000 of the \$716,415 in ECS money could cover a third grade teacher and a fifth grade teacher. He said there is a “bountiful crop of young elementary teachers” still looking for jobs.

“I would love to avoid third grade and fifth grade having 26, 27 students per class,” he said.

It would not be difficult even as late as Au-

gust to hire the elementary teachers, according to Smith.

Finance Director Jeff Jylkka on Wednesday disputed the idea that the increased ECS funding should go to the schools.

The ECS grant is administered on the general government side of the budget. With the unexpected increase included, the town is slated to receive \$7.14 million in ECS funds in the coming fiscal year.

Jylkka emphasized that the town, in accepting the grant money, is legally obligated to spend \$7.14 million on education. The rest of the education budget – in this case, \$23.36 million – is funded by taxpayers.

“If ECS went from \$7 million to \$10 million next year, it doesn’t mean the Board of Education would get an extra \$3 million,” he said.

Conversely, the town would need to generate more tax revenue in the event of a decrease in ECS funding. That’s what happened in the middle of the current fiscal year when Gov. Dannel P. Malloy held back \$1.2 million in education funding to the town.

The decrease was largely mitigated by a tax sale held as part of the town’s aggressive effort to recoup back taxes.

“Nobody [on the school side] came out and said ‘Oh, I guess we have to cut our budget by a million,’” Jylkka said. “It just means we have to kick in more tax dollars. It’s got to go both ways.”

## The Next Step

The Board of Finance is scheduled to meet Monday for their regular meeting. Members will discuss the general government budget at that time, according to Jylkka.

The finance board is charged in the town charter with approving a new budget, which must then be sent to the council before heading back to town meeting and referendum.

Board of Finance Chairman Michael Rose, a Republican, said Tuesday night that he does not view the failure of a general government budget as a sign that voters want more cuts.

“I think it’s probably a signal from people that they want money added back in to some sort of supplemental appropriation for the Board of Education,” he said.

He said it will ultimately be up to the full finance board to interpret the voters’ intent in voting ‘no.’

# Marlborough Construction Projects Continue

by Allison Lazur

There are several capital projects on the town's agenda, and up next is construction on the North Main Street Bridge culverts, as well replacement of the Jones Hollow Bridge over Blackledge River.

At two separate public informational meetings this week, Town Planner Peter Hughes, along with representatives from the Department of Transportation (DOT) and design engineers, were present to answer residents' questions and discuss the impact of the projects on the town.

The North Main Street Bridge culvert repair project was presented first, on Monday night.

Construction on the culverts – located just beyond Park Road and near Austin Drive – is scheduled to begin in less than a month.

First Selectman Amy Traversa told the *Rivereast* construction will start July 3 and conclude on August 11.

She explained that residents will be impacted through "minor detours," utilizing 1-mile to 1.5-mile loops off of North Main Street to navigate around the construction.

One of the detours takes advantage of Hodge Road, Edstrom Road and then Chapman Road. The other detour uses Park Road to Stage Harbor and then comes out on West Road, she said.

Traversa added that the affected neighborhoods "should expect increased traffic and increased police presence."

The outlined detours will not be able to accommodate trucks because the roads are smaller and curved.

She also said Hughes is working on obtaining notice to inform drivers that Exit 12 is closed to trucks.

Traversa disclosed that the contractor initially projected a need for two separate closures, each lasting 30 to 35 days, but recently decided there will only be one closure lasting 30 days.

"Efficiency, efficiency, efficiency, Traversa said. "I love it."

The culvert replacement will cost roughly \$336,000, she said.

Funds from the current year budget, town aid road (TAR) funds and money from the 2018-19 budget have all contributed to the final cost.

The good news is portions of the bridge do not need to be replaced, according to Traversa. "The actual abutments that touch the water are in good shape," she said.

But the concrete on the bridge itself – located right above the culverts – as well as the roadway will be "peeled back" and restored, she added.

A later undertaking that won't affect residents until spring 2020 is the Jones Hollow

Bridge construction, with a completion date of fall 2020.

Hughes told residents at Tuesday's information meeting that the bridge will be closed for six to seven months.

While the bridge is closed, residents will be detoured from Jones Hollow Road to a 4-mile alternate route.

The detour resorts to Finley Hill Road, Marlborough Road, Bailey Street, Hebron Avenue and Murphy Road, with portions of the route running through Hebron and Glastonbury, Hughes said.

He explained that 145 letters were sent to those who would be impacted and added "We are going to keep the outreach going."

Dennis Garceau, design engineer from GM2 Associates, delivered an in-depth presentation on the specifics of the current bridge and proposed plan for the future bridge.

The current bridge – built in 1929 and reconstructed in 1986 – has an overall length of 34 feet and a curb-to-curb width of approximately 30 feet, Garceau said.

The proposed design reflects a 60-foot bridge length and two 11-foot lanes, as well as two 3-foot shoulders.

The guardrail will also be upgraded to meet crash testing standards, Garceau said.

The current bridge has "numerous cracks" in the concrete T-beams, as well as "heavy cracks" in the abutment.

However, DOT Project Manager Priti Bhardwaj chimed in to clarify that "residents should rest assured" knowing that the bridge is checked every two years by DOT for safety and will be checked again next year.

The total project is expected to cost \$1.78 million with 80 percent, or \$1.42 million, paid through federal funds.

The town will be responsible for 20 percent – or \$360,000 – of the project.

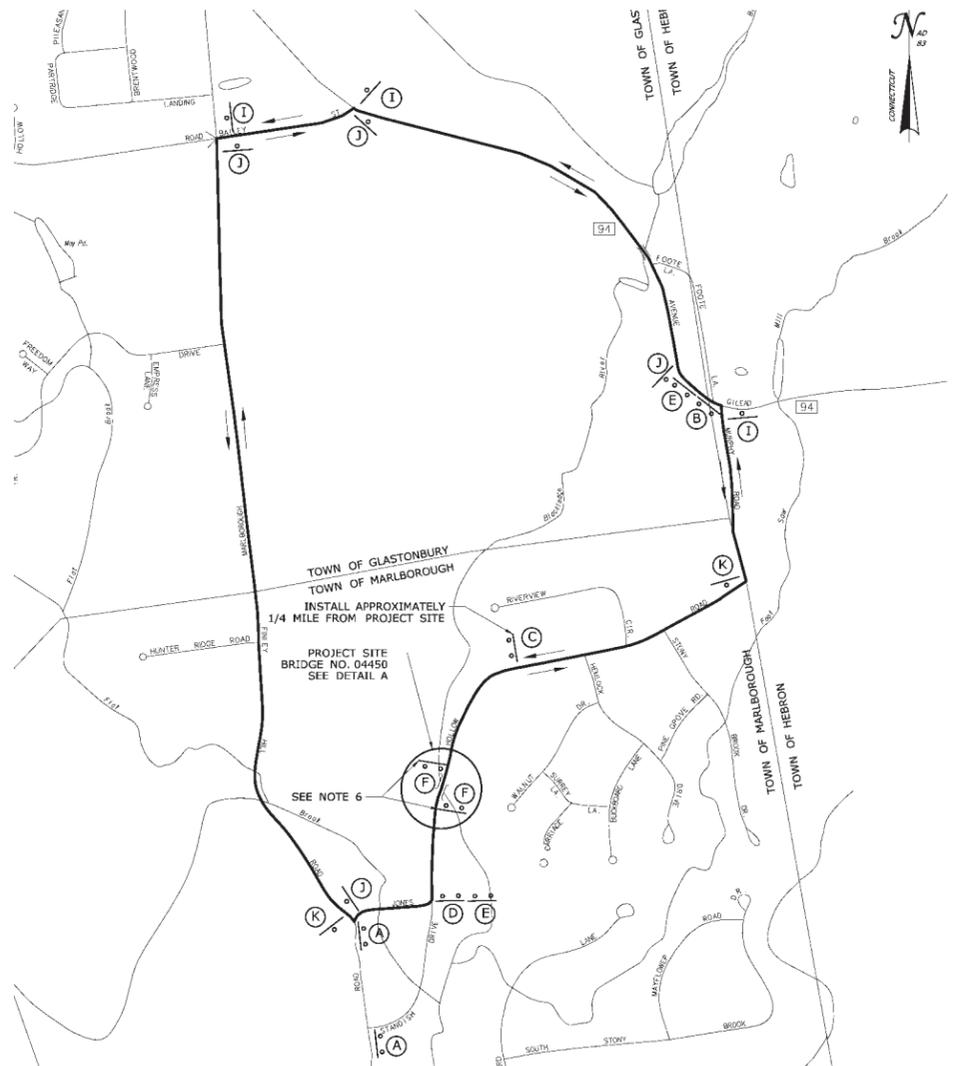
Hughes said the "town funds are already in place through taxes" and have been appropriated over the past three years.

Garceau explained that "after tonight, GM2 [Associates] goes to finalizing the design of the bridge."

The new bridge will have a life span of 75 years and will "minimize environmental and property impacts," Garceau said.

Although the new bridge will have long term positive advantages, a few residents expressed their immediate concerns during the construction phase.

Those who spoke out were primarily concerned with how emergency services and buses



**Construction on the North Main Street Bridge culverts is scheduled to begin July 3 with anticipated minor detours. However, the Jones Hollow Bridge construction – slated to begin in spring 2020 – will reroute residents from Jones Hollow Road to a 4-mile detour through parts of Hebron and Glastonbury.**

would reach impacted streets.

Hughes explained that the town will rely on mutual aid from Hebron and acknowledged that buses to Marlborough Elementary will definitely be affected, but said most of the construction will be done during the summer in order to minimize that impact.

Traversa assured residents there would be additional meetings prior to the start of construction so that all questions are answered.

She also encouraged residents to reach out

to her and Hughes with any concerns in the meantime.

"It's important for those of you who are going to be most affected by this to keep in contact with us; we want to address the concerns. It's an enormous inconvenience, but it's something we need to do."

A separate repair project on Fawn Brook Bridge was the subject of an informational meeting on May 29. The project is slated to close the bridge for seven months in 2020.

# Marlborough BOF Debates What to Do With Windfall

by Allison Lazur

Through the budget season Marlborough was faced with the decisions of where to make cuts at the town and school levels and exactly how much to cut. Now, the town is faced with a new dilemma – what to do with the unanticipated \$378,019 in revenue that will be coming from the state.

The town already passed its \$24.63 million 2018-19 budget at a referendum. The Board of Finance set the mill rate at 36.52 mills. Cuts totaling \$287,065 have been made from town and school capital. And \$563,634 of the \$663,634 surplus from the 2016-17 fiscal year has been deposited into the undesignated fund balance, with the remaining \$100,000 used to offset the tax rate.

However, the budget chronicles continued at Wednesday night's finance board meeting when Board of Finance Chairman Doug Knowlton revealed that the revenue numbers factored into the approved 2018-19 budget were lower than what was passed by the legislature last month.

The majority of Marlborough's unanticipated \$378,019 revenue increase stems from Education Cost Sharing (ECS) funds, which were restored by the legislature.

"The legislature passed their budget in the wee hours of the night the day after we passed our budget, so we did not have the opportunity to include these figures in any of our calculations," Knowlton said. "We built our budget with our understanding at the time."

The 2018-19 budget was based on figures

calculated "post holdbacks," Knowlton said. The term "holdbacks" refers to mid-year cuts to education funding made by Gov. Dannel P. Malloy late last year.

Knowlton told the rest of the finance board there are several options on the table for the revenue money: deposit it into the undesignated fund balance, use the money to offset the mill rate further, reverse the cuts, or do nothing and leave the amount as a surplus for the 2018-19 fiscal year.

"I'm trying to be totally transparent about what we've got and what our choices are," Knowlton said.

If the finance board were to restore the cuts – totaling \$278,000 – to the town and school budget, the town would still be left with the question of what to do with the remaining \$91,000.

The option of restoring the cuts would also have to go to a public hearing and then a town meeting, Knowlton explained.

First Selectman Amy Traversa spoke at Wednesday's meeting to advise finance board members to deposit the money into the undesignated fund balance because of concern over the possibility of more holdbacks from Malloy or a future governor.

"I made the cuts after they were requested; we're willing to live by those cuts. We made choices. If we need to later on come back and seek additional funds that's something we could do, but I would encourage you to put [the

money] to the side," she said.

Finance board Vice Chairman Susan Lesser agreed with Traversa's proposal while also raising the idea of using the money to reduce taxes.

"I think if we have an opportunity to lower the tax rate, I think we should lower it or leave that money and do nothing and have it go into the undesignated fund because we still need to build that up," Lesser said.

The 2018-19 mill rate approved by the finance board last month represents an increase of 1.06 mills over the current year.

Other members of the board, including Secretary Ken Hjulstrom and Alternate Liz Gorgoglione, voiced opinions in favor of restoring funds to some of the major capital items in the school and town budgets.

"I think we are looking at a rare opportunity where we can maybe put a little of that money back into the budgets," Gorgoglione said.

However, Lesser and Alternate Deb Bourbeau disagreed with restoring the slashed funds.

"I think we need to start adopting a philosophy in this town that if you get a little extra money, you don't have to spend – you can save it," Lesser said.

Gorgoglione added, "I agree with adopting the philosophy, but I think we've done a very good job this season with not spending too much and depositing money into the undesignated fund balance."

While the conversations among the board entertained all possible options, the board made a final decision to take no action.

"If we do something with it, it will take a motion. If there is no motion at this time, we just wait and see what happens. We don't have to take a vote to do nothing," Knowlton said.

He also explained that with no action the money will exist in the account and result in a larger surplus next year.

The board agreed to revisit the matter at a future meeting after all members have had time to ponder the choices.

# Pruned Tree Leads to Apology in Marlborough

by Allison Lazur

After resident Paul Cullen's wife Michelle passed away in 2012, he subsequently received approval from the cemetery sexton, Violet Schwarzman to plant a Dwarf Shirazz Japanese Maple tree at her gravesite.

As reported by the *Rivereast* last week, the tree was severely pruned in May by Marlborough Cemetery Committee Chairman Kristine Hudock which angered Cullen and prompted him to seek restitution.

Since then, the town and cemetery committee have taken steps towards rectifying the situation.

After press time last Thursday, Hudock called Cullen to apologize and work out the details of replacing the tree, Cullen told the *Rivereast* Monday.

Cullen said he thought the apology was "heartfelt" and that Hudock agreed to let him locate a new tree and reimburse him for the cost – if that was what he preferred.

Cullen said he has been on the hunt for a new tree and – based on what an arborist has advised – he plans to wait until the fall to plant a new Dwarf Shirazz Japanese Maple.

First Selectmen Amy Traversa also reached out to Cullen by mailing a letter of apology, which he received Monday evening.

In the letter, Traversa states, "I am deter-

mined to rectify the damage that was done."

She also invited Cullen to meet with her and the committee to discuss how to "make proper amends" and "find out how we can do better in the future."

Traversa also called Cullen Tuesday evening to confirm the letter was received and offer her apologies.

Cullen said he is "still looking for a change in the way the committee operates" and plans on meeting with Traversa and the committee in the next few weeks.

While the rules of the cemetery committee have changed over the years, as well as the active or inactive status of the committee at any given time, Schwarzman said she stands by the permission she granted to Cullen.

The current cemetery rules and regulations – adopted in 2017 – state that "no trees or shrubs are to be planted by any individual," but "existing trees and shrubs may remain, if current owners maintain them."

Schwarzman says the tree was "grandfathered in" to be allowed.

The rules and regulations from 2001 state that "trees, shrubs, bushes or obstacles of any type are not permitted on any lot" and that "the sexton reserves the right to remove such articles that may hinder the opening of the graves, the

proper maintenance of the cemetery, or in the sexton's judgment shall seem inappropriate."

Schwarzman said because Cullen purchased two extra plots she made an exception to the rule and allowed him to plant the dwarf tree.

"He purchased [two] extra plots, so the tree wouldn't be an issue," she said. "I figured why not allow him, since it's not like I could bury a body there."

While she has never served on the cemetery committee, resident Marilyn Murphy – who has lived in town for 60 years – said she has seen the role of the committee and sexton develop over the years, and defended Schwarzman's 2012 decision. She said exceptions to the cemetery rules and regulations were made as long as what was being planted "was a beautification and not a detriment."

She further added, "I agree with the rules and I agree you have to enforce rules, but they did not have the right to do that without talking to [Cullen]."

"The tree should've been cut back with some common sense" and "by someone with an arborist license," Murphy said.

The Dwarf Japanese Maple was also home to wind chimes which Cullen added to the tree in 2014, to mark what would have been

Michelle's 50th birthday. The whereabouts of the chimes were unknown last week.

However, Traversa told the *Rivereast* Monday that the wind chimes were located by former Cemetery Committee Chairman Lindalee Favry and have since been restrung and handed off to Traversa to be reunited with the Cullen family.

Cullen confirmed the discovered wind chimes were the ones he hung on his wife's tree.

The Cemetery Committee's next meeting is scheduled to take place at 9 a.m. on June 21 at town hall. Traversa said in an email this week that she will be asking the cemetery committee to "clarify the modern role of the sexton" by looking at town charter, ordinances and state statutes.

She added that "a new 'job description' for the role will then need to be reviewed by legal counsel and by the Board of Selectmen for eventual adoption."

Traversa said she could not definitively say whether or not it was within Schwarzman's jurisdiction in 2012 to grant permission to plant the tree in the first place.

"This situation has certainly brought to light the need for more clarity," Traversa said.

# \$11.18 Million Budget Passed at Referendum in Andover

by Sloan Brewster

Andover has a budget for the 2018-19 fiscal year.

The \$11.18 million spending package passed at referendum Tuesday by a 200-136 vote. The budget is \$558,129, or 9.75 percent, below the current year's budget – but represents a tax increase of 4.5 percent, bringing the mill rate to 33.95 or 1.45 mills above the current year.

When asked why the mill rate would go up by 4.5 percent while expenditures are proposed to go down by 9.75 percent, Daniel Warren, Board of Finance chairman, explained the budget does not include expenditures and corresponding revenues from grant and special revenue funds, whereas the current year's budget does. Had the same accounting been done in the current year's budget, spending would have been \$11.12 million, which is \$617,800 less than the \$11.74 million shown in the actual budget.

The accounting change was made on the recommendation of the town's auditor, Warren said. The auditor advised the town not to mix grant and special revenue funds with the general fund budget.

In addition, in the current year, more was taken from fund reserves to offset tax increases than in the proposed budget, Warren said.

There were also two advisory questions on

Tuesday's ballot. To the question on the whether the town's budget was too high or too low, 192 said it was too high and 63 said too low. The second advisory question was about the Board of Education's budget, to which 154 said it was too high and 102 said it was too low.

First Selectman Robert Burbank said Wednesday he was glad the budget had passed.

"The budget is pretty tight for the town so I don't know what they would do to reduce it if they tried to reduce it further," he said.

As to the turnout, which Burbank said was "very low," he said that tends to be the case if people are satisfied.

Sixteen percent of eligible voters cast their ballots in the referendum.

"People tend to come out more against the budget then to vote for it," he said. "If people are dissatisfied then they will come out."

Burbank said he thinks residents recognize that while things are rough in the state the town is doing its best to manage spending.

Folks at the polls midday Tuesday were none too pleased with the budget and despite the fact that it ultimately passed all who spoke to the *Rivereast* said they voted against it.

Linda and Russ Holyfield said they have been living on town for 33 years and vote at every election.

"Our government was running fine with [former first selectman] Ed Turn and [current first selectman] Bob Burbank," Linda Holyfield said. Turn and Burbank "kept taxes down."

"Bob did an outstanding job," Russ Holyfield said.

The Holyfields said there were too many supervisory positions at the elementary school and that the town does not need a town administrator.

One of the hot-button issues talked about during this budget season was a proposal by the finance board to cut funding for the town's resident state trooper. However, in response to public outcry about losing the trooper, the board put \$187,000 in funding back into the budget to cover the position.

The Holyfields said Tuesday they were had mixed feelings about the trooper position. They said that while they understood why some were strongly in favor of funding it, they thought it was too high a price to pay for the services rendered.

"It's \$187,000 for the state trooper position and we only get eight hours a day," Russ Holyfield said. "We're spending a tremendous amount of money for a one-third position."

In emergency situations, the Andover Fire

Department responds within minutes, and calls to the state trooper's barracks are also quickly answered, the Holyfields said.

"For a little town with very little crime, I think we're getting very swelled heads," Linda Holyfield said.

She talked about taxes getting to high and said if they sell their three-bedroom house a family with four kids will come in and will be a drain on the school system.

Russ Holyfield talked about Andover having an aging population.

"You can't just keep raising taxes on people with fixed incomes," he said.

"We've seen [the town] grow a little bit but all of a sudden the change is not good," Linda Holyfield said.

Edward and Valerie Jurovaty also said they were concerned about taxes getting too high.

"We voted down the budget," Valerie Jurovaty said. "We are a very small town and we can't afford all this."

The Jurovatys have lived in town for 50 years, she said and taxes are making it hard to remain.

"It's going to be to the point where we can't afford to live here anymore," Valerie Jurovaty said. "We don't know what we're going to do, as much as we love Andover."

# Colchester Board of Finance Changes Bylaws

by Allison Lazur

A ruling by the Freedom of Information Commission (FOIC) at the end of April determined that the finance board violated the FOI Act – and as a result of this decision, the finance board unanimously voted to amend its bylaws last week.

The ruling states that the finance board failed to ensure the public could identify who was talking via speaker phone during a May 25, 2017, meeting. The acting chair for that meeting was board member Thomas Kane, as normal chairman Rob Tarlov was unable to attend. However, he and Board of Selectmen member Stan Soby later attended the meeting by telephone.

An FOI complaint filed by resident Deanna Bouchard days after the meeting prompted the involvement of the FOIC. While almost all of her allegations were dismissed, the FOIC did agree with her complaint regarding a failure by Kane to identify Tarlov and Soby participating via telephone.

At last week's Board of Finance meeting the board enacted a new bylaw stating "At the beginning of the meeting, the chairperson shall identify people attending by phone or other electronic means by first and last name. When there are multiple participants, each shall identify themselves before speaking."

Tarlov and Soby were on the phone at the same time during the 2017 meeting. Tarlov said it was "the first time in nine years more than

one person was on the phone" for a meeting.

Among Bouchard's other complaints was the allegation that an illegal meeting was held when the selectmen offered comments during the finance board meeting.

Although the FOIC's findings did not affirm that an illegal meeting had been held, the finance board decided to further include bylaws stating what is permitted from other board members during meetings.

The new bylaw states: "Members of the Board of Selectmen and Board of Education attending the Board of Finance meeting in person, by phone, or other electronic means are members of the public. As a courtesy to these two boards and because they often have information important to this board's business, at the discretion of the chairperson, their members will be permitted to comment outside of citizen's comments. They must be recognized by the chairperson and state their name and position before speaking."

Tarlov said he understood the confusion that arose from the May 25, 2017 meeting. He said he listened to an audio recording of that meeting, and the recording "made it sound like the meeting was hijacked and we want to make it clear in our bylaws that comments [from other members of other boards] are acceptable."

As a result of the ruling, the finance board was also ordered to attend FOI training, which took place yesterday, June 14, at Town Hall.

## Marlborough Police News

6/8: State Police said Jeffrey R. Gorham, 51, of 4 Smith St., East Hampton, was arrested and charged with speeding at 60 mph in a 30 mph zone, DUI and failure to drive right.

## Hebron Police News

6/4: State Police said Jayne M. Steele-Pantschenko, 47, of 6 Smith Farm Rd., Amston, was arrested and charged with risk of injury to a child and disorderly conduct.

## Colchester Police News

6/7: State Police said Jason L. Suprenant, 33, of 795 Norwich Ave., was arrested and charged with second-degree failure to appear.

6/8: Colchester Police said Heather Carpenter, 32, of 552 Goshen Hill Rd., Lebanon, was arrested and charged with DUI and improper turns.

6/8: State Police said Cody Houston, 21, of 59 Cannon Dr., Amston, was arrested and charged with violating probation.

6/8: State Police said Mikala Clark, 21, of 10 Wellswood Rd., Apt. 3, Hebron, was arrested and charged with second-degree failure to appear after turning herself in to State Police.

## Tailgate Stolen from Colchester Parking Lot

Colchester Police are investigating the theft of a tailgate from a Dodge Ram 2500.

At approximately 4:46 p.m. on June 6, police received report of a stolen tailgate from a brown Dodge Ram 2500. The Dodge was located in the service area parking lot of the

Troiano car dealership located on South Main Street, police said.

This investigation is currently active and anyone with information is asked to contact the Colchester Police.

## Three-Vehicle Collision Reported in Marlborough

State Police said a Ford truck crossed the center double yellow line, causing a three-vehicle crash on June 6.

At approximately 4:25 p.m., state police said a Mitsubishi Lancer driven by Nicholas A. Hill, 28, of 64 Russet Ln., Middletown and a Ford Explorer driven by Rodney L. McIntosh Jr., 28, of 6 General Lyon Rd., Eastford, were both traveling east on Route 66, just east of the intersection with Parker Road.

A Ford truck driven by Jarod M. McCarthy, 19, of 40 Hennequin Rd., Columbia, was traveling west on Route 66 when the truck veered left, crossing the double yellow line and into the eastbound travel lane.

Police said the Ford truck subsequently made contact with the left side of the Mitsubishi, as well as the left side of the Ford Explorer after traveling further into the eastbound lane.

Police said the collision forced the Ford Explorer off the shoulder and up a small embankment where the vehicle came to a final rest.

The passenger of the Ford Explorer, Matthew C. Castillo, 33, of Stickney Rd., Pomfret Center, had minor, visible lacerations to his right arm and hand, but refused medical attention, police said. However, McCarthy was transported by Marlborough Fire to Middlesex Hospital with possible injuries.

## East Hampton Police News

5/27: After an investigation into a one-car motor vehicle crash at the corner of Route 16 and Old Middletown Avenue, in which the operator left the scene, Joshua Yarrow, 22, of 140 Great Hill Pond Rd., was issued a summons for evading responsibility and failure to drive right, East Hampton Police said.

5/28: John Forbes IV, 31, of 48 Old Marlborough Rd., was arrested and charged with risk of injury to a minor, police said.

6/1: Kasandra Caron, 26, of 5 Mark Twain Dr., was taken into custody pursuant to an active warrant for her arrest, police said, and

charged with conspiracy to commit second-degree assault, police said.

6/7: Dustin Wilson, 28, of 32 Suffolk Dr., East Hartford turned himself in pursuant to a warrant for his arrest. Wilson was charged with risk of injury to a minor, third-degree assault and second-degree reckless endangerment, police said.

From May 28-June 3, officers responded to 15 medical calls, zero motor vehicle crashes and nine alarms, and made 20 traffic stops, police said.

*From the Editor's Desk*

## Observations & Ruminations

by Mike Thompson

To live in one of the *Rivereast* towns is to know small-town life. Let's face it, there are no cities here; I believe Colchester has the largest population of the six communities, with a whopping 15,000 folks.

Most people in small towns like ours, I've noticed, like the bucolic nature. They enjoy the decided lack of hustle and bustle, the fact a police car or ambulance racing down the street is an uncommon enough sight as to pique curiosity, and that stoplights are few and far between.

It's small-town life and people are proud of it, and are generally pretty good-natured about it. They know they don't exactly live in Boston, or even West Hartford, but they like it that way.

Sometimes, though, jokes about small-town living don't always go over well.

According to an article in last Saturday's *Journal Inquirer*, contract negotiations between the Town of Suffield and its police union broke down following a joke involving cows.

During a May 15 meeting to hammer out contract details, the *Ji* said, the police union's president, Officer Justin Fuller, stressed the dangers of police work even in a small town by reminding town officials that Suffield police officers each day come to work wearing bulletproof vests and carrying rifles.

The town's labor lawyer, Lisa Lazarek, then asked if the vests were to "to protect [officers] from unruly cows?"

Yup – unruly cows.

Needless to say, that did not go over well with the lawyer for the police union, Eric Brown, who later wrote a letter to the Board of Selectmen, the police chief and the Police Commission. In it, according to the *Ji*, Brown wrote Lazarek's comment "showed a complete lack of respect and understanding for the work police perform. It was filled with contempt. It was demeaning. It was frankly

intolerable."

First Selectwoman Melissa Mack was at the meeting and, Brown wrote in his letter, didn't interrupt Lazarek or apologize for her – and that, he said, just made things worse. So, Brown and the union decided to leave the meeting.

Negotiations haven't resumed since. The current contract between the town and the police union expires at the end of June.

Mack later sent her own letter to the Police Commission, each officer in town, and her fellow selectmen, and in it defended Lazarek's crack as a "failed attempt at levity in what by its very nature is a contentious environment."

That may very well be true. I don't know Lazarek and I wasn't there and I can't say if the comment was made with malice, but I'll give her the benefit of the doubt. Still, it doesn't excuse what she said.

Big city or small town, police officers take their work very seriously. They don't take their duties lightly. There's a whole lot more there than defending against "unruly cows."

I'm not sure I'd have halted negotiations over this, but I can understand the slight. Hopefully discussions of a new contract can resume soon.

\* \* \*

So here's a delightful exchange, between a pair of friends we'll call Tom and Jerry.

Tom: "Have you heard of Murphy's Law?"

Jerry: "Yeah."

Tom: "What is it?"

Jerry: "If something can go wrong, it will go wrong."

Tom: "Right. Have you heard of Cole's Law?"

Jerry: "No, what is it?"

Tom: "Thinly-sliced cabbage."

\* \* \*

See you next week.

# Obituaries

## Portland

### John H. Schufer

John H. Schufer, 84, husband of Mert (Marjorie Hanna) Schufer of Portland passed Sunday, June 10, after fighting a courageous battle due to a motor vehicle accident. He was born in Portland in 1934, the son of Albert and Anna (Quirk) Schufer.

He was co-owner of John & Bob's Garage for 38 years with his brother-in-law, Bob Hanna, until his retirement.

A loving and devoted husband of Marjorie Schufer for 64 years, he is survived by his wife, brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law: Ardys Schufer, Irene Nichols, Robert Hanna, Carol Baretta, William and Kim Hanna and by his loving niece Debbie (Carl) Johnson and other nieces and nephews.

John is predeceased by his brothers and sisters, Marian Schufer, Elizabeth and her husband Richard Walleit, Albert Schufer, Shirley and husband Frank Bednarz, Edward and wife Lillian Schufer and Theresa and her husband Edward Bednarz.

John was an active lifetime member of the Middletown Elks Lodge 771 and a lifetime member of the Portland Volunteer Fire Department. He was a member of the Second Congregational Church of Middle Haddam, a member of St. Mary Church in Portland and a 38-year member of the Connecticut Towing Association.

John and Mert loved to travel on cruises, to dinner parties, and spend time at their homes in Florida and Old Saybrook. They were regulars at the Middletown Elks Lodge Thursday night dinners.

Funeral services will be held Saturday, June 16, at 10:30 a.m., at Biega Funeral Home, 3 Silver St., Middletown. Burial will be held at the Union Hill Cemetery, Middle Haddam. Friends call at the Biega Funeral Home today, June 15, from 5-7 p.m.

Memorial contributions may be made in John's memory to the Portland Fire Department, P.O. Box 71, Portland, CT or the Hartford Hospital Intensive Care Unit.

To share memories or express condolences online, visit [biegafuneralhome.com](http://biegafuneralhome.com).



## Hebron

### Lorraine Jane Thoma

Lorraine Jane (Taylor) Thoma of Hebron went home to her Lord peacefully Saturday, June 9, with her loving family at her side, at the age of 81. Born Oct. 31, 1936, in Wilkes-Barre, Pa., she was the daughter of the late Glen and Lucille (Henry) Taylor.

Mrs. Thoma taught elementary school for many years. Upon her marriage to Merle Thoma in 1969, she moved to Hebron from Pennsylvania. Lorraine was a member of Faith Baptist Church in Manchester and the Colchester Bible Baptist Church in later years. She had been longtime Sunday School teacher and enjoyed gardening and spending time with her family.

In addition to her loving husband of nearly 50 years, she leaves two children and their spouses, Lucie and Allyn Tarbell of Columbia and Harold and Jessica Thoma of Lebanon; six grandchildren, David, Jonathan, Samantha, Jason, Mary and Lucas; and numerous extended family and friends.

She was predeceased by her brother, Glen Taylor.

The family received guests Thursday, June 14, at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester. The funeral will assemble starting at 9:30 a.m. today, June 15, at the funeral home, before a chapel service at 10 a.m. Those attending are asked to wear something bright and cheery. She will be laid to rest privately in Thrashers Cemetery, Dushore, Pa.

Those who wish may make memorial contributions to the Colchester Bible Baptist Church, 38 Chestnut Hill Rd., Colchester, CT 06415 or to Faith Baptist, 52 Lake St., Manchester, CT 06040.

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



## Portland

### Nancy B. Coman

Nancy B. Coman, 85, of Portland, wife of the late Herbert W. Coman Jr., died peacefully in her home on Saturday, June 9. Nancy was born in Hartford CT to the late Charles and Elizabeth Brink on May 20th 1933.

Nancy is survived by her daughters, Beth Rau (Dennis), Deborah Rooth (Curtis), and sons Mark Coman (Ilene), John Coman (Sandy), Matthew Coman; Sisters Maureen Lawlor and MaryEllen Mozdierz; 8 grandchildren: Dennis Rau Jr, Amanda McKenna, Jennifer, Scooter, and Kelsey Rooth, Thomas and Nick Coman and Luke Coman; seven great-grandchildren, David, Claire, Grace, Billy, Katie-Faith, Ellie and Brianna.

She is preceded by a son, Scott Charles; granddaughter, Katie Rau; and sister, Betty Jacobucci.

Nancy was a graduate of St. Francis Hospital School of Nursing in 1954. She worked as an RN in a many different fields of nursing. She retired as the director of nurses at Elmcrest Psychiatric Institute in the early 1980s. Nancy's passion for nursing was passed on through her family as many are working in the healthcare profession.

After her retirement and raising their children Nancy and Herb spent many wonderful years wintering in Delray Beach, Fla., with special friends Nate and Elsie. It was there she honed her talent for cooking. She was a great chef and was selfless in providing culinary delights to family, friends and neighbors.

The family wishes to express our gratitude for all the special people who provided care with love and compassion to our Mom; especially Dolly, from visiting Angels, Julio, grandson Thomas and best friend and sister MaryEllen.

Calling hours were Tuesday, June 12, at Portland Memorial Funeral Home, 231 Main St., Portland. A Mass of Christian Burial was held Wednesday, June 13, in St. Mary Church, Portland. Burial was private in the Coman Cemetery in North Grosvenordale.

In lieu of flowers memorial contributions can be made to the Connecticut Veterans Association, 287 West St., Rocky Hill, CT 06067 or online at [ct.gov/ctva](http://ct.gov/ctva).

## Portland

### Elaine F. Ericson

Elaine F. Ericson, 76, of Portland, passed away Tuesday, June 12, at Middlesex Hospital. She was born April 1, 1944, to the late Edwin and Marion (Kavanaugh) Ericson.

A lifelong resident of Portland, she attended Portland school and was a member of St. Mary church. She worked at Graystone Rest Home in Portland for 40 years. She enjoyed doing jigsaw puzzles, reading, playing bingo, and for many years bowled with the Portland Women's League.

She is survived by a sister, Jo-Ann Leary of Barefoot Bay, Fla.; several nieces and nephews including Colleen Briggs (Tom), Michael Leary (Debbie), Brian Leary (Amie), Karen Hanna (Rob) all of Portland, also Kristen Delrusso (Sam) of Moosup. She also leaves several great nieces and nephews and a very special cousin, Carol Kapitke.

Elaine was predeceased by her twin sister, Eleanor Csere, in 2014.

A private graveside service will be held at the Swedish Cemetery, Portland, at the convenience of the family.

The Portland Memorial Funeral Home, 231 Main St., Portland is in charge of arrangements.