

Willey Building Rates Up, Library May Be Charged For Use

by Will Walters

CABOT — There are two public hearings set for February 27, one for the Hazard Mitigation Plan and another for Town Meeting 2017. With the town voting on all of these articles by Australian ballot, there will be more articles for discussion at the hearing. The select board will provide further information on the time and place as the date draws closer, but the public should mark their calendars for this important date.

The Town Meeting article for the zoning and planning commission will have an amendment on securing rates to houses. The select board will be voting on January 27. Karen Deacy will add an amendment to the proposed warranty. The amendment will allow handicapped entryways, ramps, and other necessary access improvements to be approved without a variance in certain situations. Currently, especially in the village, required accessibility modifications need a variance which can be a lengthy process. In

situations where a project does not impact the road right of way and can minimize impact to the select board, it should be approved with out a lengthy process. The planning commission voted at its December meeting.

Deacy said the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission will do an inventory of the town's roads which will be a digital program on a tablet.

The select board approved a two-percent increase for Utility Partners to operate the water and wastewater systems.

There should be better lighting in the auditorium of the Willey Building with the replacement of 22 lights. The building had new storm guards installed on the roof. The reconstruction of Town Clerk Betty Ritter, the rates for the Willey Building were increased and the board, effective January 1. The refundable cleaning deposit increased from \$75 to \$100. The daily use for the auditorium increased from \$150 to \$300. **SEE RATES, 2**



Photo by Vanessa Fournier
 Hardwick experienced zero or below zero temperatures from December 26 to January 7. The coldest actual temperature recorded was -30 on January 7. Chimney smoke could be seen throughout town as homes and businesses stayed warm. This photo was taken on Cottage Street.

Road Conditions Raise Temperatures

by June Pichel Cook

GREENSBORO — Winter delights some but brings misery for others, leading to a heated select board meeting at the closing of the year. A tractor trailer stuck at the intersection of Garvin Hill Road and Jasper Hill Farm Road and a mail to town officials about sanding routes set the stage for a contentious exchange.

A rumor that the board was retaining sand usage on roads was adamantly refuted by Vice Chair Peter Romano. Chair Susan Wood said the board is trying to coordinate with business owners of Jasper Hill Farms (JHF) and Hill Farms. However, when deliveries by tractor trailers are made, which accommodating town residents and school buses.

In a phone interview, Wood said, "We are working with Jasper Hill and the Board to come up with solutions that work for everyone. We are making sure we are taking care of our roads for everyone." On December 14, Wood and Romano received an email from Massimo Kober, JHF forwarding a rumor in town that the board had restricted the road crew to reduce

the amount of sand applied to roads." Kober stated, "Garvin Hill Road was hazardous for much of the day and we had an 18-wheeler stuck at TH41 for two hours, waiting for a sander. Chuck Hill family arrived to sand the Town Road."

Romano responded to the e-mail: "The select board has made no such change in policy or suggested anything of that nature to the road crew. We included our foreman, Tom Camara in this response."

At the board meeting in December, discussion focused on the competence of the driver of the tractor trailer driver who had gotten stuck. It was noted the tractor truck didn't have winter tires. The driver, who was unidentified, had the assistance of someone from JHF to get the vehicle unstuck. The driver had stopped at the town garage seeking assistance on removing the chains.

Romano noted in a phone interview, "We have fuel trucks, grain trucks, milk trucks, and delivery trucks come and going and I've heard only one time there was a problem. It is not like our roads are not negotiable if you have people

SEE ROAD, 2

Town Buildings Struggle to Keep Heat on

by Michael Bielawski

HARDWICK — According to town manager Jon Jewett, the town and local businesses have struggled to maintain sufficient supplies of heating fuel and avoid damages to infrastructure amid the latest deep freeze.

"A lot of people have been struggling through this cold weather to keep up," Jewett said. "I think the fuel companies have been struggling and I think people have been struggling to pay for this, too." Presently, there appears to be a significant threat when maintaining adequate heating fuel levels is a challenge. Water pipes will freeze and then burst when the heat goes out, resulting in further flooding and water damage. Jewett said one way to avoid this is to get an auto-refill plan set up with the supplier.

Since the average insurance claim for water damage resulting from frozen or broken pipes is \$15,000. But even when auto-delivery set up, mistakes can happen. The Memorial Building almost ran out of fuel on December 27 to 30 and nearly broke for the 31st. Lights flickered as the strain on the electric grid grew stronger and the temperature in the building dropped down to 40 degrees Fahrenheit at one point.

Jewett said he spoke with one of the workers at Road River, Inc., which is where the town has contracted to purchase heating oil at \$1.80 per gallon. He said the company is new to working with

Hardwick and they were using seasonal drivers who may not be as familiar with the buildings and where the tanks are, and some tanks were skipped a few times.

"That's a major issue and I think the fuel dealer companies know that," said Jewett. "They were very apologetic to us. We are on automatic delivery."

In addition to the Memorial Building and The Granite building, Jewett said there was another building by the North Main Street bridge that was having issues with the cold and the Depot, home to the

Frozen

by Doug McClure

HARDWICK — After a frigid end to 2017, 2018 began with brutally cold temperatures. The official reporting station in Ferrisville broke records for four consecutive days on December 27 to 30 and nearly broke for the 31st. Lights flickered as the strain on the electric grid grew stronger and the temperature in the building dropped down to 40 degrees Fahrenheit at one point.

SEE FROZEN, 2



Photo by Doug McClure
 The studio of the Vermont Glass Workshop on Mainville Road caught fire on December 29. Co-owner Harry Besetti said the fire was caused by a propane tank that was not properly secured. Friends are helping him raise money to assist him in rebuilding their business.

Vermont Glass Workshop Studio Catches Fire

by Doug McClure

HARDWICK — The studio of the Vermont Glass Workshop on Mainville Road caught fire on December 29. According to co-owner Harry Besetti, he was doing year-end accounting and trying to keep the studio warm using a space heater. He went to get a coffee and when he returned, the studio was in flames. "It wasn't anything related to glassmaking," he says. "I called 911 and Hardwick Fire was here in 15 minutes and an incredibly short amount of time. Things like this

you lose track of time, but they were here very quickly. Thanks to the well-trained response of Hardwick Fire, we didn't lose the entire building."

All their inventory was lost in the blaze, but only half of the building burned. No one was hurt in the fire. Besetti says that insurance should cover a good bit of the damage, but won't cover everything and cannot make up for the loss of inventory. Most of their equipment is salvageable. Harry and Wendy Besetti have been in business since 1984. Besetti says he is overwhelmed by

the support they've received since the fire.

"We are incredibly grateful for the supporting of support," he says. "Someone in our rebuilding, we would like to honor them. It has been a lot of very good people, and that's something you don't find everywhere else."

Besetti says their next steps are to "re-group and rebuild." Friends of the Besettis from New Hampshire have organized a GoFundMe campaign to help with that process. For information, search for "Vermont Glass" at gofundme.com.

Alternative School Structure Proposal Garners Little Input

by June Pichel Cook

CRAFTSBURY — School District 3 is exploring for an Act 46, Section 9 alternative school structure, instead of meeting with other districts, won't know the outcome of their plans until November. The Orleans Southwest Supervisory Union (OSSU) is proposing an alternative school structure under Act 46, Sec. 9. A section of the report deals with Craftsbury as a part of that alternative structure.

On November 30, 2017, the State Board of Education is scheduled to issue its "Final Statewide Plan," which renders supervisory union (SU) boundaries, where necessary. A letter from the Agency of Education (AOE) to OSSU Superintendent (SUE) regarding the proposed meeting at the Craftsbury School Board meeting. The OSSU report, sent be-

fore the December 26, 2017, deadline, garnered little substantive response from the AOE, according to Julie Blane and Craftsbury School Board Chair Harry Miller.

Jeff Blane and Craftsbury School Police say Davis was about multiple times in the town and heard "a lot of noise" about Major Crime Unit detectives are working the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI).

In its response, the AOE stated, "Finally, note that the State Board has for decades had full authority to redraw SU boundaries — although it would not divide members of a union elementary/high school districts."

SEE INPUT, 8

Danville Man Found Murdered in the Snow

BARNET — Authorities say the man discovered on Sunday, January 7, off the edge of Peacham Road was murdered. The victim is preliminarily identified as 49-year-old Greg Davis, a Newburyport resident.

Police have yet to determine how Davis got to Barnet, and say he did not have a "visible injury" with law enforcement. At this point, authorities do not believe the murder was random.

Anyone with information is asked to contact authorities.

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Photo by Vanessa Fournier
 Chris McElroy and Dan Bailey of Morgan Construction in Barnet work on the new Green Mountain Technology and Career Center (GMTCC) signposts set week. The group of five will cover the 82 x 23-foot building, which is located on the Hazen Union campus. Finished by Spring 2018.



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Photo courtesy
 Gagnon's Video, on Mill Street in downtown Hardwick, is closing after serving the community for 25 years. Mary and Alan Gagnon have owned a "book buy" in their windows. They plan to close the store for good at the end of January, unless a buyer can be found. The business has been described as an "anchor" and as having had a "wonderful impact on the community."

Gagnon's Video Packs Up Shop After 25 Years

by Michael Bielawski

HARDWICK — After two-and-a-half decades as a corner-store destination for entertainment, game nights and friendly discussion on current events, Gagnon's Video Store is closing.

Owner Mary Gagnon said the decision was related to the difficulty of obtaining affordable health insurance as a small business. They could no longer run the store enough hours and her husband, Alan Gagnon, took a new job in human services to provide for health insurance coverage.

Officially, the store shut at the start of the month. The Gagnons are now in the process of moving out, which is expected to be done by the end of the month. On that note,

they would really appreciate that the community returns rented movies and cost outstanding balances.

"One remaining question is what to do with all those DVDs. She said they are currently listing them on eBay and remain hopeful to "find the right match in someone, or some organization, that will see the use in helping the collection intact and work to keep it as a resource in this area."

She said they are looking forward to some of the extra time off, especially to participate more in community organizing and activism.

"We both feel this community has treated us with such love and

never be able to fully express just how

SEE GAGNON, 3