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Hazen Board Sets Bond Targets

by Doug McClure

HARDWICK – The Hazen Union board discussed the upcoming bond vote at its February meeting. A number of requirements has led to proposing this bond. A recent assessment identified numerous major problems with the building; students and faculty claim that the 50-year-old building's configuration frustrates Hazen's 2020 education goals, and enrollment is declining. According to the 2020 Hazen Annual Report, Hazen expects 312 "equalized pupils" – the fourth annual decline in a row. The Board plans to bring a bond to voters in November to address these challenges.

Hazen Board Chair Steven Prehoffer said the board regards the

bond as a business plan. "Keeping in mind that the principal 'customers' are the students, how do you plan this benefit them?" he asked. "Will the proposed changes unduly increase costs in the future? What are the likely revenue sources to support these plans? If student enrollment and state aid are decreasing, won't we need to identify other (plausible) revenue sources?"

In other words, we should be able to explain this project as if it were a business plan and an affordable one at that.

An August, 2019 assessment detailed the minimum needed to get the school code-compliant. After careful deliberation, the board decided it would not be enough to fix the school's facility. Prehoffer said the board wanted

to avoid going back to voters in mind that the principal 'customers' are the students, how do you plan this benefit them?" he asked.

The board decided a long-term approach would be the wisest strategy. In order to attract quality teachers and students, the draft plan adds a music classroom, weight room and a visitors' locker room to the school's facilities.

The board hopes to increase the Hazen community's involvement and ownership in the school. A draft house addition was proposed. Prehoffer said, "It would include a gym, but configured for community use, and reduce wear and tear on the existing gym (especially the floor), which is presently used for community gatherings... [the field house could be a site for craft fairs, men's and women's sports leagues, walking seniors for seniors, blood drives... There is a continuous flow of ideas of how this space might be useful to the community at large."

Also discussed was a retrofit to use geothermal for climate control. The assessment recommended removing two defunct boilers and replacing the circa-1970 HVAC system in use – fans that could run as high as a half-million dollars or more. The Highland Center for the Arts in Greensboro

uses geothermal systems. With regard to declining enrollment, Prehoffer suggested examining what draws students to tech schools or homeschooling options.

"How we get the student here is by first understanding why they went somewhere else," said Prehoffer.

The board's overall strategy is to start big and scale back as needed. Prehoffer added that if ideas are not feasible or prove to be "budget busters," they can be modified or abandoned "before going too far on each."

The only concern raised at the meeting was whether the plan missed other big ideas. For example, one possibility currently being evaluated is whether to move the OSU's offices from the Daniels Building to Hazen property. A tight timeline means the board wants to hear from the community sooner rather than later.

"Ideas for the design stage is targeted for late March, early April," Prehoffer said. "Can we get input from students, teachers, administrators, Hazen partners, and community members for the design by the 1st of April, or is it right now?" The board next meets in the Hazen library on March 9.



A fire swept through the second floor of a home at the north end of Main Street in Greensboro Bend on the afternoon of Monday, Feb. 24.

Fire Destroys Family Home in Greensboro Bend

by Doug McClure

GREENSBORO BEND – At 2:57 p.m. on Monday, Feb. 24, fire departments from Greensboro, Hardwick, Wolcott, Walden, Woodbury and Craftsbury responded to a structure fire at the north end of Main Street in Greensboro Bend, according to the Greensboro Fire Department. Glover Ambulance also was on the scene as a precaution, according to Greensboro Fire's Chief Dave Brochu.

He said the fire was on the second

floor sustained major water damage. "We're classifying it as a total loss. Everyone got out okay, including the cat. We were most worried about getting his grandmother out," said Brochu.

Living in the home were 22-year-old Jacob Gates, his mother, and grandmother. The day after the fire, Gates was outside with friends trying to pick up the pieces.

Gates said a wood stove heated their home, and originally he thought the smoke was coming in

from outside. "I was on the second floor, sitting in my bedroom, playing a game on my PlayStation. I saw the smoke and thought it was coming in the window, a back-draft from the chimney. But then I smelled it. It smelled like burning plastic. Adrenaline took over. I ran across the hall to my mother's bedroom and opened the door. It was completely black in there, heavy smoke. I couldn't even see the fire."

He said he tore downstairs and yelled for the others to call 911.

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The Highland Center for the Arts' geothermal heating and cooling system.

Geothermal Heats and Cools Highland Center, Schools

by Doug McClure

GREENSBORO – Hazen Union school is considering replacing its current heating and cooling system with an environmental-friendly geothermal system. If approved, Hazen would join multiple schools and public buildings across the state in using geothermal, which Efficiency Vermont described in a brochure as "the most efficient and earth-friendly heating and cooling mechanism in the planet."

Locally, the Highland Center for the Arts (HCA) in Greensboro uses geothermal for heating and cooling. The system was installed by Williston-based New England Air Systems. Geothermal technology works from the principle that, unlike outside temperatures, the temperature of the earth below the surface is fairly constant. Instead of burning fossil fuels to heat outside air in a comfortable temperature, geothermal systems use heat stored in the earth, which requires far less energy to warm or cool.

"You don't have to worry about the outside temperature," Kevin Griggs, Building & Facilities Manager at HCA, said.

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Winner of National 911 Award Very Humbled

by Doug McClure

WOODBURY – Evelyn Bailey received the prestigious Carla Anderson "Heart of 911" Award from the Next Generation 911 Institute in Washington, D.C., on February 5. Bailey was the first executive director of Vermont's Enhanced 911 heard in the 1990s. She said, "This honor was a huge surprise. I had no idea that I had been nominated for this award, never mind that I had even won it until I got a telephone call."

The award's namesake, Carla Anderson, was the first executive director of the national Next Generation 911 Institute. Bailey said she "appended to have the privilege to know" Anderson. "She was charismatic, but she also had the ability to make things happen, and that's an unusual combination in my experience."

Bailey said she "sort of fell into" her career. She had experience in the legislative process and grassroots organizing from an unrelated previous career, but her education was in archaeology and medieval history.

Just a few pockets in Vermont had any form of 911 in the late 1980s and early 1990s, she said. A fundraising peer asked her to meet over coffee, thinking Bailey's skills would be a match for the project. "She asked me if I would meet with the commissioner of the Department of Public Service, which was coordinating the attempt to draft legislation.



Evelyn Bailey

So, I met with him and he asked me if I could start on the following Monday."

She said, "It was a challenge that utilized everything I had in my professional background, kind of brought it all together, and 911, it's really one of those things that kind of grabs your heart because it really makes a difference in people's lives in a very profound way." At the time, Lamotte County's then-sheriff Gardner Manoh was trying to get countywide 911. "The cost to do it for one county was just about the same as the cost to do the whole state because of the infrastructure," said Bailey. "There was no getting around it. People were not particularly resistant. I learned fairly quickly that if the fire chief in a town thought it was a good thing, then it was going to be a

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Hazen seventh-graders listened to 96-year-old Holocaust survivor Jane Keibel talk about her escape from pre-War II Nazi Germany on the ship MS St. Louis.

Holocaust Survivor US Turned Away Speaks to Seventh Graders

by Doug McClure

HARDWICK – Hazen's seventh graders are studying the Holocaust in Emily Willen's Global Citizenship class, and reading the book, "Refugee" in Kelly Rott's

independent English class. The book follows the stories of three refugee families.

One family was on the MS St. Louis, a German luxury liner that departed Germany in 1939 filled with Jews fleeing the Nazis. It first docked in Cuba, but was turned away. It then steamed to ward the U.S., but the U.S. had a nationality-based immigration quota system. The asylum-seekers were refused. The ship returned to Europe.

One of the survivors of the St. Louis was then-12-year-old Jane Keibel. Now 96, she lives in Burlington. The class wrote to Keibel, asking her to speak about her experiences and expressing that "they will not forget her story," Robins said.

Keibel's story was of a young girl's life ripped apart by rising nationalism. She asked the class, "Can you imagine to be forced to leave a country where you were born, where your parents, grandparents, uncles, aunts and cousins live a productive and comfortable life?"

Her father, who had fought for Germany in WW I, owned a department store. The Nazis forced it to close by convincing the people from doing business with a Jewish establishment," Keibel said. He narrowly avoided capture on "Kristallnacht."

"We did not know where he was," those were very tense days for us," Keibel said. "It made our lives almost unbearable."

Keibel, who was 10 years old when Hitler came to power, said "I couldn't go to schools or play in parks." She said she boarded the St. Louis "with a heavy heart" and waved goodbye to everyone and everything she had ever known: "Nothing was left there... all would be taken to a concentration camp," she said, adding it was an "impossible thought."

As the ship left port, "the band was playing Strauss waltzes," she recalled. After Chas turned the ship away, "one man slashed his wrist and jumped overboard," Keibel said. He was treated at a

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How and Where to Vote at Town Meeting

by Doug McClure

HARDWICK – Voters in all towns will be asked to make important decisions for local offices and issues as well as for the Presidential primary on March 3. Prior to Town Meeting Day, voters can also cast their ballots at the Town Clerk or request a ballot mailed to them on so.vomnet.com/gov/elections/voters/every-absentee-voting/

All ballots must be returned to the town clerk's office before the office closes the day before the election, or to the polling place before 7 p.m. the day of the election, in order to be counted. Voters can register up to and including Election Day (March 3) at any state v.t.us. Here are the times and locations for Town Meeting and Town Clerk's office locations and hours.

All polling places close at 7 p.m.

Hardwick:

Polling Place: Hardwick Elementary School, 135 South Main Street, opens 7 a.m. Town Meeting: 10 a.m.

Town Clerk: 20 Church St., Hardwick, open M-F, 8-4. Phone: 862-475-5971.

Cabot:

Polling Place: Cabot School Gym, 3084 Main Street, opens 7 a.m. Town Meeting: 10 a.m. Town Clerk: 3084 Main St., Cabot, M-F, 8-5. Phone: 862-

563-279.

Calais:

Polling Place: Calais Elementary School, 221 Lightening Ridge Road, opens 7 a.m. Town Meeting: 9:30 a.m.

Town Clerk: 2120 Pekin Brook Rd., East Calais, M-F, 8-4. Phone: 862-456-8720.

Craftsbury:

Polling Place: Craftsbury Academy

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Hazen students left to right: Abi Leveille, Sophia Chinnery and Lydia Hall singing "Don't Stop Believin'" during a Dinner and Coffee House fundraiser Feb. 21 in the Hazen Union auditorium. Proceeds from the event are to benefit the Hazen Music Department's trip to Ireland.

OSUED Begins Discussing Potential New Configurations

by Emmett Avery

HARDWICK – On Feb. 20, the first in a series of special meetings of the Orleans South Union Elementary District (OSUED) board was held to begin looking at potential future configurations of the district. The articles of agreement which form the legal framework for OSUED prohibit the district from closing any grades for which there are students or closing any school

buildings in the academic years 2019-2020 and 2020-2021, the first two years of the union's existence, unless the residents of the town in which the school resides vote to do so.

The point of this series of meetings is to collect and generate ideas for how the district could be better arranged in the future with both student outcomes and cost controls in mind. One option, the board noted, is for the district

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