

# THE Hardwick Gazette

INDEPENDENT LOCAL NEWS SINCE 1889

Hardwick • Cabot • Calais • Craftsbury • Greensboro • Marshfield • Plainfield • Stannard • Walden • Wolcott • Woodbury

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## OSUED Board Approves Budget, Tuition Increase

by Doug McClure

HARDWICK – The Orleans Southwest Union Elementary District (OSUED) board approved a \$7,048,823 budget last Tuesday. The budget will be voted on by residents on Town Meeting day.

The board also revisited the district's tuition, which had not been adjusted for years, even as costs-per-student increased.

The board discussed some voters' misunderstanding of the relationship between the Hazen Union and OSUED boards, particularly in Hardwick. The two boards are separate entities and do not co-ordinate their own budgets directly, but the decision process for each board typically includes reviewing the other organization's budget to be aware of costs and changes. Education property taxes in Hardwick, Greensboro, Stannard, and Woodbury are

made up proportionately in part by the OSUED's property tax rate. The towns, with the exception of Stannard, also include Hazen Union's property tax rate.

A concern raised at the meeting was the error in last year's Hazen Union budget and its impact on public confidence.

See **APPROVES, 3**

## Hazen Union Holds the Line, Keeps Arts Staffing

by Doug McClure

HARDWICK – The Hazen Union School Board reconvened on Friday after failing to decide on its budget the previous Monday.

After spending nearly two hours in executive session on Friday, the board approved a

See **HOLDS, 4**

## Greensboro Informational Meeting Vets Petitions and Controversies

by June Pichel Cook

GREENSBORO – Three petitions and the policing contract with the Hardwick Police Department were central discussions at the town's informational meeting via Zoom last week. A second informational meeting was held last night.

The informational meetings were scheduled prior to the upcoming town meeting on March 2, which will be held by Australian ballot. The meetings were scheduled to give voters the opportunity to ask questions, seek clarifications and air views.

A petition presented last week by Jenifer Ranz seeks to have all elected officials voted via Australian ballot in the future; a second petition requested that all future ordinances or zoning changes also be voted by Australian ballot.

Ranz explained this gives every voter an opportunity to be heard, particularly those unable to attend a town meeting in person.

Town Clerk Kim Greaves said if the petitions are passed there would be no discussion by candidates on the town meeting floor,

and no other nominations could be made from the floor. People would need to "get out and campaign" before the town meeting. Write-ins would be allowed on the ballot.

Select board member Andrew Kehler said the petitions had

See **VETS, 2**



photo by Vanessa Fournier

William Hennequin of Brian Perry & Sons plows a driveway on North Main Street in Hardwick after a weekend storm that brought around seven inches of wet packed snow to the area.



photo by Doug McClure

A trio of stalwart residents rallied in front of the Gohl Block in Hardwick to advocate for improved social justice despite wintry weather.

## School Board Votes Budget

by June Pichel Cook

CRAFTSBURY – The Craftsbury School Board approved a \$4,059,065.98 budget for FY2022 to operate the Craftsbury School District. The proposed budget raises the homestead tax rate to 1.7653, representing approximately a 4-cent increase over FY2021.

Voters will have the opportunity on March 2, via Australian ballot, to say "yea" or "nay" to accepting or rejecting the proposed budget. The homestead educational tax is projected to be \$1,765.27 per

\$100,000 of property assessed valuation. Residents will be voting via Australian ballot, either by going to town hall in-person on March 2, or via absentee ballot, which can be requested before March 2.

The proposed budget represents about a \$48,752.11 increase in expenditures over last year, a 1.21 per cent jump, according to OSSU Chief Financial Officer Brittany Currie. Currie said the increase would have been .01 if revenues had stayed the same. She complimented Principal Merri Greenia for monitoring and maintaining the budget.

"We were able to set aside half of the fund balance from FY20 to go into the building reserve fund (\$127,000) to help be able to further maintenance on the buildings without having to borrow money to do so," Currie said in an email.

Changes in the proposed budget are due to multiple factors. In a phone interview, Greenia explained that a 0.4 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) math interventionist position funded through a consolidated federal grant was moved to local funding because future federal funding is uncertain.

A 1.0 FTE position for Grade 3 was added. Greenia explained the position, originally 0.8 FTE, was increased last summer because it was not possible to keep social distancing in a combined 2nd and 3rd grade class of 20 students.

See **VOTES, 4**

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**Vets**

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enough signatures and would be on the March 2 town meeting ballot. He urged voters to go to the town's website to review documents that were posted regarding the upcoming meeting.

He explained the board's process of addressing the budget line by line, particularly as taxes have increased.

He said the board examined all town expenses "in a way we haven't in prior years" and that more feedback from the community was welcomed.

Becky Arnold, speaking on behalf of the Greensboro Free Library, said a petition was submitted to appropriate \$25,000 for the library in keeping with past appropriations. The board reduced the appropriation to \$15,000 for the coming year. She explained the \$25,000 is the same level funding as the previous six years. Speakers noted the library is an important community hub and the cut was a 40 percent reduction.

In response to a question about the library's endowments, Arnold explained that interest only from a \$300,000 endowment may be used for library expenditures. Money from a \$200,000 non-endowed fund is not earmarked the same way. The library budget is approximately \$95,000, of which they are requesting \$25,000 from the town. The remaining money is raised through fund-raising.

Although the library can get through this year, there is concern for the future, Arnold said. It costs approximately \$25 per year per household with a \$300,000 assessment for the library. For a household with one-half of that assessment, it would cost one-half (\$12.50); for a household with double the assessment, the cost is \$50.

Mary White noted libraries are always "political targets" and play a fundamental role in a community.

"You don't know it until you lose it," she said. She suggested looking at the fireworks display appropriation, which was not reduced.

Select board member Gary Ciosta noted taxpayers pay some library expenditures - maintenance, worker compensation, water bill, and other things - in addition to the appropriation.

Police services came under scrutiny. Board Chair Peter Romans noted the board had put a placeholder of \$190,000 for a police contract with the Hardwick Police Department (HPD), \$77,938 less than last year. He said the town was overpaying for police services. The

*Ciosta said the town overpaid by \$125,000 because of a badly worded contract. "The contract is not logical the way it is worded," he said.*

town is obligated by contract to pay a percentage of the appropriation voted by Hardwick. The actual cost of operating the department was considerably less and Greensboro eventually overpays its percentage of the actual costs.

A new contract is being negotiated, according to Ciosta.

Ciosta said Hardwick votes on the percentage Greensboro pays, not a percentage of what it actually costs to run the department. He said it was fair for Greensboro to pay a percentage of actual costs and not a percentage of "what was simply voted."

Ciosta said the town overpaid by \$125,000 because of a badly worded contract.

"The contract is not logical the way it is worded," he said.

Discussion centered on other options available for policing services and the impact on the Hardwick Rescue Squad if Greensboro sought other options.

The budget shows a cost of \$138,418 for the town's snow plowing of private driveways. At previous town meetings, the snow plowing has been justified as an equivalent benefit for people who do not have children in the school system.

Romans said he was not sure the snow plowing by a private contractor would be continuing in two or three years. The consensus seemed to be the town's plowing of driveways placed minimal impact on households when compared to homeowners paying privately for the service.

Ciosta said it was actually a terrific bargain. Greaves reported the town has 520 private driveways plowed whenever snow levels reach five inches. The snow plowing also includes town properties.

The town's proposed budget totals \$1,580,007. If all other funding requests are approved, the town's total budget will be \$1,945,961. The total budget represents a \$75,000 decrease from the amount approved by voters for 2021.

Despite the budget decrease, municipal tax rate will increase. In FY2021, the town used \$100,000 from a rainy-day fund to lower the municipal tax rate and cannot do so in FY2022.



**January 20 - January 26**

<b>Jackets &amp; Coats</b> 20% Off or more While Supplies Last!		<b>Baselayers</b> now 20% Off in Clothing	
<b>Food Club</b> Pasta Sauce <b>\$1.28</b> 23.9-24 oz.	<b>Food Club</b> Peanut Butter <b>\$1.18</b> 16 oz.	<b>G.M.</b> Cheerios <b>\$1.88</b> 8.9 oz.	
<b>Natures Bakery</b> Fig Bars <b>2/\$1</b> 2 oz.	<b>Stash</b> Tea <b>\$2.99</b> 18-20 ct.	<b>Rana</b> Ravioli <b>\$3.99</b> 10 oz.	
<b>Gold Medal</b> Flour <b>2/\$5</b> 5 lb.	<b>Dole 4 pk.</b> Fruit Cups <b>2/\$5</b> 16 oz.	<b>Wishbone</b> Salad Dressing <b>3/\$5</b> 15 oz.	
Kellogg's Rice Krispies, Honey Smacks or Corn Flakes <b>2/\$5</b> 12-15.3 oz.	<b>Bisquick</b> Baking Mix <b>\$2.99</b> 40 oz.	<b>Nabisco</b> Oreos <b>2/\$5</b> 10.1-15.35 oz.	
<b>Nabisco Red</b> Oval Crackers <b>2/\$5</b> 8.8-10.6 oz.	<b>Betty Crocker</b> Fruit Snacks <b>2/\$4</b> 4.5-8 oz.	<b>Planet</b> Oatmilk <b>2/\$5</b> 52 oz.	
<b>Morning Star Veg.</b> Burgers and Sausage <b>3/\$10</b> 8-12 oz.	<b>Food Club</b> French Fries <b>\$1.89</b> 32 oz.	<b>Barber Stuffed</b> Chicken Breast <b>\$3.99</b> 10 oz.	
<b>Maine 3 lb.</b> Red B Potatoes <b>2/\$3</b>	<b>Imported Red or</b> Yellow Peppers <b>\$3.99</b> lb.	<b>Lisbon Maine Boston</b> Lettuce - <b>\$3.29</b> 3 oz. Romaine Baby - <b>\$5.99</b> 6 oz.	

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**Approves**

**Continued From Page One**

Orleans Southwest Supervisory Union (OSSU) Director of Finance Brittany Currie stated previously that a spreadsheet error caused the Hazen Union budget to go \$144,418 over the state's threshold. A penalty was imposed pursuant to state-imposed sanctions for schools that spend more than a certain amount per student.

She said the error was made by a "former employee" that misplaced a revenue item in the local revenue column. Currie said this year all budget sheets had been rebuilt from the ground up with the assistance of a veteran consultant. She added that the budgets were now documented and annotated for an easy transition should someone else need to take over the work.

Currie said the process relied not only on compiled data about students but went through each "kiddo" to check the data for

accuracy. Currie often used the term "kiddo" as a reminder to the board that although they were discussing numbers, their decisions would impact each of the approximate 334 students the OSUED educates and serves, as well as student families and advocates.

The first item raised was tuition rate for OSUED schools. Currie said tuition had been \$12,500 for an unknown number of years and, based on current calculations, the actual cost of educating each student was estimated at \$18,840. The discrepancy struck the board as too much. Board member Orise Ainsworth recommended an increase. The only students currently tuitioning are four from Kingdom East, a merged district with some of its students closer to an OSUED school than to schools in that district.

Ainsworth said, "I cannot justify to a taxpayer someone from another town coming in at \$12,500 when we're paying \$18,000 for the

kid who lives next door."

She said even Kingdom East students coming to an OSUED school at an increased tuition rate might cost less than bussing them to a Kingdom East school. Tuition is paid by the towns in that district, not the parents. Currie said a proposed increase to \$15,000 might raise eyebrows in that district's administration because it was the same as its own tuition rate. As a compromise, the board opted to raise the OSUED tuition to \$14,000. The impact on the revenue side of the budget was estimated at \$6,000.

The FY2022 proposed budget was \$7,048,823 for FY2022. Working from an estimated 334 equalized pupils, per-equalized-pupil spending worked out to \$18,840.77. After subtracting \$52 in excluded costs, the number is \$1.28 under the state-imposed threshold of \$18,789. While the board voiced concerns about going over the threshold and receiving a penalty, Currie said she believed the 334.28 equalized pupils estimate was less than the official, soon-to-be-released official Agency of Education (AOE) figures.

Another concern was that \$328,000 of budget revenue was due to a surplus from previous years and would not be available in subsequent budgets. Ainsworth said the board would need to justify an extra \$328,000 in expenses in the next budget to keep services at the current level.

Not addressed in the budget were the Woodbury Elementary School lease arrangements and creating a building fund. Chair Katharine Ingram later said, "To be clear -- the use of the Woodbury building as a school facility for the OSUED is continuing. One board member raised a question regarding the fiscal responsibility of entering into another lease with the Town of Woodbury, however, the majority of the board was not supportive of discussing altering our path to negotiate a lease with Woodbury. There are no plans underway or current discussions about changing the use of any of the three campuses. As you can imagine, this is a very sensitive

topic for the people of Woodbury, so I would rather there not be any confusion."

Ingram added, "The new [Woodbury School] lease talks [with the select board] are progressing slowly for a number of reasons, but they are amicable and I believe everyone has the best interest of the students in mind."

Regarding the building fund, Ingram said "The board was interested in starting a building fund for the district, but also didn't want to tie up all of the surplus money into that fund -- which could leave us in trouble if any unexpected expenses came up."

As put forth, the budget includes some staffing changes. A social-emotional coach position grant-funded in the current year could not be grant-funded in FY2022 and was eliminated. An early proposal to add a home school liaison position was removed from the budget. Lakeview School will gain a direct instruction teacher. A shift in the configuration of some administrative positions would effectively eliminate a position, but Ingram said "The admin positions were changed in the November meeting" and there is now "an office manager-type position that oversees the admin for all three buildings. Ingram said it was "more of an expansion of an existing position" than a new position.

The board approved the budget and set an informational meeting for February 23. For each of the four towns that pay for the OSUED schools, the tax rates varied based on the percentage of students attending an OSUED school and the town's Common Level of Appraisal (CLA).

Greensboro has a CLA of 95.66% and 39.7% of its students attend an OSUED school. Therefore, the FY2022 rate would be \$0.7265 per \$100 of property value, which is a 4.65% increase from FY2021. Based on Hardwick's CLA and attendance, the town's rate for the OSUED would be \$0.9679, a 7.9% increase. In Stannard, the OSUED rate for FY2022 would be \$0.9754 which is 4.9% less than FY2021. And in Woodbury, the rate for FY2022 would be \$0.9754, a 5.6% increase.

# POLICE REPORT

*Hardwick Police*

**Media Log Summary**

January 11: Motor Vehicle Complaint, Wapanaki Rd.; 911 Hangup, Vt. Rte. 15W; Accident – Property Damage On Craftsbury Rd.; Assault, Maggie's Pond Rd.

January 15: Assist – Agency; Suspicious Event, Vt. Rte. 15W, Foot Patrol, S. Main St.

January 12: Suspicious Event, Mill St.

January 16: Assist – Agency, Benway Dr.; Accident – Property Damage On, Vt. Rte. 15; Fire, Kate Brook Rd.; Accident – Property Damage On, Vt. Rte. 16; Assist – Agency, High St.; Assist – Agency, Stratton Rd.; Motor Vehicle Complaint, Vt. Rte. 14; Fire, Vt. Rte 15/Vt. Rte. 16.

January 13: Foot Patrol, S. Main St.; Suspicious Event, Vt. Rte. 14S; 911 Hangup, Cherry St.; Assist – Agency, Mountainview Rd.

January 14: Missing Person, Bayley Hazen Rd.; Suspicious Event, Vt. Rte. 15W; Foot Patrol, S. Main St.; Odor Investigation, Mill St.; Assist Agency, Vt. Rte. 15, Walden Line; Foot Patrol, S.

January 17: 911 Hangup, Vt. Rte. 15W; Theft- Automobile, Houston Hill Rd.; Traffic Hazard, Vt. Rte. 14; Theft, Vt. Rte. 15W.

*Vermont State Police*

**Domestic Assault**

On January 13, Vermont State Police received a delayed report of a possible domestic assault in Woodbury. Subsequent investigation by Troopers indicated that Forrest Menard, of Woodbury, had assaulted the victim on January 10, in the presence of a child, at a residence in Woodbury. Menard was located in Woodbury on January 15 and taken into custody. He was transported to the Middlesex State Police Barracks for processing.

Menard was subsequently released on conditions and ordered to appear in the Washington County Superior Court, Criminal Division on January 19 at 12:30 p.m.

This report is based on information provided by the Vermont State Police but is not a full accounting of police activity. Persons named in this report are presumed to be innocent unless they plead or are found guilty in court.

**AWARE Report**

HARDWICK – AWARE served 13 survivors of domestic and sexual violence from January 10 through January 17. AWARE is a nonprofit organization, established in 1984, dedicated to

resolving the causes and effects of domestic violence and sexual assault in the greater Hardwick area.

The 24-hour hotline is 802-472-6463.

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Mike Gauthier, CIC  
mikeg@calderwoodins.com

## Hold

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budget of \$6,692,354, a 2.22% decrease from FY2021.

The proposed budget holds the line on staffing levels in several departments. Orleans Southwest Supervisory Union's (OSSU) Director of Finance Brittany Currie said, "there will be no [staffing] cuts in the arts departments, no cuts in the phys-ed department, no cuts in the administrative assistant department, and no cuts in the food service department."

"The best part of putting together this budget was the benefit of having unprecedented numbers of people attending and sharing their views in the on-line information meeting before the board adopted the final budget proposal," Hazen Union Board Chair Steve Freihofner said. "This is a practice worth establishing permanently. And now, it's up to the voters."

Hazen Union Principal David Perrigo said, "Hazen leadership worked very hard to balance protecting Hazen's hard working and dedicated staff from loss of their livelihood while assuring sensitivity to taxpayer burden at this difficult time."

At \$19,068.38 per equalized pupil, the budget crosses the state's threshold for per-pupil spending by \$92.31. The total impact of the overage is significantly less than the \$144,418 overage caused by a spreadsheet error in the FY2021 budget. To ensure maximum accuracy, Currie previously said all spreadsheets had been rebuilt based on "kid-by-kid" information, rather than relying on compiled data.

Feedback received on a budget proposed at the January 7 meeting, which had more than one hundred in attendance, indicated the public opposed proposed staffing cuts to arts programs. At that meeting, Principal David Perrigo said of the proposed budget, "nobody feels that this is a step toward making Hazen a better, stronger place for our kids." Current and former students told the board of the positive impact the arts programs had on their lives, with one calling it "lifesaving." Teachers also chimed in, with one calling the proposed cuts part of a "downward spiral." In the current budget going to voters, the cuts were removed.

The board approved staffing cuts in other areas, including 0.5 (FTE) in the custodial department, 1.0 in the behavioral department, 0.5 FTE of a coordinator, 0.5 in science, a 1.0

*Hazen Union Principal David Perrigo said, "Hazen leadership worked very hard to balance protecting Hazen's hard working and dedicated staff from loss of their livelihood while assuring sensitivity to taxpayer burden at this difficult time."*

contracted service school-based clinician position. There were some reclassifications in administrative line item, Currie said. A study hall monitor position was added. Non staff-related cuts in multiple departments were approved, including a general supplies cut in the drama department from \$5,750 to \$500 for the year. Budgets for virtually every department were cut by more than 40%.

The proceedings got a last-minute boost from updated data from the Agency of Education (AOE), which adjusted the equalized pupil count from 311.23 students to 319.9, which Currie said added approximately \$160,000 to the budget.

Three towns directly pay for Hazen Union's budget: Hardwick, Greensboro, and Woodbury. Individual tax rates were estimated without the threshold penalty factored in. Greensboro's tax rate is estimated to increase 6.31% to \$1.1269 per \$100 of property tax. Hardwick taxpayers will pay slightly less at \$0.9061, a 0.88% drop. And Woodbury's rate will increase by 6.07% to \$0.8142. On a \$100,000 home, the increase amounts to \$66.87 in Greensboro or \$46.61 in Woodbury. The decrease for Hardwick taxpayers on a \$100,000 home is estimated at \$8.09.

Other towns, such as Wolcott and Stannard, tuition their children to attend Hazen Union. The board previously approved a tuition increase of \$500 to the \$17,000 Hazen Union tuition rate, which is paid by the sending town and not the parents. The Hazen Union board is holding a statutorily mandated virtual public information session on Monday, February 22. All school articles will be voted on by Australian ballot this year.



photo by Vanessa Fournier

The Jeudevine Memorial Library of Hardwick, in collaboration with Muddy Creek Pottery of Wolcott, offered Valentine Heart Kits to the first 15 people who requested one. The kit included four fired white clay hearts, ribbons to hang the hearts, paints and a paint brush. All kits were spoken for the following day.

## Votes

Continued From Page One

"We did hire a teacher for 3rd grade this year," she said, "but had money saved from other positions to cover that position."

The physical education and athletic director position were combined and may be kept in that configuration. To keep art in the elementary and middle grades, the art position was increased from a 0.4 FTE to a 1.0 FTE.

A 0.5 FTE custodial position was added. In FY21, a clinician position was budgeted in anticipation of a grant that did not materialize. The position, under a contract with Lamoille County Health, provides in-school counseling.

Increases in support to the REACH (after-school program), electricity, and health insurance premiums, which have jumped 10 percent, added to larger projected expenditures in the coming year.

The district moved from leasing tech equipment on a three-year payment plan to purchasing equipment yearly. There was also a cut in tech supplies.

According to Greenia, enrollment is currently projected between 190 to 200 students, but that could change. Tuition student numbers have dropped to 37, but Craftsbury student numbers have increased, which boosts the state's per-equalized student formula. The increase in Craftsbury students helps the tax rate. Craftsbury students are counted when determining per-equalized student numbers, but tuition students are counted in their own communities.

One of the biggest anticipated increases in expenses due to the pandemic was costs for substitutes if staff had to be quarantined. Greenia explained the need for

*"We haven't anticipated more for the next year," she said. "We are assuming it will turn back to normal."*

substitutes was a concern. The earlier release of COVID money in 2020 helped cover the cost of substitutes.

"We haven't anticipated more for the next year," she said. "We are assuming it will turn back to normal."

The OSSU (Orleans Southwest Supervisory Union) budget was lower, which in turn lowered Craftsbury's assessment.

At its meeting last week, the board raised tuition rates from \$16,500 to \$17,000. The actual cost of educating per-equalized students is projected at \$18,513.22, an increase of about \$90.

Greenia said the COSA (Craftsbury Outdoor Sports Academy) athletes have been able to practice with the Craftsbury Ski Team, but all interscholastic athletic events have been canceled. She said the Craftsbury Outdoor Center has been very careful during the COVID pandemic.

The basketball teams have been able to practice and hold scrimmages within the school but cannot compete with other schools.

"The good thing is that there are a lot of kids at practice," Greenia said.

The board will hold an informational Zoom meeting on Saturday, February 20 at 3:30 p.m. The school district Zoom meeting follows the town's informational meeting, which is scheduled from 1 to 3 p.m.

# Greensboro Nursing Home Residents Receive COVID Vaccine

by June Pichel Cook

GREENSBORO – A team from CVS Pharmacy provided the first dose of the Pfizer COVID-19 Vaccine to residents at the Greensboro Nursing Home (GNH) on December 30. The second dose is scheduled for Wednesday, January 20.

Administrator Brian Labelle said, “No serious reactions of any kind have occurred as a result of the vaccinations. One hundred percent of our residents received the first round of the vaccine.”

The CVS team came into the nursing home to provide the vaccination, and “they did a wonderful job,” Labelle said. “CVS monitors and is prepared for any adverse reactions which might occur due to the vaccination.”

The state recommended the first vaccinations go to skilled nursing facility residents and essential staff working in healthcare, but policies are reassessed daily, Labelle said.

GNH has protocols in place that follow Governor Phil Scott’s executive orders, along with guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to reduce spread and impact of COVID-19, Labelle said.

“The safety and wellbeing of our residents is our top priority,” he said. “We are doing what we can to limit the spread of COVID-19 within Greensboro Nursing Home. We are staying in very close communication with local and state health officials to ensure we are taking all the appropriate steps under current circumstances.”

Connecting residents with family members is extremely important, Labelle noted, and family members are encouraged to connect with their loved ones through video chat, calling, texting, or on social media.

“We have a sit and chat area

where residents can sit inside the building and family can sit outside the building for visits.”

Family members are required to call the facility to set up visiting times so staff can be available to assist during the visit. Outdoor visits are limited to 30 minutes. Labelle asked that requests for weekend visits be made by 3 p.m. on Fridays.

If people are bringing nonperishable items for residents, it is important to contact the facility beforehand. Labelle explained staff are not always at the front door area. A drop-off box is available by the front door.

If bringing perishable items, visitors are asked to call the facility. Fresh-cut flowers can be brought and left outside the front entry. Visitors are encouraged to call the facility to let them know when flowers will be placed there.

In a letter to the residents’ families, Labelle wrote, “This is a difficult time for everyone. We will continue to provide you with updates.”

Labelle assumed his duties at the GNH in August of 2018. He is an occupational therapist (OTR/L) and worked as a therapist at GNH as well as other nursing homes in Vermont.

“We are a small, rural center focused on providing a caring and healthy environment for our residents,” he said. “Our current census at GNH is 24 residents, out of a capacity of 30 residents – we have to keep some rooms available for quarantine periods due to the pandemic.”

For more information, he encouraged people to visit the CDC website ([cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus)) for information on how to stop the spread in the community, “since continued spread in the larger community increases the chance the virus will work its way into our building.”

The GNH has been free of COVID-19.



photo by Vanessa Fournier

A sign at Craftsbury Academy praises the staff and volunteers at the Craftsbury Community Care Center for all of their efforts, dedication and commitment during the COVID-19 pandemic.

## WARNING

### Craftsbury Town School District

#### PUBLIC INFORMATIONAL HEARING ON THE FY22 BUDGET

on February 20, 2021, at 3:30 p.m.

Public can access the meeting using this number: +1 803-563-6945

PIN: 211 642 677# or by using this link [meet.google.com/tvc-eztx-stv](https://meet.google.com/tvc-eztx-stv)

The legal voters of the Craftsbury Town School District are hereby warned to meet for the Craftsbury Town School District **Public Informational Hearing on the FY22 Budget** online via a google meeting on, **February 20, 2021, at 3:30 p.m.** for discussion on the school district's proposed FY22 budget as required by Title 17 VSA 2680 (g).

**Article 1:** To elect the following officers for: (Voting by Australian Ballot on Tuesday, March 2, 2021)

- School District Meeting Moderator
- School District Treasurer
- School District Clerk

**Article 2:** To elect the following school district officers for the ensuing year (Voting by Australian Ballot on Tuesday, March 2, 2021)

- School Board Director for a term of two years.
- School Board Director for a term of three years.

**Article 3:** To see if the voters of the school district will authorize the following salaries to be paid for the officers and directors of the school district: (Voting by Australian Ballot on Tuesday, March 2, 2021)

School Board Chair - \$ 000.00/yr.  
 School Board Member - \$ 000.00/yr.  
 District Treasurer - \$ 4997.00/yr.  
 District Clerk - \$ 000.00/yr.

**Article 4:** Shall the voters of the school district authorize the school board to transfer \$127,254 of unobligated year end fund balances as of June 30, 2020 to a reserve fund established pursuant to Title 24, Section 2804 to be used for building maintenance and repairs. (Voting by Australian Ballot on Tuesday, March 2, 2021)

**Article 5:** Shall the voters of the school district approve the school board to expend \$4,059,066, which is the amount the school board has determined to be necessary for the ensuing fiscal year? It is estimated that this proposed budget, if approved, will result in education spending of \$18,513 per equalized pupil. This projected spending per equalized pupil is 0.50% higher than spending for the current year. (Voting by Australian Ballot on Tuesday, March 2, 2021)

**Article 6:** To see if the voters of the school district will authorize the school board to borrow money in anticipation of state revenues. (Voting by Australian Ballot on Tuesday, March 2nd, 2021)

**Article 7:** Shall the town authorize the Craftsbury School Board to transfer all property owned by the Craftsbury School District to the Craftsbury Academy Trustees/corp. (Voting by Australian Ballot on Tuesday, March 2nd, 2021)

Voting on the aforementioned Articles 1-7 will be by Australian Ballot on Tuesday, March 2, 2021, at the Craftsbury Town Hall, between the hours of Nine (9) o'clock in the forenoon (a.m.) at which time the polls will open and Seven (7) o'clock in the afternoon (p.m.) at which time the polls will close.

Dated a Hardwick, Vermont, this 13th day of January, 2021

Harry Miller, Kasey Allen, Michelle Menard  
 Craftsbury Town School District Directors

Attest: Yvette Brown, District Clerk

## Relief Fund Awards Emergency Grants

GREENSBORO – The Greensboro Association’s Community Relief Fund has awarded seven pandemic-related emergency grants totaling \$8,750 for the first quarter of 2021, according to the Greensboro Association Relief Fund Committee.

Recipients of the latest grants were Craftsbury Community Care Center, Hardwick Area Food Pantry, Four Seasons of Early Learning, Greensboro Nursing

Home, Craftsbury Saplings, Greensboro Free Library and Wonder Arts.

In keeping with Greensboro Association’s mission “to support initiatives and organizations that enhance our community”, the association’s Community Relief Fund has awarded grants totaling \$38,750 since March 2020 to local front-line organizations dealing with pandemic-related health, food, safety and education challenges.

# Wolcott Elementary Wrestles with ‘Unpalatable’ Budget

by Doug McClure

WOLCOTT – At its January 14 final budget meeting, the Wolcott School Board attempted to wrangle a budget where nearly half the costs were beyond its control and another large portion of costs were due to errors in previous budgets.

The proposed budget of \$5,154,519.51 is a 6.7% increase from the inaccurate FY2021 budget. It works out to a \$0.1459 increase of 8.7056% with the FY2022 Homestead Education Property Tax Rate at \$1.8216 per \$100.

The board spent several hours trying to avoid a major increase, including considering cuts to a staff that has already been pared down, according to Principal Matt Foster and Orleans Southwest Supervisory Union (OSSU) Superintendent Adam Rosenberg. “[The staffing] is skeletal as is,” Rosenberg said.

Because Wolcott has no secondary school, Wolcott tuitions its students to other schools. The school budget covers 112 pre-K through sixth-grade students and tuitions students in grades 7-12 to more than a half-dozen schools in the area. FY2022 will see an estimated 120 students in secondary grades. Almost every secondary school increased tuition for FY2022.

The idea of eliminating school choice was floated but quickly scrapped. The majority of Wolcott’s tuition students attend schools in Lamoille North or the OSSU’s Craftsbury Academy, and both tuitions are roughly at \$17,000 per student. Two previous budgets were missing “good chunks” of actual tuition costs: \$44,500 in preschool tuition and another \$67,000 in secondary education tuition — more than \$110,000.

“Somehow in prior year’s budgets we spent money on preschool,” Board Chair Gordon Young said. “I remember signing those vouchers, and somehow that did not get figured into those budgets?” Currie said she did not know how the preschool tuition was missed by the previous person who put the budget together. She surmised the inaccurate secondary tuition amount was caused by inaccurate data based on vouchers.

Currie said she and Executive Director Taylor Blaisdell spent two days reviewing detailed student-by-student data to confirm the information was correct. Currie said the FY21 per-pupil amount of \$17,296

was “unheard-of” and anyone reviewing the budget “should have seen there was a problem,” based on the number of tuition students. “That’s the problem and why we’re having to go up this year is [that] two years in a row you had a deficit. That’s unfortunate, but it’s the reality of the budget,” Currie said.

The FY2022 budget also reflected a significant number of students in secondary education, 28 of which are seniors.

When students are tuitioned, the initial amount is set by the receiving school and is re-examined at the end of the year. If the cost of educating the student is more than 3% of the tuition amount, the school can bill Wolcott up to 10% for that student. As a precaution, the FY2022 proposed budget initially included a \$65,000 buffer to address the potential 10% bill-back. In the end, the board removed the amount to bring the tax rate down. Currie thought FY2023 would have a smaller number of students in secondary education and could likely absorb any bill-back from FY2022.

“I just know this is a very big tax increase,” Currie said. “I would rather see that number come out than see a staff member come out.” Currie noted the “wonderful school” and “tight-knit community you guys have,” which she in part attributed to the principal and staff. She preferred to remove the buffer number than “for you guys to lose a staff [member],” she said. Board member Elliot Waring told Currie, “We can bang our heads against \$300,000 all we want, but we can’t actually do anything about it.” He cautioned that removing the buffer could result in “repeating the mistakes” of previous boards, but “if you think we can safely do that I would support removing the \$65,000.”

Nearly two cents of the proposed budget increase was due to Wolcott Town’s Common Level of Appraisal (CLA) being a low 94.21%. This prompted a recommendation that residents concerned about the budget should ask the town to request a reappraisal.

In at least one case, budget cuts were due to a particular need that was addressed at the supervisory union (SU) level with grant funding. Five thousand dollars was included in a prior budget version to ensure Wolcott Elementary students that became homeless and moved out

of the town but wanted to keep their school and teachers and friends could receive transportation. Currie said the amount was cut in the hope that “if that occurs again, we can try to cover that through an SU grant.”

Board member Gwyneth Harris said, “If you are choosing between investing in the town’s children or feeding your own child, the question becomes a lot more complex.” An earlier draft, with a 15-cent increase, left Vice Chair Rebecca Ventrice skeptical that the budget would be passed. “People can’t afford that in this town,” she said.

Prior years had left some residents unhappy with even three-cent increases, but at the time board members and residents were unaware that the increases did not reflect actual amounts being spent. No one on the board was optimistic about the budget’s chances without residents gaining understanding of what had caused the increase and what steps Currie and Foster took this year to avoid a repeat. But neither Foster nor the board saw any way to proceed without cutting into staff.

“We can’t actually do anything to get us to the guaranteed pass point, I don’t think it’s possible,” Waring said. “We have to stick with what makes sense for the school and that is not losing any staff and then we

have to go to work and let people know. We have to market the budget and try and explain.”

The board briefly considered cutting a part-time custodian, but Foster said the position was necessary. “I don’t want to stress my staff out any more than I need to,” he said. “I don’t want my staff to feel like they need to be doing any more than they’re already doing. I’m not asking them to bring coal in or water from a pump, either.”


Cutting the position would make almost no difference in the end result. Even cutting the position along with one full-time position only brought the increase down another two cents, “so our kids will suffer, and our taxpayers will still suffer a 12-½ cent increase instead of a 14-½ cent increase,” Young said.

Just before the board unanimously passed the budget, Young said he thought the town should “continue to invest in paying for our students.” He described the situation as “suffer now or suffer later,” and said, “the cost of not educating our next generation can’t be calculated.” He cautioned that students who struggle to learn in elementary and high school risk being “set off on a trajectory that can have life-long impact.”

An informational session will be held on February 27, at 6 p.m.

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# Wolcott Select Board Discusses Budget

by Doug McClure

WOLCOTT – The Wolcott Select Board held a special meeting on Wednesday, January 13 for a further round of budget discussions. The board hoped the discussion, this time primarily from Vice Chair Linda Martin, would avert an hours-long meeting tonight.

Martin raised the issue of dog licenses. Newcomers to the town have been slow to license their dogs, she said.

“There’s so many new people in town,” she said, “And we’re seeing that people aren’t licensing their dogs.” Martin said more community outreach and public notification could help educate those who might not be aware of Wolcott’s licensing laws. Board members Kurt Billings and Kurt Klein agreed. The board decided to put funds toward public information and advertising.

Martin also raised whether the purchase of a \$1,200 tabulator was warranted, as no primary or general elections are coming up and there is no stated proposal to conduct the 2022 Town Meeting via Australian ballot. Klein agreed with Martin’s logic.

The highway department’s budget drew more questions. Martin opposed the inclusion of a line item for “temporary help” as “not very transparent” and suggested the proposed \$10,000 was too high if the item was intended to pay Lucien Gravel for helping Road Foreman Dillon Cafferky. Klein thought \$1,000 might be more appropriate, while Billings and Martin suggested \$2,000.

The board also discussed equipment repairs for the highway department. Cafferky proposed a \$5,000 line item increase to \$30,000, which he earlier ascribed almost entirely to Truck 13’s need for additional repairs. Martin said the \$5,000 increase was a hard pill to swallow “after all the money we’ve spent repairing equipment.” Klein agreed but said, “My only concern about the repair of equipment is Truck 13 still seems to be a problem.” He said the amount should be kept at \$25,000 with that caveat. Billings concurred.

Martin said after consulting with the auditor, the \$53,271 needed to cover the flood loan would not need to be raised in taxes. Removing that item from the budget still left roughly \$25,000 that she anticipated would be the town’s match for FEMA and federally reimbursed

work due to the Halloween Storm of 2019. This did not include the Brook Road culvert “which we’re still negotiating every day with FEMA,” she said.

Another \$6,000 Martin identified as excess from earlier repairs to North Wolcott Road could be reallocated somewhere else, but it would mean a reclassification of funds requiring a board vote. Another \$5,275 for tax mapping by the listers was no longer needed and could also be reallocated. Martin and Clegg agreed that a portion of the fund could be used to reduce the tax rate.

Billings opposed the town paying for the road crew’s uniforms, and Martin explained the obligation was based on a long-ago negotiation because the crew did not want to destroy their own clothes at work. Billings replied, “Where I work, they have to pay for their uniform service. I would like to have that taken out.”

Another subject was the librarian Sally Gardner, who plans to retire from the library in July and return a month later in a part-time capacity. As a part-time worker she would not receive benefits. Martin proposed Gardner’s part-time work at 24 hours per week for 46 weeks with the same per-hour salary. Klein said that proposal made sense. Billings did not agree and said that not only should Gardner not be re-instated at a prior salary but probably should not be re-instated at all since in his opinion a trustee could do the work.

As a result of COVID-19 and the library’s curbside service, “I don’t think you need a librarian,” he said. “One of the trustees could go in once a day and if people call in during that time, they can pick up books. That’s my gut feeling, after July 1, no more librarian. The trustees can do everything a librarian can do.”

Martin reminded Billings

that the trustees are not full-time positions, and the work entails a bit more than what he seemed to think. Billings replied, “I work full time and I’m on [this] board right now.” He said the salary proposed was “just another cost.” Klein reminded Billings that the budget started in July of 2021 and hopefully by then some restrictions would have been relaxed, maybe even allowing the library to open. Billings returned to Gardner’s proposed re-hiring and said, “When someone quits or retires and they come back, they don’t get everything they want.” He said the amount proposed was “quite a lot in my book” and found the proposed two weeks of vacation an unreasonable request. “I don’t see COVID ending. I have my doubts. I could see an hour or two [of work] a day.” Martin said the trustees make those determinations, and Billings replied, “We’re the ones paying.” Martin said, “I’m going to have to disagree with you on this one.”

Billings also rejected a question Martin floated to increase pay by 2% across the board to keep ahead of inflation. Klein felt the proposed increase might be too much to bear “given where we’re at.” Martin said she was undecided but asked that the board note the cost of living is projected to increase by 1.3%.

Klein requested an upgraded version of the profit and loss statement so that regular salary and overtime pay it could be viewed by department.

He returned to the budget and again raised the line item for recording fees, which struck him as inaccurate, he said. Clegg said the current year’s recording fees were a COVID-related spike due to a hot property market that would not be repeated, but Klein said it looked like part of a “three-year trend.” He proposed raising the \$17,000 item to \$25,000 to reflect

what he thought was a more realistic expectation. The number appears on both the revenue and expense sides of the budget.

Klein next raised what he said was an overlooked item. In December 2019, the board received a \$400,000 estimate for grant-supported work, with a town match over five years, to bring the town in line with current hydrological standards for roads. No money was officially allocated in FY2021, but Martin said much of the work Cafferky and his crew performed could fall into necessary corrections under the standards. Because the work was performed with town labor, the labor could count towards the town’s match.

She said VTrans advised Cafferky to get an app for an iPad to track expenditures so the town could see what work had been completed, but Cafferky did not have an iPad. Klein recited the list of roads the report identified as necessary fixes, many of which had undergone completed work this year. Martin said, “Jones Road and Turcotte have not been dealt with, maybe a lot on those others has been done.”

Klein said he had not figured out if the iPad’s app required cellular service. Martin suggested he follow up with Jim Cota of VTrans to get a more specific picture of what was required and what expenses it would entail.

The board briefly discussed Warning language complexities introduced by the Australian ballot-only town meeting. Also raised was the timeline for the statutorily required informational meeting, which thus far has not shifted due to COVID. The meetings must be held in the ten-day period prior to town meeting, which could be problematic this year as many people will have ballots prior to that time frame and some might have already voted.



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# EDUCATION

## Gao of Earns President's List Honors

CANTON, N.Y. – SUNY Canton President Zvi Szafran has announced that Denny Gao of Hardwick has earned President's List honors during the fall 2020 semester. Gao majors in the Game Design and Development program. The President's List recognizes students who achieve a 3.75 or greater GPA on a 4.0 scale.

## Holliday Makes President's List

RANDOLPH CENTER – Vermont Tech has announced that Leigh Holliday of Plainfield has achieved President's List honors in the Certificate of Practical Nursing program. To make the President's List, students must maintain a 4.0 or higher average for the semester while being enrolled in at least 12 letter-graded credit hours.

## Local Students Named to President's List

RANDOLPH CENTER – Vermont Tech has named the following students for achieving President's List Honors for the fall semester of 2020. These are degree students carrying 12 or more letter-graded credit hours who achieve a GPA of 4.0 or higher.

Leah Jacobs of Plainfield, Associate of Applied of Science in Landscape Contracting; Kasey Long of Cabot, Associate of Science in Respiratory Therapy; and Gabriel Mulligan of Marshfield, Bachelor of Science in Professional Pilot Technology

## Local Students Named to Dean's List

RANDOLPH CENTER – Vermont Tech announced that following students have achieved Dean's List Honors for the fall semester of 2020. These are degree students carrying 12 or more letter-graded credit hours who achieve a GPA of 3.5 or higher.

They are Lauren Bellavance of Cabot, Associate of Science in Nursing; Michelle Broaddus of Marshfield, Associate of Science in Nursing; Naphtali Schumacher of Calais, Associate of Science in Nursing; Ryder Lalomia of Marshfield, Bachelor of Science in Architectural Engineering Technology; Matthew Bader of Hardwick, Bachelor of Science in Computer Information Technology; Malcolm Putvain of Wolcott, Bachelor of Science in Software Engineering Technology; and Solomon Lew-Raskin of Hardwick, Bachelor of Science in Diversified Agriculture.

## Bailey Named to Dean's List

CASTLETON – Lillian Bailey of Cabot was recently named to the Castleton University Dean's List for the fall semester of the 2020-21 academic year. To qualify for this academic honor, students must maintain full-time status and a semester grade point average of 3.5.

## Maxfield Named to President's List

CASTLETON – Jeremy Maxfield of Cabot was recently named to the Castleton University President's List for the fall semester of the 2020-21 academic year. To qualify for this highest academic honor, students must maintain full-time status and a semester grade point average of 4.0.

## Olkowski Makes Dean's List

EAST HARTFORD, Conn. – Ruth Olkowski has earned a spot on the Goodwin University Dean's List for Summer 2020. Dean's List inclusion requires a student to earn a minimum 3.5 GPA, the equivalent of an A-average, during a given academic session. The student must also be enrolled in a minimum of six academic credits to qualify.

Ruth, a student from Plainfield, is one of 949 students to make the Dean's List, reserved for those who demonstrate great academic performance.

## Russell Named to Dean's List

POTSDAM, N.Y. – Michael Kai Russell of Plainfield, a sophomore majoring in environmental engineering, was named to the Dean's List for the fall 2020 semester at Clarkson University. Dean's List students must achieve a minimum 3.25 grade-point average and carry at least 14 credit hours.

## Local Students Named to Dean's List

BURLINGTON – Students Dean's List are Ciara Benfield, Joseph Buonanno and Wenzdae Wendling of Wolcott; Tessa Brimblecombe and Ivan Shadis of Marshfield; Elizabeth Brown of Craftsbury; Samuel Fought and Justin Murray of Calais; Sally Weinstein and Eli Wilson of Plainfield; and Rebecca Whipple of East Hardwick.

# OUR COMMUNITIES

## Collage Workshop for Children Begins Feb. 2

HARDWICK – Grass Roots Art & Community Effort (G.R.A.C.E.) will host a workshop series designed to teach young children about collage making and books.

This virtual event will include lessons posted every Tuesday, beginning February 1, with discussions the following Monday for the entire month of February.

Collage Workshop for Kids by Shannon Merenstein will be used as a starting point, with Eric Carle picture books being the focus of this four-week workshop format. Basic concepts of paper use, color, texture, shape and line will be introduced in an active, literacy rich format.

This series is free. The deadline for registration is January 25th to register visit [eventbrite.com/e/kids-explore-collage-workshop-for-children-tickets-133268428457](https://eventbrite.com/e/kids-explore-collage-workshop-for-children-tickets-133268428457) or

go to [graceart.org](https://graceart.org).

Kits of art materials will be available for pick up at GRACE's Old Firehouse and will include directions, materials, and a copy of each of the Eric Carle books used for the lessons. Books include: "Head to Toe," "Brown Bear, Brown Bear What Do You See," "Have You Seen My Cat?" "The Very Hungry Caterpillar."

A short video (10-15 minutes) will be uploaded to the G.R.A.C.E. website, [graceart.org](https://graceart.org), with our instructor welcoming participants, reading aloud the story of the week, and giving instructions for Lesson One. Families will have until the following Monday to complete the project, and then they will be able to log on to a Zoom community with the instructor and all other participants from 10 to 11 a.m. to share artwork and connect.

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Funding for development of this project made possible through a Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development Small Business Recovery Technical Assistance grant awarded through Northern Community Investment Corporation.

[NEKsafe.com](https://NEKsafe.com)



photo by Vanessa Fournier

Workers for Kingdom Construction, Inc. of Newport frame up the roof on a bay window January 6 on the new Leesa Fine addition to the Craftsbury Public Library.



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**HAZEN UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT #26  
PUBLIC INFORMATIONAL HEARING ON THE FY22 BUDGET  
on February 22, 2021, at 7 p.m.**

Public can call into the meeting using this number: +1 678-256-3930  
PIN: 821 696 533# or by using this link [meet.google.com/ycf-pxqp-rqu](https://meet.google.com/ycf-pxqp-rqu)

The legal voters of Hazen Union School District No. 26 consisting of the Town School Districts of **Greensboro, Hardwick and Woodbury** are hereby warned to meet for the Hazen Union School District #26 **Public Informational Hearing on the FY22 Budget** online via a google meeting, on Monday, **February 22, 2021**, at 7 p.m. for discussion on the school district's proposed FY21 budget as required by Title 17 VSA 2680 (g).

**Article 1:** To elect the following school district officers for the ensuing year: (Voting by Australian Ballot on Tuesday, March 2, 2021)

- School District Meeting Moderator
- District Clerk
- District Treasurer
- Alternate District Treasurer

**Article 2:** Shall the voters of the school district authorize the following salaries to be paid for the officers and directors of the school district? (Voting by Australian Ballot on Tuesday, March 2, 2021)

School Board Chair - \$ 0/yr.  
School Board Member - \$0/yr.  
District Treasurer - \$2,500/yr.  
Alternate District Treasurer - \$96 per payroll worked  
District Clerk - \$25/yr.

**Article 3:** To elect the following school district officers for the ensuing year (Voting by Australian Ballot on Tuesday, March 2, 2021)

- **Greensboro** - School Board Director for a term of three years.
- **Hardwick** - School District Director for a term of three years.

**Article 4:** Shall the voters of the school district authorize its school board to borrow money pending the receipt of payments from the member districts and state funds as provided in Title 16 of the Vermont Statutes? (Voting by Australian Ballot on Tuesday, March 2, 2021)

**Article 5:** Shall the voters of the school district approve the school board to expend \$6,692,354, which is the amount the school board has determined to be necessary for the ensuing fiscal year? It is estimated that this proposed budget, if approved, will result in education spending of \$19,068 per equalized pupil. This projected spending per equalized pupil is 3.44% lower than spending for the current year. (Voting by Australian Ballot on Tuesday, March 2, 2021)

**Article 6:** Shall the voters of the school district authorize the school board to transfer \$96,454.04 of unobligated year end fund balances as of June 30, 2020 to a reserve fund used for all buildings established pursuant to Title 24, Section 2804 to be used for building maintenance and repairs? (Voting by Australian Ballot on Tuesday, March 2, 2021)

**WARNING HAZEN UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT #26  
PUBLIC INFORMATIONAL HEARING ON THE FY22 BUDGET  
on February 21, 2021, at 7 p.m.**

Public can call into the meeting using this number: +1 678-256-3930  
PIN 821 696 533# or by using this link [meet.google.com/ycf-pxqp-rqu](https://meet.google.com/ycf-pxqp-rqu)

Voting on the aforementioned Article 1- 6 will be by Australian Ballot on Tuesday, March 2, 2021, between the hours of:

a. Nine (9) o'clock in the forenoon (a.m.) at which time the polls will open and seven (7) o'clock in the afternoon (p.m.) at which time the polls will close at the polling places for the following member towns  
**Hardwick: Hardwick Fire Station, Hardwick, Vt.**

b. Between the hours of ten (10) o'clock in the forenoon (a.m.) at which polls will open and seven (7) o'clock in the afternoon (p.m.) at which time the polls will close at the polling place for the following member town:  
**Greensboro: Greensboro Town Hall, Greensboro, Vt.**  
**Woodbury: Woodbury Town Hall, Woodbury, Vt.**

Upon closing of the polls, the ballot boxes will be sealed, reopened at the polling place in the town of Hardwick, the ballots commingled and publicly counted.

The legal voters of the Hazen Union School District #26 are further notified that voter qualification, registration and absentee voting relative to said meeting shall be provided in Chapter 43 of Title 17, Vermont Statutes Annotated.

Dated at Hardwick, Vermont this 18th day of January, 2021  
Brett Stanciu, Andrew Meyer, Stephen Freihofner,  
Amy Rosenthal, Mike Metcalf  
Hazen Union School District #26 School Board Directors

Attest: Tess Martin, District Clerk  
Date: 1/18/2021

# Craftsbury School Board Holds Equity Training Session

by June Pichel Cook

CRAFTSBURY – The Craftsbury School Board met with Equity Counselor Hilary Maynard at Wednesday's board meeting to participate in an equity training session.

At the outset of the session, Maynard explained the umbrella agreements which form a foundation for the process.

Core elements are care, dignity, and belonging, centering on "belonging" and avoiding "marginality," Maynard explained. An important element in the process is for participants to have a sense of safety and freedom from judgment. The session was a reflective practice of moving from the adult modeling of power to a power sharing modality.

She explained the process is breaking down rigidity in top-down structure. Building together requires an understanding of the intentions each person brings to the process. It is important to consider reframing something that has caused offending in the past,

actively listening, not as something to respond to, but actually listen; and challenging ideas that may arise from experiences. She noted we speak from our experiences, and there is wisdom in experience.

The exercise involved thinking back to early educational experiences and remembering the names of those historical figures who were studied. Racism isn't going to be solved overnight, Maynard said, and we must look at what is the story being told and whose story we are telling.

In her report, Principal Merri Greenia spoke about Dominique Dubuque's historical inquiry class participating in the Hamilton Education Program through the Gilder Lehrman Institute this fall. Students learned about the American Revolution through the musical, Hamilton, and analyzing primary sources of the era. Three students had their end-of-unit projects submitted to a contest sponsored by the Gilder Lehrman Institute; winners will win a three-day, two-night trip to New York City and to see Hamilton

when Broadway reopens.

Greenia reported that in-person classroom learning is back to 85 percent. The shortened school day has been used for teacher planning time to facilitate in-person, hybrid, and remote classrooms. Finding time and space for individual and small-group tutorial support has been the greatest challenge. The Vermont Agency of Education is requiring all districts to "present a plan for helping students make up for learning loss due to the pandemic," Greenia noted.

Greenia reported she addressed the middle- and high school students on the attack on the U.S. Capitol. Her remarks, she indicated, were similar to those Senator Ben Sasse of Nebraska made to legislators after the 6-hour siege ended.

"Truth matters," Greenia said, "and I pointed out how Craftsbury teachers across the grades teach students to use evidence to support their ideas." She indicated that Senator Sasse also said that the heart of America and American

democracy could be found in the towns and neighborhoods across the country. Greenia explained that teachers continued conversations about the horrific events of last Wednesday, and the best path forward and discussions as events unfold.

Joseph Smith has been hired to teach middle and high school art for the remainder of the year. Gabriella Silva has been hired as a long-term substitute in physical education.

"Both PE classes and winter sports are running smoothly under her leadership," Greenia stated.

Greenia stated in her report that positive conversations with students and parents about the increased benefits of in-person learning versus remote learning. Although remote learning is supported, students are discouraged from deciding on the basis of choosing remote for reasons of convenience.

Tracking student progress and providing remedial support is ongoing, reinforcing both equity and excellence, she indicated.

## WARNING

### Orleans Southwest Union Elementary School District

PUBLIC INFORMATIONAL HEARING ON THE FY22 BUDGET, February 23, 2021, at 7 p.m.

Public can access the meeting using the number 1-513-816-0443 PIN: 864 459 042# or by using this link [meet.google.com/gky-hecp-nqr](https://meet.google.com/gky-hecp-nqr)

The legal voters of the Orleans Southwest Union Elementary School District, consisting of the Towns of Greensboro, Hardwick, Woodbury and Stannard are hereby warned to meet online via google meeting on February 23, 2021, at 7 p.m. The assembled meeting shall constitute the Public Informational Meeting for discussion on the proposed FY22 school district budget and Articles as required by Title 17 VSA 2680 (g).

The following articles will be voted on March 2, 2021, by Australian Ballot in the Towns of Greensboro, Hardwick, Woodbury and Stannard.

**Article 1:** To elect the following school district officers for the ensuing year: (Voting by Australian Ballot on Tuesday, March 2, 2021)

- School District Meeting Moderator
- District Clerk
- District Treasurer
- Alternate District Treasurer

**Article 2:** Shall the voters of the school district authorize the following salaries to be paid for the officers and directors of the school district? (Voting by Australian Ballot on Tuesday, March 2, 2021)

School Board Chair - \$0/yr.  
School Board Member - \$0/yr.  
District Treasurer - #2,500/yr.  
Alternate District Treasurer - \$25 per days worked  
District Clerk - \$30/yr.

**Article 3:** To elect the following school district officers for the ensuing year (Voting by Australian Ballot on Tuesday, March 2, 2021)

- Woodbury- School District Director for a term of three years
- Hardwick- School District Director for a term of two years
- Hardwick- School District Director for a term of three years
- Hardwick- School District Director for a term of three years
- Greensboro- School District Director for a term of three years

**Article 4:** Shall the voters of the school district authorize its school board to borrow money pending the receipt of payments from the member districts and state funds as provided in Title 16 of the Vermont Statutes? (Voting by Australian Ballot on Tuesday, March 2, 2021)

**Article 5:** Shall the voters of the school district approve the school board to expend \$7,048,823 which is the amount the school board has determined to be necessary for the ensuing fiscal year? It is estimated

that this proposed budget, if approved, will result in education spending of \$18,844 per equalized pupil. This projected spending per equalized pupil is 3.11% higher than spending for the current year. (Voting by Australian Ballot on Tuesday, March 2, 2021)

**Article 6:** Shall the voters of the school district authorize the school board to transfer \$8,850.00 of unobligated year end fund balances as of June 30, 2020 to a reserve fund established pursuant to Title 24, Section 2804 to be used for building maintenance and repairs for all buildings? (Voting by Australian Ballot on Tuesday, March 2, 2021)

**Article 7:** To determine whether to authorize the Board of School Directors, pursuant to the provisions of 16 V.S.A. §563(10) & (11)(C), to provide mailed notice to residents of the availability of the Annual Report and proposed school budget in lieu of distributing the Annual Report and proposed budget. (Voting by Australian Ballot on Tuesday, March 2, 2021)

Voting on the aforementioned Articles will be by Australian ballot Tuesday, March 2, 2021, Nine (9) o'clock in the forenoon (a.m.) at which time the polls will open and seven (7) o'clock in the afternoon (p.m.) at which time the polls will close at the polling places for the following member towns:

**Hardwick:** Hardwick Fire Station, Hardwick, Vt.

Between the hours of ten (10) o'clock in the forenoon (a.m.) at which time the polls will open and seven (7) o'clock in the afternoon (p.m.) at which time the polls will close at the polling place for the following member town:

**Greensboro:** Greensboro Town Hall, Greensboro, Vt.

**Stannard:** Stannard Town Hall, Stannard, Vt.

**Woodbury:** Woodbury Town Hall, Woodbury, Vt.

Upon closing of the polls, the ballot boxes will be sealed, reopened at the polling place in the town of Hardwick, the ballots commingled and publicly counted.

The legal voters of the Orleans Southwest Union Elementary School District are further notified that voter qualification, registration and absentee voting relative to said meeting shall be as provided in Chapter 43 of Title 17, Vermont Statutes Annotated.

Dated at Hardwick, Vermont, this 12th day of January, 2021:

Kim Silk, Samantha Friend, Katherine Ingram,

Orise Ainsworth, Rose Modry

Orleans Southwest Elementary School Board Directors

Attest: Lorelei Wheeler, District Clerk

Date: 1-15-2021

## Skiing Fun at the Craftsbury Outdoor Center



As part of Cabot's Winter Wellness Program, students Emmett Steinert (left), Aiden Morse (center) and Olivia Smith (right) ski at the Craftsbury Outdoor Center on January 15. Grades 1-12 participate and will visit three to five times. The Center offers complimentary passes and rentals so students can enjoy the facility.



Students Mekiah Smith (left) and Olivia Smith (right) ski at the Craftsbury Outdoor Center Friday as part of Cabot's Winter Wellness Program.



Students participating in Cabot's Winter Wellness program at the Craftsbury Outdoor Center (from left) Ethan Searles, Jacob Tidd, Scarlett Wetmore and teacher Michael Crocker.



Cabot teacher Thomas Dunbar (right) instructs students (from left) Mekiah Smith, Aiden Morse and Brody Moran before heading for the trails at the Craftsbury Outdoor Center January 15.

**Photos  
by  
Vanessa Fournier**

# THIS WEEK'S EVENTS

## Thursday, January 21

**JAQUITH PUBLIC LIBRARY**, 122 School St., Rm. 2., Marshfield, Tuesday through Friday, 9 a.m. - noon and 3 - 6 p.m. Curbside service only. Home deliveries available for senior citizens within a 10 mile radius. Information: 802-426-3581 or [jaquithpubliclibrary@gmail.com](mailto:jaquithpubliclibrary@gmail.com).

## Friday, January 22

**BLACK LIVES MATTER/Peace and Justice Vigil**, 5 - 6 p.m., Fridays, Peace Park, Hardwick. All welcome.

**JAQUITH PUBLIC LIBRARY**, 122 School St., Rm. 2., Marshfield, Tuesday through Friday, 9 a.m. - noon and 3 - 6 p.m. Curbside service only. Home deliveries available for senior citizens within a 10 mile radius. Information: 802-426-3581 or [jaquithpubliclibrary@gmail.com](mailto:jaquithpubliclibrary@gmail.com).

**MAGICAL DISPLAY OF LIGHTS**, 5 - 8 p.m., Highland Center for the Arts grounds, 2875 Hardwick St., Greensboro. Take in the warmth of glowing fires and enjoy live music. HCA Cafe will serve light dinner fare, desserts and drinks. Wear outdoor gear. Social distancing and masks required. Purchase tickets at [highlandartsvt.com](http://highlandartsvt.com).

## Saturday, January 23

**BLACK LIVES MATTER/Peace and Justice Vigil**, 3 - 5 p.m., Saturdays, South Main at Wolcott Street, Hardwick. All welcome.

**MAGICAL DISPLAY OF LIGHTS**, 5 - 8 p.m., Highland Center for the Arts grounds, 2875 Hardwick St., Greensboro. Take in the warmth of glowing fires and enjoy live music. HCA Cafe will serve light dinner fare, desserts and drinks. Wear outdoor gear. Social distancing and masks required. Purchase tickets at [highlandartsvt.com](http://highlandartsvt.com).

## Monday, January 25

**CELEBRATE RECOVERY**, Mondays, 6 p.m., Touch of Grace AG

Church, 104 Vt. Rt. 16, E. Hardwick. Men's Addiction Group. Information: 802-279-2185.

## Tuesday, January 27

**JAQUITH PUBLIC LIBRARY**, 122 School St., Rm. 2., Marshfield, Tuesday through Friday, 9 a.m. - noon and 3 - 6 p.m. Curbside service only. Home deliveries available for senior citizens within a 10 mile radius. Information: 802-426-3581 or [jaquithpubliclibrary@gmail.com](mailto:jaquithpubliclibrary@gmail.com).

## Wednesday, January 27

**JAQUITH PUBLIC LIBRARY**, 122 School St., Rm. 2., Marshfield, Tuesday through Friday, 9 a.m. - noon and 3 - 6 p.m. Curbside service only. Home deliveries available for senior citizens within a 10 mile radius. Information: 802-426-3581 or [jaquithpubliclibrary@gmail.com](mailto:jaquithpubliclibrary@gmail.com).

**EAST HARDWICK GRANGE SUPPER**, a free meal for the community, Wednesdays, 5 - 6 p.m. Caledonia Grange #9, 88 East Church St., East Hardwick. A curbside dinner for the whole family to enjoy. Information or delivery: [easthardwickgrange@gmail.com](mailto:easthardwickgrange@gmail.com) or 472-8987.

## Exhibits

**HIGHLAND CENTER FOR THE ARTS**, Greensboro, 2875 Hardwick St., outdoor art experience. Ski or snowshoe at your own pace, and on your own time, in and through artwork by Vermont artists. The 1.8-mile trail begins at HCA and loops to the neighboring Wilson Farm. Open daily, weather permitting from dawn to dusk. Social distancing and masks required. Register online at [highlandartsvt.org](http://highlandartsvt.org).

**ELIZABETH NELSON/ICELAND**, The Satellite Gallery, 71 Depot St., Lyndonville. 802-229-8317. [facebook.com/thesatellitevt/](https://www.facebook.com/thesatellitevt/) through January 31. Open Wednesday and Saturday, noon to 4 p.m. or by appointment.

To get your event listed free in our weekly events calendar, please e-mail: [news@hardwickgazette.com](mailto:news@hardwickgazette.com).



*photo by Vanessa Fournier*  
A patron of the Jeudevine Library in Hardwick uses the handheld wood moisture meter to check the moisture content of firewood. The device can be loaned out from the library for a week at a time. Twenty percent or less moisture content is suitable for burning. Vermont Agency of Natural Resources Department of Environmental Conservation in partnership with 48 libraries throughout the state have made the device available.



*photo by Vanessa Fournier*  
This snowman was spotted at the home of Kim and Josh Wells on Elm Street in Hardwick.



*photo by Vanessa Fournier*  
A frosty scene with branches bending along the Lamoille River on Sunday morning after a very wet, heavy snowfall over the weekend.



*photo by Vanessa Fournier*  
Looking down Winter Street in Hardwick Sunday after the weekend's heavy snowstorm.

## COMMUNITY COMMENT

### Co-workers Remember Mark Lichtenstein

#### Jeri Wohlberg FNP, Craftsbury

As a provider new to the Hardwick Health Center, my initial reaction was “who is this cowboy?”

But as I spent time working alongside Mark, I came to realize that he was a man before his time.

Although some of his medical decision making made me nervous as a more “by the book” healthcare provider, his relationships with patients, built on years of trust and mutual respect, were the basis for his sometimes unorthodox approach

Mark was a pioneer in harm reduction before it was a “thing”. He had the ability to meet patients where they were, see the best in them ... even under challenging circumstances. He was a supportive presence to those who followed mainstream medical practices, and to those who chose an alternative approach. Without judgment.

Before it was standard of care, Mark engaged in shared decision-making conversations and encouraged patients to help make their own healthcare choices. He had a keen way of aligning with those from all walks of life.

After his retirement, I spent countless visits listening to patients tell the stories of Dr. Mark and express their dissatisfaction with anyone else.

He could not be replaced. Mark was a teacher to all of us. He will be greatly missed.

#### Sarah Morgan MD, Hardwick

I had the privilege of having Mark as a colleague and mentor for my first 10 years in practice at the Hardwick Health Center.

Mark supported my growth as a clinician, making himself available for any question, no matter how busy or how late it

was. He gave me good advice (“always try to get your notes done same-day,” “don’t sweat the small stuff; look at the bigger picture”) and was transparent and open in all professional matters.

He inspired in me a love of caring for the elderly, and for those nearing the end of life. But most of all, I appreciate and honor Mark’s deep commitment to care holistically for his patients. He probed the social, economic and often traumatic histories that influenced his patients’ health, and in his nonjudgmental way, tried to meet people where they were at.

He was a great listener and took the time his patients needed, which means he often ran late, and worked late into the evenings. He did home visits, saw patients after-hours and on weekends, and provided end-of-life care. Although at times his work ethic bordered on the unsustainable (and I’m sure resulted in many a late dinner!), his remaining colleagues and staff strive to honor his legacy by remaining focused on person-centered, comprehensive care.

#### Brook Marcotte RN, Cabot

I was a new nurse when I met Mark and was lucky enough to work with him during the final years he practiced medicine and luckier still to call him a friend.

One of Mark’s best qualities, and one that endeared him to his patients – or sent them running, was his direct way of communicating. All alone this quality can easily cause offense – and that was the experience of some, but if you stuck around and got to know him, you began to understand that his directness came from an understanding and acceptance of the human condition.

He looked at a problem, a disease, a life, honestly and the advice he gave was delivered with that same honesty. I think it was this quality, coupled with a deep caring for his patients, that made him a pioneer in end-of-life medicine.

Death, and the walk toward it, is not something we deal with well in this culture. As medical professionals, we are hardwired to help, to heal, to save. It is often difficult to flip the switch and accept that our pursuit of healing is futile, or worse, harmful. Mark’s approach to hospice care was as refreshing and ground-breaking as

his care of those in their prime. He was honest with himself and his patients about when it was time to focus efforts on comfort rather than improvement. He respected death as the last milestone of a life and his reverence for the final journey was felt and ultimately shared by patients, their families and his colleagues.

Mark’s unconventional wisdom and unparalleled commitment to his patients profoundly shaped my philosophy around patient care. I will forever and fondly remember this brilliant, dedicated, brave person who meant so much to so many.

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# YANKEE NOTEBOOK

## Teaching Was my Racket, Then

by Willem Lange

EAST MONTPELIER – Foghorn? Right here! Give it a toot; make sure it's working. Thank you. Bilge pump? Port side of center-board trunk. Is it working? I don't know. Two plastic buckets? Right here! Fill one of 'em to check if the bilge pump's working. Good. Charts?

And so it went, from the duffel bags and main sprit down to the water jugs and the pair of dividers in the chart case. It was like the takeoff checklist of an airliner. Everything had to be on board and working and stowed where it belonged. Finally, we cast off bow and stern, I quoted Bert and I – “Give the doc a push with the oar, Bert!” and we were off among the islands of the coast of Maine.

Teaching was my racket then. I'd been at it only three years when I stumbled across a Life magazine article about Outward Bound. Several unsuccessful job applications later, I was hired by the Hurricane Island school for the summer of 1965 as a substitute for an instructor who couldn't make it. My wife and I loaded up our two kids and the 1954 Ford wagon and drove to the coast.

My first job, upon arriving at the pier at low tide, was getting Mother up the slippery green vertical ladder, which she refused to climb in a skirt. After that, it was building our 16x16-foot

tent platform – “Lumber's on the pier; tools are in the boathouse.” A run through the ropes course and initiative tests with the other instructors, and I finally met a pulling boat.

Thirty feet long, eight feet wide, built like bank vaults, and, naturally, heavy, the school's pulling boats – so-called because their main reliable source of locomotion was rowing (“pulling”) – were the central metaphor we were attempting to teach. A brighter person than I would have figured out much faster than I eventually did that all of the experiences on the island were metaphors. Our job as instructors was to ensure the transfer of the lessons of the experiences to the lives to which the students would be returning afterward.

Neither you nor I, probably, can climb over a smooth wall fourteen feet high, even with the help of a friend who also must get over. A group of twelve teenagers -- we called them “watches” – of all shapes, sizes, and backgrounds can do it. But it takes some organization, leadership, testing, and cooperation. The message hovering above every activity – morning run around the island and (for many) a terrifying leap off the pier into 45° water; initiative tests (the wall and a crocodile-infested canyon); capsizing drill; cleaning stations – was that only when everybody in the watch succeeds does the watch succeed. One watch of mine had a



courtesy photo

Our watch in our pulling boat running rapids.

275-pounder. Confronting the wall for the first time, they asked, “Is it okay if he doesn't go over but somebody else goes twice?”

And so to the pulling boats. Though there were often some yacht club members' sons in a watch, it's safe to say that none had ever wrestled a crowded thirty-foot sprit-rigged cat ketch with a twelve-oar auxiliary through the rocks, reefs, and fogs off the Maine coast. It took a bit of time to get everybody familiar with port and starboard, coming about, jibing, stretchers, tiller, pintles, gudgeons, and centerboard pennant. Then, finally, we could begin.

That boat was their miniature planet: It had aboard it all they needed to survive for the length of their planned trip. It was their means of survival and of getting anywhere; if they broke it, they were going nowhere. It had to be watched around the clock, with regular log entries. At anchor, the watch had to record soundings every half hour, and keep a journal

going through their shift (while their crewmates tried to sleep on a bed of oars laid lengthwise side by side atop the seats).

The stories of the crew's adventures and misadventures would – in fact, did – fill a book. But my constant concern was that they could see how, in spite of all their differences in talent, physical ability, ethnicity, and background, the great lumbering pulling boat was their world, and if they took care of it, would in turn take care of them. Also, that great lumbering 275-pounder who I dictated led the morning run each day before breakfast – that boy could pull on a ten-foot oar fit to break it! When he rowed, the boat moved! And when it came to the tug-of-war contest at the end of the course, he was, as the old hymn goes, their fortress and their might. I watched them leave, waving happily, with the usual mix of relief and regret. And my usual fervent hope is that I might get a dozen members of Congress into a pulling boat for a couple of weeks.

### THE Hardwick Gazette Since 1889

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**EDITOR**  
Ray Small

**SPORTS EDITOR EMERITUS**  
Dave Morse

**PHOTOGRAPHER**  
Vanessa Fournier

**CIRCULATION**  
Dawn Gustafson

**PRODUCTION**  
Sandy Atkins, Dawn Gustafson

**CONTRIBUTING WRITERS**  
Sandy Atkins, Michael Bielawski,  
Ken Brown, June Cook,  
Jim Flint, Eric Hanson,  
Pat Hussey,  
Willem Lange, Doug McClure,  
Daniel Métraux,  
Joyce Slayton Mitchell

**ADVERTISING SALES**  
Erica Baker

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Julie Atwood

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photo by Vanessa Fournier

Craftsbury students board their buses after school dismissal Friday.

# ANOTHER OPINION

## A Tale of Two Towns: Separate and Still Inherently Unequal

by David Kelley

GREENSBORO – A classroom of students in Hardwick is different than a classroom of students in Shelburne. One difference is that at Hazen Union in Hardwick 80% of the students are on free and reduced lunch. In Shelburne 12% of the students are on free and reduced lunch.

Underneath those numbers lurks a more complicated difference. In some ways they are not just different towns, but two very different worlds. It isn't just about free lunches. It is explained more fully by different numbers: numbers about alcoholism, drug abuse and incarceration rates, divorces, substandard housing, and relief from abuse petitions, not to mention the more mundane differences like the numbers of internet connections and home computers.

More than two decades ago our Supreme Court decided that wide disparities in per pupil spending throughout Vermont rendered our educational funding formula unconstitutional. Our General Assembly responded with a statewide property tax that purportedly equalized spending, if not opportunity, and since then we have bandied about the word "equity" without any serious consideration of what we were talking about.

This year that may finally change. A group of representatives has introduced H. 54. The bill recognizes that, for more than 20 years, many of Vermont's smaller and poorer school districts, have been overtaxed and underfunded.

Comparing teaching in Hardwick, Lowell, Richford, Coventry and Glover to teaching in Shelburne, Williston and Charlotte is a little like comparing triage to an annual check-up. In many Northeast Kingdom schools, the best teachers aren't just teachers. They are social workers, caretakers, trauma therapists and, in some cases, de facto parents.

In Lowell, Richford, Coventry, Glover, and countless other small rural communities throughout the Northeast Kingdom, the challenges and the salaries in our schools are turned upside down. The average teacher's salary in

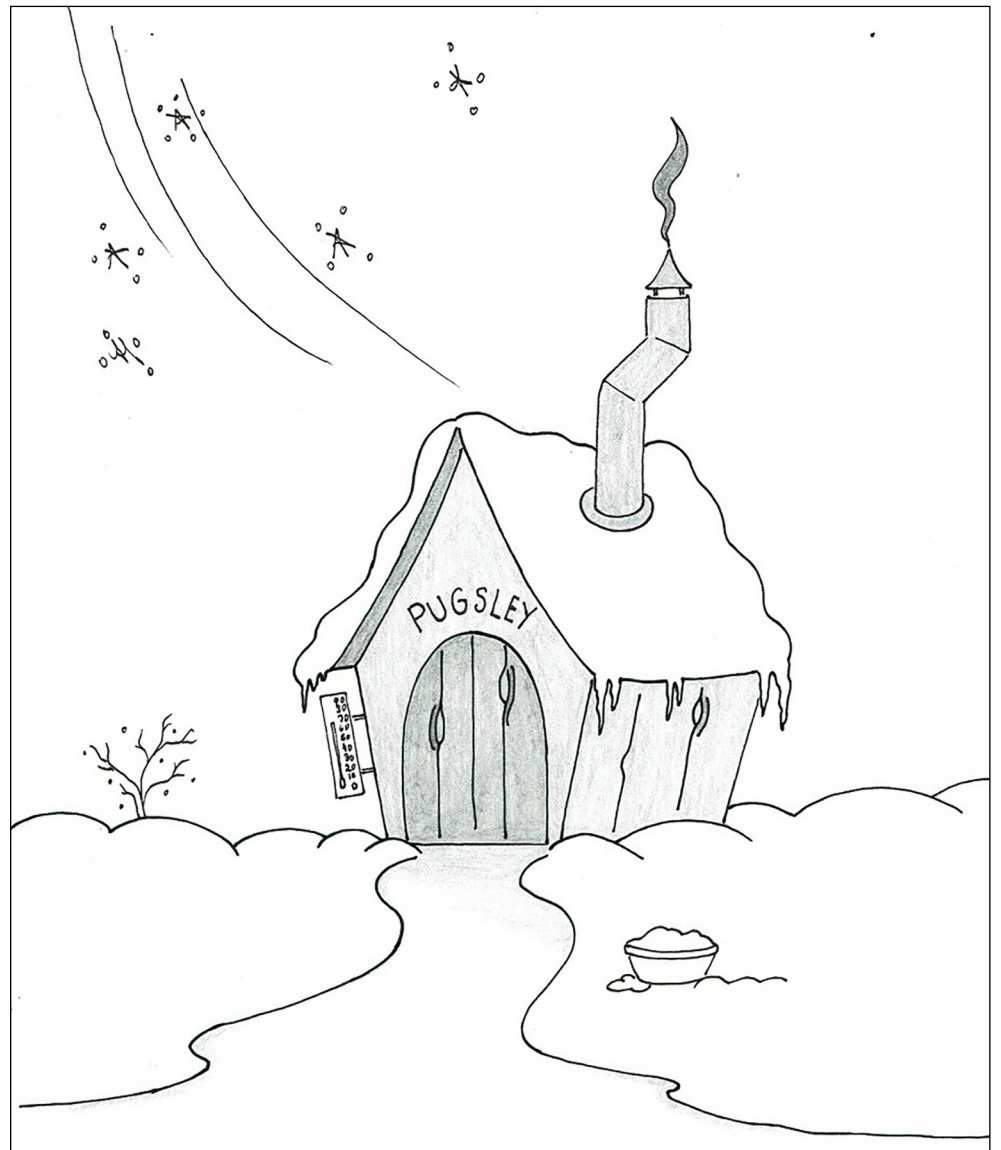
towns like South Burlington and Colchester now exceeds \$80,000. The average teacher's salary at the Richford Middle School and High School is \$49,629 while the statewide average is about \$61,000. But teachers' salaries are only one piece of a much more complex mosaic. In some corners of rural Vermont poverty has become generational, and in many ways is being worsened by bad public policies.

We recently began a process in some areas of closing our small, rural schools. In the process we will be sending some of our most disadvantaged students to schools further from their homes, with longer bus rides, with less opportunity to participate in extracurricular activities, and with even less opportunity for working parents to participate in parent teacher conferences. If Addison Central Unified Union (ironically, one of the more affluent districts in the State) is any harbinger of things to come, then we will also be spending more, not on teaching, but on more busing, more bricks and mortar and eventually more administrators. In terms of "equity" we would be hard put to design a more regressive formula for at-risk students.

H. 54 isn't perfect. It makes the funding formula even more unfathomable for voters and school boards. But most importantly H. 54 finally begins to take into account some of the extra challenges and costs associated with teaching in economically disadvantaged and sparsely populated communities. It is a proposal that is about 20 years overdue.

Progress is rarely linear, and it is usually measured in millimeters, not miles. H. 54 will not solve every challenge confronting small, rural schools, and it certainly won't solve every problem facing our neediest students. Meaningful jobs, decent housing, and more genuine opportunity is a taller order than this Legislative session is going to fill. But H. 54 is one small step toward making educational funding more "equitable," making smaller, poorer school districts more sustainable, and hopefully giving more disadvantaged students a greater chance at the education they need and deserve.

## Woodsmoke by Julie Atwood



"BRRR, PLEASE DON'T FORGET ABOUT YOUR PET!"

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# IN THE GARDEN

## Helping Your Plants to Survive the Winter

by Henry Homeyer

CORNISH FLAT, N.H. – If you are like me, you buy new perennials, trees and shrubs every year. Most plants sold locally are hardy, but not all. It's good to know the "zone hardiness" of plants before you buy them, and how the zone maps work. In a nutshell, the colder the climatic zone, the lower the number.

The USDA (Department of Agriculture) has created maps showing the climatic zones of all states and regions. They are based on many years of temperature records and rate each zone according to the coldest average temperatures in each zone. Summer temperatures are not considered in creating the hardiness zones.

Each zone covers a 10-degree range of temperatures. The coldest zone in New England is Zone 3, which includes places where temperatures each winter range between -40 and -30 degrees Fahrenheit. Some maps include an "a" and "b" designation to further describe the zones. An "a" is 5

zone. The key is to get them well established before winter arrives, and to provide them with growing conditions that are optimal – sun, soil and moisture levels that correspond to their needs. You probably cannot grow perennials and woodies that are rated for two zones warmer than yours, but one zone is generally possible.

Some trees and shrubs will survive in a colder zone but might not bloom every year. Or ever, for that matter. Here in Zone 4, old fashioned wisteria vines that do well in Connecticut or Rhode Island will survive but their flower buds (which are set the summer before) are spoiled by our cold, so they do not bloom.

Harvey Buchite of Rice Creek Gardens in Blaine, Minnesota, wanted a wisteria that would bloom in his Zone 4 gardens. He was given a seedling on his wedding day 34 years ago, one started from a seed of a fairly tough hybrid. His turned out to be a wonder vine, and he named it the Blue Moon Wisteria, and sold it for many years. It blooms reliably after winter temperatures



courtesy photo

*Blue Moon wisteria blooms on new wood, so is not bothered by cold winters.*

can be improved by mulching the roots of your delicate or borderline-hardy plants. I bought a Japanese Andromeda (*Pieris japonica*) this year, even though it is only hardy to Zone 5. In the fall I spread a thick layer of leaves around the base to keep the roots warm as winter approached. I could have used bark chips instead, which is also a good mulch.

Trees and shrubs extend their roots in the fall up until the ground freezes, and I wanted my little shrub to grow as big a root system as possible. And later, when temperatures drop to minus 20 and below, I wanted to keep the roots protected.

That Andromeda was loaded with flower buds when I bought it. I may wrap it with burlap or landscape fabric to protect those blossoms from harsh winter winds, though I haven't yet. In the long run it will have to survive on its own – I have too many plants to fuss over them all every year. The first year is always the most important – once established, plants are tougher.

Sometimes freezing and thawing of the ground will push a

plant up and part way out of the soil. This allows roots to be exposed to the air, freezing and dehydrating. That is almost always lethal. But this usually only happens the first winter after planting. Check new plants after a thaw, and if a plant has popped up, push it back down and mulch it well.

Wrapping shrubs or small trees with burlap or a synthetic, breathable cloth will help to protect flower buds from desiccation and dieback. I find roses in my climate often are badly burned by winter winds, but I rarely do anything to protect them. I just cut back the roses to green wood in April or May, and they bloom nicely. I cut back a nice double red "Knockout" rose to the ground this past spring, and it rewarded me with dozens of blossoms all summer, starting in June.

I do lose some plants to winter conditions most years, but don't feel bad about that. As I see it, I learn something each time one dies, and losing one plant means I can try a new one! Or, if a particularly loved plant does not survive in one location, I may buy another and plant in a different spot.



courtesy photo

*Burlap will help protect this heirloom rose planted late in the season.*

degrees colder than a "b". So, Zone 4a is minus 25 to 30, and 4b is minus 20 to 25.

Trees and perennial plants that survive in Zone 4, which includes much of Maine, Vermont and New Hampshire, should be hardy to -30 degrees, though we often only see minus 20 degrees. Zone 5 is -20 to -10, Zone 6 covers areas where temperatures range between -10 and zero, and Zone 7, which includes much of Rhode Island, temperatures only drop down to zero or 10 degrees above.

All that said, you can grow perennials, trees and shrubs that are not rated to be hardy in your

of 30 below. The reason for its success? Blue Moon, unlike most other wisteria, blooms on shoots grown in the current season – on new wood.

I called Harvey Buchite in 2006 and he reported that even after hard winters it will bloom, and often three times each summer. I've had one since 2004 and get a very nice set of blooms each year around the Fourth of July. It usually reblooms a little in the fall. Others have been developed since then that will bloom in Zone 4, including "Amethyst Falls" which I grow and like even better.

Survival rates in a cold winter



courtesy photo

*This Japanese andromeda is a Zone 5 plant in my Zone 4 garden, but should survive.*

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**Important Annual Notice Regarding Herbicide Use in the Maintenance of Electric Utility Rights-of-Way**  
The Vermont Public Utility Commission has set forth rules under PUC 3.600 pertaining to the use of herbicides in the maintenance of electric utility rights-of-way. Each spring, herbicide applications may begin on or after April 1. These rules afford you important rights and duties. Vermont electric utilities maintain electric line rights-of-way with several methods, including the selective use of herbicides on trees and brush. They also encourage low-growing shrubs and trees which will crowd tall-growing species and, thus, minimize the use of herbicides. Methods of herbicide applications may include stump, stem injection, basal, soil and foliar. **Only electric utility rights-of-way that have tall-growing tree species with the potential of threatening the electric utility system are treated.**  
**If you reside on or own property in Vermont within 1000 feet of an electric utility right-of-way:**  
1. **Sign up to receive written notification** from your local electric utility of plans to apply herbicide on any ROW within 1000 feet of your property or the property where you reside. Check nearby poles for tags identifying the utility and/or pole number, complete the form below and submit it to your local electric utility by mail before February 15, 2021, to be added to the notification list. If determined to be qualified, you will receive notification from the utility at least 30 days prior to scheduled herbicide application.  
2. **You are responsible to make your local electric utility aware** of the location of any potentially affected water supply, and of any other environmentally sensitive area where herbicide application ought to be avoided.  
3. **Watch and listen for public service announcements** in newspapers and radio ads noting upcoming herbicide applications.  
4. **Check with your local electric utility** regarding the vegetation management cycle near your particular line.  
5. **You have the right** to request, in writing, that the utility refrain from applying herbicides in the process of clearing the right-of-way, and the utility may offer alternatives such as herbicide stump treatment or herbicide stem injections.  
6. **You have the right** to refuse, in writing, the use of herbicides whatsoever at no cost to you if the type of lines in the right-of-way are **distribution lines**, bringing electric service directly to individual customers.  
7. **You have the right** to refuse, in writing, the use of herbicides whatsoever by paying a \$30 administration fee if the type of lines in the right-of-way are **transmission lines or sub-transmission lines**, bringing electricity to or between substations.  
**For more details, or to ask additional questions, please contact your local electric utility, or one of the following:**  
Vermont Electric Power Company VELCO      Agency of Agriculture      Department of Public Service  
366 Pinnacle Ridge Road      Public Health & Ag. Resource Mgmt.      Consumer Affairs & Public Information  
Rutland, VT 05701      116 State St., Montpelier, VT 05602      112 State St., Montpelier, VT 05602  
Attn: Scott Carlson (802) 353-3584      1-802-828-2431      1-800-622-4496  
**Based on the information above, if you believe you qualify to be notified in advance of pending herbicide applications in the rights-of-way, mail the request below to your local electric company before February 15, 2021.**

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**Resident/Property Owner Request to be Added to Herbicide Treatment Notification Mailing List**

Name	Town/City of Affected Area		
Street Address	Home Phone Number		
Town	Work Phone Number		
State	Zip Code	O.K. to use work number" (circle one)    Yes    No	
Electric Utility Account Number	Best time to contact you		
Affected Property:	Year-round residence	Summer residence	Commercial property
	Water Supply	Organic Farm	Land    Other (circle all that apply)
Line/Pole identification	Pole numbers		
Utility initials			

Please fill out this request to help us determine if you qualify for herbicide treatment notification.  
**MAIL THIS REQUEST TO YOUR LOCAL ELECTRIC UTILITY BY FEBRUARY 15, 2021.**

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# SPORTS

## Craftsbury Academy Continues to Nurture Athletic Program Under Silva

by Ken Brown

CRAFTSBURY – ACT 46 and economics have made the small Vermont high school and its athletic programs all but extinct in the last four years. Craftsbury Academy (CA) has bucked the odds by rebooting its girls' soccer and softball programs in the past two seasons and will field a varsity girls' basketball team for the first time in three years this winter under new athletic director Gabriela Silva.

Silva, a former star athlete at Stowe and a graduate of Guilford College in North Carolina, found herself back in the Northeast Kingdom this past spring when the global pandemic hit. She saw an opportunity to continue the work of former athletic director, Amy Thompson, who stepped down after three years, and at just 24 years old, finds herself doing what she always dreamed of: teaching,



photo by Vanessa Fournier  
Craftsbury Academy's athletic director, Gabriela Silva, continues to reboot the school's athletic programs with the first varsity girls' basketball team in three years.

coaching, and leading.

"I came home after COVID-19 really started to hit and I saw the

opening at CA and just went for it. I have a bachelors in exercise and sports science with a minor in sports psychology and physical education management. I think it has been a good fit for both of us so far and I'm very appreciative for all of the help and support I've received from the school and the community. It came really fast and I'm still learning every day, but it has always been my dream to coach and lead an athletic program," said Silva.

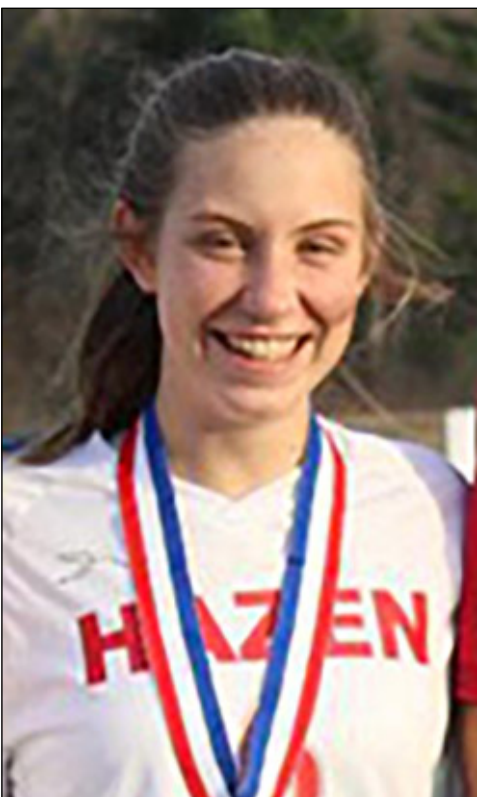
Silva will also be the head coach of the varsity girls' basketball team this winter, a program that has been dormant since their Final Four appearance at the Barre Auditorium in 2017. She has 11 girls conditioning and practicing and is looking forward to the challenge of keeping varsity athletics alive at CA. One of her first hires was Tyler Gillespie, who replaces Evans Bouchard as the head coach of the boys' varsity program. Gillespie is a Lamoille alum and has coaching experience

at the AAU level with the Vermont Hoopsters. The boys' side has also seen a good turnout at practice so far with 11 strong.

"My playing and coaching background is in lacrosse and soccer, so I got a chance to get to know a lot of the student athletes this past fall. It has been a collective effort to recruit a lot of the kids here to come out for basketball this winter and so far we've seen some great numbers. Tyler loves to teach the game of basketball and I think he'll be a great fit for what we're trying to build here. We will be a very young program this year and we'll be focusing on building fundamentals to try and create a good foundation for the future," said Silva.

Governor Scott gave the green light for Vermont high schools to begin full basketball practices and scrimmages this past Monday. If COVID-19 infections continue to decrease, the hope is that varsity competition will begin later this month or early February.

## Molleur Joins Elite Company



courtesy photo  
Hazen Union's Macy Molleur has been named to Vermont's 24-member soccer team to compete with New Hampshire's in the 46th Twin State Lions Cup.

by Ken Brown

HARDWICK – Hazen Union's Macy Molleur cemented herself as one of the top soccer players in Vermont this past

week as she was selected to the 46th Twin State Lions Cup team.

Molleur made the 24-player roster after a stellar senior campaign that saw her lead the Lady Cats to a Cinderella run to the Division IV state title match this past fall. She found the back of the net a career-high 16 times, including seven during the post-season. The senior striker's Twin State selection puts a cherry on top of sensational career that saw her lead the Lady Cats in scoring the past two seasons, as well as being named a First Team All-Mountain and All-State selection.

The annual soccer match pits Vermont's best seniors against New Hampshire's every summer, but the match was canceled last year due to COVID-19. All-State selections are normally invited to tryout for the Twin State roster at the conclusion of the soccer season, but the team was selected strictly based on in season performance this year. The 46th Twin State Lions Soccer Cup is tentatively scheduled for July 17 at Hanover, N.H., with both boys' and girls' matches scheduled.



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