

THE NEWSletter

The Newsy Little Paper
That Supplements Other Media

Volume 33 Number 9 December 2024



With best wishes for a peaceful 2025.

A New Year Means Town Meeting and Town Elections

TOWN MEETING MIGHT NOT BE until May 3 but preparing for it starts **Jan. 2**, when citizens' petitions start being accepted for the warrant, or meeting agenda.

They'll be accepted at the town clerk's office until 4 p.m. **Jan. 31**.

Each petition must be signed by 10 people registered to vote in Great Barrington. (NOTE: With any list requiring a certain number of signatures, it's best to get more. A few years ago, a candidate for library trustee had a signature that couldn't be certified. That meant he lacked enough signatures and wasn't on the ballot.)

The proposed operating and capital budgets will start being reviewed soon by the Selectboard and Finance Committee, with people able to ask questions and give their views during citizens' speak time and at a to-be-scheduled public hearing.

The Planning Board must complete by **March 27** all public hearings for proposed changes in the town's zoning bylaws and the Selectboard must approve the final town meeting warrant by **April 14**.

Town meeting will be **Saturday, May 3**, at 2 p.m. at Monument Mountain Regional High School. The change from the usual Monday evening is to see if attendance will increase.

Great Barrington was incorporated in 1761, so this will be its 263rd annual town meeting.

The last day to register to vote is **April 23**.

How To Be On Election Ballot

Nomination papers to be on the ballot will be available in the town clerk's office from **Feb. 3 to March 24**.

Local political parties no longer nominate candidates so turning in nomination papers signed by 30 registered voters is the only way to be on the printed election ballot.

Town elections will be **May 13** from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Candidates can have write-in votes on the ballot.

Vacancy on Selectboard

An already-known vacancy is the **Selectboard** seat that was held by Leigh Davis, who resigned from the board Dec. 31 and now represents the

Third Berkshire District in the Massachusetts House of Representatives.

Selectboard Chairman's Term Ends

Also up for election to another 3-year term is Selectboard chairman Steve Bannon.

Other positions with terms ending this year are, according to information on the town website:

-Board of Health, 3-year term: chairman Michael Lanoue.

-Board of Library Trustees, 3-year terms: chairman Sharon Shaloo, Lauren Clark and Dr. Ruby Chang.

-Finance Committee, 3-year terms: Milena Cerna and Madonna Meagher.

-Housing Authority, 5-year term, vacancy to be filled.

-Moderator, 1-year term: Michael Wise.

-Planning Board, 3-year terms: chairman Brandee Nelson and Jeremy Higa.

-Zoning Board of Appeals, 5-year term: clerk Carolyn Ivory.



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Meetings and More Planned So Far in January

MEETING AGENDAS are posted on the town's website at townofgb.org, and sent by THE NEWSletter. The agendas tell where to attend and provide a Zoom link, if needed.

A meeting held with all members there in person may still be held even if a Zoom link doesn't work, according to the Division of Open Government.

Watch Past Meetings Online

Recordings of many meetings are on Community Television for the Southern Berkshires at ctsbvtv.org, YouTube and the Selectboard's website page. You can watch on your computer or on Spectrum cable television channels 1301 (public), 1302 (education) and 1303 (government).

Some boards, the Claire Teague Senior Center and town libraries have their own websites.

The Berkshire Hills Regional School District's website is at bhrsd.org. It, the town, Cultural Council, police and fire departments also have Facebook pages.

The following meeting dates may change and more almost certainly will be added.

January

- Board of Health meets Jan. 9, 6:30 p.m.
- Planning Board meets Jan. 9 & 23, 6 p.m.
- Selectboard meets Jan. 13, 6 p.m.
- Great Barrington Housing Authority to continue public hearing on its annual plan, followed by board meeting, Jan. 15, 1 p.m.
- Library Trustees meet Jan. 15, 5:30 p.m.
- Berkshire Hills Regional School Committee meets Jan. 16 & 30, 6 p.m.
- Historic District Commission meets Jan. 16, 5:30 p.m.

- “Meet the Librarians” is Jan. 18, 5 to 7 p.m., Ramsdell Library
- Martin Luther King Day observed Jan. 20.
- Parks Commission meets Jan. 20, 5:15 p.m.
- Affordable Housing Trust Board meets Jan. 21, 6:30 p.m.
- Cemetery Commission meets Jan. 22, 3:15 p.m.
- BHRSC's Building Committee meets Jan. 22, 5:30 p.m.
- Conservation Commission meets Jan. 22, 6:30 p.m.
- Housatonic Improvement Committee meets Jan. 23, 6:30 p.m.
- Deadline to submit citizen petition is Jan. 31, 4 p.m.
- NEED TO ADD LIBRARY MEETING AND LIBRARY GATHERING**

Libraries, Senior Center, Recycling Center Information

THE TOWN'S TWO LIBRARIES have a website at gblibraries.org. The website lists programs for many interests and different ages.

THE NEWSletter sends the libraries' monthly newsletter to its email list.

The New York Times, New York Times Cooking, Berkshire Eagle, Washington Post and THE NEWSletter can be read free online. Anyone with a Massachusetts library card can sign up for a Boston Public Library e-card.

Books, CDs and DVDs can be ordered by calling Mason Library at 528-2403 or emailing masonramsdell@gmail.com or bark.cwmars.org. Wifi is available on both libraries' lawns and Mason's parking lot.

Museum passes are also available.

Mason Library

Mason Library on Main Street, Great Barrington, is closed Sundays and open Monday through Fridays from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Its phone number is 528-2403.

Ramsdell Library

Ramsdell Library on Main Street, Housatonic, is open Sundays from 1 to 4 p.m., Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 1 to 6 p.m.; closed Thursdays and Fridays, and open Saturdays, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Its phone number is 274-3738.

Ramsdell has a loaning **Library of Things**, including visual reality goggles, a sewing machine and a staple gun.

THE CLAIRE TEAGUE SENIOR CENTER at 917 South Main St. offers activities and fitness classes, lunches and help with technology, driver-license renewals, and more. Its phone number is 528-1881.

Its website lists lunch menus and is at greatbarringtonseniors.org.

Staff is available Mondays through Fridays to answer calls and offer counseling for SHINE, Serving the Health Insurance Needs of Everyone.

Big Y donations are available Mondays and Wednesdays.

THE NEWSletter sends “Grapevine,” the center's monthly newsletter, to subscribers who have requested it.

SOUTH COUNTY CONNECTOR, fka Tritown Connector, bus service has a new website, socoride.org.

The town transit program provides transportation for people who call 413-591-3826 at least 48 hours in advance.

A Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation grant lets the program offer free service until 11:30 p.m. Fridays for veterans, except for Pittsfield medical rides; and for seniors and for people with disabilities needing transportation to local food pantries and free meal sites.

THE RECYCLING CENTER on Stockbridge Road, across from Monument Mountain Regional High School, is open Fridays, 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.; Saturdays, 7 a.m. to 3 p.m.; and Sundays, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Its fees are at townofgb.org/recycling-transfer-station.

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How To Subscribe

Twelve issues (one year) are \$35 for the print version within the 012 zip code or \$30 for the emailed one anywhere.

Cost to get the printed TN by bulk mail outside the 012 zip code is \$40. Cost for first class for a year (12 issues) is \$50.

Cost to receive THE NEWSletter in large type is \$40 for 12 issues, plus the annual print subscription.

Checks should be payable to THE NEWSletter and mailed to it at POB 567, Housatonic 01236.

Both the written and emailed versions include **free emails** — agendas, news

updates, forwarded material — sent between issues. Your name and email address are kept confidential **unless** you're an elected or appointed public official.

You can forward everything to as many people as you want,

but having THE NEWSletter send the emails between issues is \$5 a year for each name.
-EWM



Town Manager Search Committee To Be Appointed

News of Selectboard, Affordable Housing Trust Board

THE SELECTBOARD plans to appoint in January a seven-member town manager search committee to work with Community Paradigm Associates of Plymouth in determining finalists to succeed Mark Pruhenski.

Mr. Pruhenski announced at the Oct. 21 meeting that his last day at work in Great Barrington will be Jan. 14. He starts Jan. 15 as town manager of Middlebury, Vt.

Assistant town manager Chris Rembold will serve until Mr. Pruhenski's successor starts.

That hiring should be done by March 10, according to a projected timeline based upon a Nov. 25 start. However, the firm was not officially hired until the selectmen's Dec. 2 meeting so timelines might change.

The timeline calls for initial interviews of semi-finalists by Jan. 27, followed by reference and background review, with finalists referred to the selectman in February.

Interviews of the finalists will be in public.

Town Meeting on Saturday, May 3

The selectmen voted 4-1 Dec. 2 to set the town meeting date for **Saturday, May 3, at 2 p.m.**

People work on Saturdays, Garfield Reed observed. He voted against changing from the usual Monday night.

During discussion, board chairman Steve Bannon said he hopes there is a quorum (100 voters) to start the meeting.

Eric Gabriel said he was disappointed that only 197 people responded to a poll about the preferred day. Of that number, 185 are registered to vote in town.

"The best way to see if it works is to try it," Ben Elliott observed.

Child Care Committee Formed

Members are sought for a child care committee, which the selectmen on Dec. 19 agreed to form. Mr. Elliott had requested it.

The committee's charter is reproduced in this issue.

Selectboard Now Is Four Members

To avoid the cost of a special election, the selectmen decided to wait until the **May 13 town elections** to fill the vacancy caused by the Dec. 31 resignation of Leigh Davis.

Ms. Davis has been elected as the Third Berkshire District's state representative.

Eric Gabriel, nominated by Ms. Davis, was unanimously elected to succeed her as Selectboard vice chairman.

Lawyer Hired for HWW Negotiations

The board agreed to retain Eric J. Krathwohl, a partner at the firm of Rich May, PC, to represent it in negotiations to acquire Housatonic Water Works.

His resume from the Dec. 2 Selectboard packet is reproduced in this issue.

READERS: To avoid the appearance of conflict of interest, I do not report on the Great Barrington Housing Authority or send its minutes as I am an elected member of its board. -EWM

Mercer Called About Selling HWW

The vote was continued Dec. 2 after Mr. Krathwohl, attending on Zoom, said he had talked to Jim Mercer, HWW co-owner and treasurer, who was seeking legal advice about selling the company.

Mr. Krathwohl said he had only one conversation with Mr. Mercer and it was more than a year ago.

Ms. Davis said she was uncomfortable that they had talked and Mr. Gabriel suggested a more thorough search for lawyers be conducted.

After Mr. Bannon reported Dec. 19 that Finance Committee chairman Phil Orenstein found there are few lawyers experienced in negotiating with water companies, the vote to retain Mr. Krathwohl was unanimous.

Resident Michelle Loubert did not agree with retaining him, calling it "not ethical" because he had talked with Mr. Mercer.

Other Board Actions

The selectmen voted Dec. 2 to transfer \$5,992.29 to the General Fund's long-term debt service principal account. The funds, left from surplus funds borrowed for now-completed projects, will be used to pay principal on town indebtedness.

They adopted Dec. 19 a resolution to support the state's Healthy Incentives Program. It supplements federal SNAP funds.

The resolution notes that HIP funds of \$10,545 were distributed to 77 Great Barrington families to buy fresh produce at farmers' markets during the past year.

The selectmen also on Dec. 19 approved several licenses and permits for 2025.

* * *

THE AFFORDABLE HOUSING TRUST board will buy **255 Park St., Housatonic — the former Rising ball park** — in January for development as affordable housing.

Berkshire Natural Resources Council, is selling the property for \$86,850. The Housing Trust board has the funds.

Plans to buy the property were discussed during executive sessions last Jan. 16 and Aug. 20. The board released those minutes for its Dec. 19 meeting.

According to the Aug. 20 minutes, Fred Clark, co-chairman with Ananda Timpane, said the "parcel is ideal for housing and is consistent with the Great Barrington Housing Plan. It is an infill site in an established neighborhood and is on the main travel route."

A Phase 1 Environmental Site Assessment, dated Dec. 4 and done by Roux Associates of Burlington, found the site has no adverse environmental issues.

That report is available from the board or THE NEWSletter, which received a copy.

During its Dec. 19 meeting, the board agreed Mr. Clark should request technical assistance from the Massachusetts Housing Partnership and USDA Rural Developmental programs. There is no charge for such aid, he said.

Land has been cleared for the board's other project — Prosperity Way on North Plain Road.

Property Tax Exemption Proposed

A subcommittee of Peter Most, Bill Cooke and Kryisia Kurzyca have proposed a property tax exemption, based on MGL chapter 59, section 50.

Their proposal is intended to promote availability of new — not existing — affordable housing rentals in town.

As approved at the board's meeting, the town's total property tax exemption would be limited to \$150,000 a year, with applications reviewed and approved on a first-come, first-served basis until the exemption ceiling has been met for the fiscal year.

A tax break could make ADUs (affordable dwelling units) feasible, Mr. Cook commented.

The board's final proposal will go to the Selectboard for placement on the May 3 annual town meeting warrant.

(NEWS continues on page 4)

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DAC Reviews Apartment Plans; Planning Board

The draft proposal discussed at the housing trust's board meeting is reproduced in this issue.

* * *

GREAT BARRINGTON'S DESIGN ADVISORY COMMITTEE has reviewed plans for 20 market-rate apartments at **546 Main St.** and members want to see changes.

Topa Enterprises sold the property in June to AM Management 2 LLC for \$200,000.

Kathleen McCormick, the applicant's attorney, said special permits will be needed to reduce the size of the parking spaces and to allow the project in a water quality protection district.

The project is allowed by-right — no special permit needed — as it is in a mixed-use transitional, or MXD, zone, she noted.

According to Kimberly Shaw's minutes of the committee's Oct. 16 meeting, Jim Scalise of SK Design said the plan is for one building of two and a half stories and 1.85 parking spaces, which, he said, exceeds the MXD requirement of one space per unit.

DAC Members' Comments

North and south elevations "look artificial" and "the pitch of the roof looks clunky," chairman Jennifer Clark said during discussion.

The minutes continue that "Mr. Scalise said he is not disagreeing. He said a 20 unit multi-family building does not leave much flexibility."

Member Jackie Kain said she wants to see an elevation shift or a building with more character.

"Mr. Scalise said we will go back and work on it," the minutes state. He agreed that "landscaping will help too."

Member Fred Clark "recommended replacing the trees that will be removed. The Tree Committee can recommend tree species, he noted.

Building 'Is Not Friendly'

The "building is not friendly," he said later. As now proposed, "the building turns its back on the community with a lack of windows."

Mr. Clark noted that first-floor units "appear to be 900 square feet and the second-floor units are 800 square feet."

The committee has not commented on exterior materials or window size, he observed. He thanked the applicant for building housing.

The minutes are on the committee's page on the town website at townofgb.org/design-advisory-committee

At THE NEWSletter's deadline, no date had been set for the plans to go before any other board.

A site plan presented to the committee did not reproduce for inclusion here but is available from the committee.

Design Advisory Committee Members

Also at the meeting was committee member J.B. Brodeur. Member Bobby Houston and alternate member Jim Mercer were not present.

Also not present was building commissioner Matthew Kollmer, a nonvoting ex officio member.

Members are appointed for five-year terms. Ms. Clark and Mr. Houston represent design professionals; Ms. Kain, Planning Board; Mr. Clark, Historic District Commission; Ms. Brodeur, citizen-at-large; and Mr. Mercer, Historic District Commission alternate.

What Is Committee's Purpose?

According to its website page:

"The Design Advisory Committee reviews applications for all actions that are subject to the provisions of their Town by-law and to work cooperatively with owners of land, buildings and businesses. The committee shall make recommendations to the appropriate decision making body and/or the applicant concerning compliance of the proposed action to the design review standards in the bylaws."

* * *

PLANNING BOARD MEMBERS are asking Bard College to have someone talk with them in January about the **future of its Simon's Rock**, which is closing after the spring semester.

The property, with more than 200 acres, will be for sale, as THE NEWSletter has reported.

Buildings and their uses — such as the arts center and pool — are allowed now be-

cause they are part of the college, an educational use allowed in any zoning district.

Without that use, though, some buildings will not be allowed in the residential district, board chairman Brandee Nelson noted.

Jonathan Hankin suggested waiting to see if the property is for sale and for what use. Ms. Nelson said she wanted to propose something to the May town meeting. She was concerned, she said, that the property could be vacant for years.

Trailers Not Discussed

"Mobile homes and trailers" were on the agenda but the board agreed to wait to discuss a zoning change to allow them.

Pedro Pachano and associate member Jackie Kain were not present and should be for the discussion, they agreed. Malcolm Fick said he also wants Joseph Method, who proposed allowing them, and other Affordable Housing Trust board members to be present.

Mr. Hankin felt board members "owe our people better" than a trailer.

Ms. Nelson said the board should think about saying "no" to using land that could provide housing.

There have been no applications for accessory dwelling units, she noted.

Replacing the planned unit residential development zoning bylaw with a new clustered residential development was not discussed.

* * *

ALL EIGHT MEMBERS of the **Community Preservation Committee** have voted to recommend that town meeting voters approve grants for six requests, including \$375,000 to the Affordable Housing Trust board.

(NEWS continues on page 5)

How To Reach State Senator, Representative

STATE SEN. PAUL MARK has office hours in the Great Barrington Town Hall the first and third Monday of the month from 9 a.m. to noon.

His district office is at 773 Tyler St., Pittsfield. Telephone number is 413-464-5635 there and 617-722-1625 at the State House.

His constituent services director, Casey Pease, is at casey.pease@masenate.gov.

* * *

STATE REP. LEIGH DAVIS does not yet have office hours but can be reached at 413-854-4623 or by email at rpleigh@gmail.com. Her aide, Serena Keenan, starts Jan. 6.

Emotional Distress?

Text 988, the suicide and crisis lifeline. Free and confidential emotional support is available 24/7. Veterans can press 1; for Spanish, press 2. Chat and more information are at 988lifeline.org/chat.

Looking for a Home?

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cell: 646-438-1329

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<https://youtu.be/YATqYuLSVC8>

Bishop West Real Estate Inc. in Massachusetts, New York,
Florida, Vermont

Amount Includes \$375,000 to Affordable Housing Trust

CPC Recommends Voters Grant Total of \$905,800

However, they also voted Jan. 18 not to recommend funding two requests — work at Olympia Meadows and Richard Stanley's request for improvements to housing units at 284 Main St.

Total recommended funding in all categories is \$905,800.

All recommended applications are on the committee's page on the town website, town-ofgb.org

A report, presented by category, follows and includes discussion at the Dec. 10 and 11 meetings.

Open Space

- **Berkshire Natural Resources Council**, construct **new hiking trail** to create a future connection between Thomas and Palmer Reserve and Elmwood Cemetery, \$24,800. The vote was unanimous.

- **Town, replace and upgrade park equipment**, presented by the Department of Public Works for the Parks Commission, \$107,000. Patricia Sharpe, a citizen-at-large member, felt the application wasn't sufficiently clear because photos submitted by the Department of Public Works were not labelled to show their location. Karen Smith, CPC chairman and Parks Commission representative, felt enough information was provided. The vote to fund was 8-0.

List of What Will Be Done

According to the list in the application, three sets of bleachers at Olympia Meadows will be replaced and one-to-two sets will be added;

Also, a swing set at Olympia Meadows and one at Dewey Park will be replaced; 200 to 300 feet of chain link fabric will be replaced on various fencing at Olympia Meadows and Dewey Park;

Also, safety rails will be added to a pre-existing set of bleachers at Memorial Field; basketball hoops, two at the skate park, one at the Grove Street park and three at the Housatonic park; and six dugouts will be stained.

- **Town, Olympian Meadows soccer field** with \$165,000 requested by the DPW for the Parks Commission. The goal is "to rehabilitate the area being used as a makeshift soccer field and create a soccer field close to official size for all levels of soccer play, \$165,000,

This was not funded on a vote of 6-2.

In his presentation Dec. 10, town DPW superintendent Joe Aberdale said the field is multipurpose and highly used for soccer but is not smooth. He urged priority for public requests like the town's before private ones.

Ms. Smith said a security system should be installed first. During the Dec. 11 meeting, Steve Bannon, who represents the Selectboard on the CPC and is also on the Parks Commission, said a security system has not been requested but the CPC can recommend the funds and require a security system.

Ms. Smith said she also wants the park to be more inclusive of people over 70.

Ms. Sharpe noted that equipment is being improved at the park, which is off South Main Street.

Historic District

- **Unitarian Universalist Meeting of South Berkshire**, next to Ramsdell Library in Housatonic, roof replacement, \$54,000.

The original request was for \$87,000 for the entire roof but Jeremy Higa, who represents the Planning Board on the CPC, proposed the lower amount and the vote was unanimous.

William Young, who represented UUM at all three CPC meetings, said the lower amount to fix part of the roof was fine.

The society has spent about \$300,000 on the building, he said. The repairs are needed so the building can be used for day care and after-school programs, he explained when Ms. Sharpe asked about community use.

- Town, preserve Mason Library sconces, \$49,000. The vote was 6-2.

- **Town**, preserve Mason Library's clamshell over front entrance, \$146,000.

Housing

- **Marble Block Realty**, Craig Barnum, manager, 268-274 Main St., **create two workforce housing apartments** with 15-year deed restrictions to 100% of the area median income. The request is for \$150,000, or \$75,000 for each apartment.

In his step 2 application, Mr. Barnum wrote:

"This immediately provides a dignified workforce housing solution in downtown Great Barrington.

"CPA funding request is for \$75k per unit. The approximate cost to create a newly built affordable housing unit is \$500k. This is a significant benefit to taxpayers."

"The electrical upgrade is contingent on receiving CPA funding," he stated in the application. He proposes using \$50,000 for that upgrade and the rest for the roof.

He would provide \$68,692.

The property is on the state's historic building's list, he noted.

The vote to recommend was unanimous, with Mr. Bannon observing Dec. 11 that the building's manager, Craig Barnum, is sincere.

- **Town's Affordable Housing Trust**, to support affordable housing, \$375,000.

The vote was unanimous to recommend that town meeting approve a grant for the funds remaining after CPC members had acted on the other requests.

Kate Van Olst, the Conservation Commission's representative on the CPC, made the motion and Mr. Bannon seconded.

The housing trust's board had requested more. The first paragraph of its original application for step 1 stated it was requesting:

"\$600,000 — the maximum CPC can apply to affordable housing — to fund the Trust as the official town body tasked with

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-Clinton Church Restoration/W.E.B. Du Bois Center for Freedom and Democracy, Community Development Corp., Construct, Cultural District;

-District Attorney, Dewey Hall, Great Barrington Historical Society;

-RSYP, Schumacher Center for a New Economics, Claire Teague Senior Center, and Volunteers in Medicine.

Feel free to suggest more.

Sent To Everyone

Everyone gets information from the town, including Mason and Ramsdell libraries; the Berkshire Hills Regional School District; and the Attorney General's Division of Open Government.

That's because the town — especially its libraries — serves everyone and it and the school district are taxes support them, and the Secretary of State's Division of Open Government oversees the Open Meeting Law, which helps ensure government transparency.

advancing affordable housing to accept, review, fund and oversee all applications and projects related to affordable housing in the Town. In this way, the Trust will answer the urgency of the housing crisis in our community efficiently while minimizing redundancy."

When that application was first discussed Nov. 12, Mr. Higa commented that the trust's board has more time and knowledge than CPC members.

Mr. Bannon said it would take funding decisions out of town meeting's hands. Trust board co-chairman Ananda Timpane said town meeting would be deciding when it votes to fund the amount for the trust.

Ms. Smith has noted that the housing trust board provides requested reports of its work and finances.

Reistan's Request Not Funded

Not funded was a request from **Reistan Enterprises** for \$400,000 for work at 284 Main St.

(NEWS continues on page 6)

CPC continued; DEP Fines HWW

Mr. Stanley's step 2 application called for using \$69,435 of Reistan's funds and \$395,000 of CPA funds.

He estimated \$382,250 to replace the "state closed elevator with modern equipment" and \$82,185 to fix kitchens and bathrooms in 15 units.

Also, pasted from the application:

"The rent for all 27 apartments in the building will all at or below 100% AMI rent for 5 years. 10 of these apartments will have a deed restricted rent at 100% AMI or below for 10 years."

CPC members had held site visits of the Barnum and Stanley properties. At the Dec. 18 meeting, Ms. Van Olst said that 20 years ago she lived in an apartment at 284 Main St. and "nothing has changed" there since then.

The Marble Block will be "dignified," she said, and "not the same product."

Concerned Building Will Be Sold

Richard Geiler, who represents the Finance Committee, said he feels that in five or six years, Mr. Stanley will sell his building and the new owner will make units that are not affordable.

Investing \$400,000 for the elevator makes the building worth more, Martha Fick, a citizen-at-large on the CPC, observed. "Fund the kitchens and bathrooms and put rent control on the building," she suggested.

Jim Mercer, who represents the Historical Commission, asked whether Mr. Stanley would agree to a deed restriction of three units for 15 years, rather than 10. Mr. Stanley said no.

Ms. Van Olst made the motion not to fund, noting that if town meeting voters approve the \$375,000 for the Housing Trust, Mr. Stanley can apply there. Mr. Geiler seconded.

They, Ms. Fick and Ms. Smith voted not to fund and Mr. Bannon, Ms. Sharpe and Mr. Mercer voted to fund. Thus, the motion not to fund passed, 4-3.

Mr. Higa had recused himself from the discussion and vote. He lives at Blue Hill Commons, of which Mr. Stanley is manager.

Approved Projects Drop Out

Four projects had been approved to submit step 2 applications but did not do so.

They are the town to treat invasive plants at Lake Mansfield; Simon's Rock for walking trails and outdoor classrooms; Central Berkshire Habitat for Humanity for 10 houses at Prosperity Way off North Plain Road;

Also, Community Development Corporation South Berkshire to add affordable and workforce housing at Blue Hill Commons and to renovate interior stairways in the Sumner Block.

HOUSATONIC WATER WORKS has been fined \$10,205 for violating 310 CMR 22.00 of the Massachusetts Drinking Water Regulations.

DEP: 'Willful' Violations

According to the Nov. 5 penalty assessment notice, HWW's violations "were willful (not the result of error)."

It could have been fined \$25,000, according to an Oct. 8 letter from Michael J. Gorski, regional director of the Western Regional Office of the state Department of Environmental Protection's Bureau of Water Resources.

(HWW continues on page 7)

Turn extra space into extra dollars...

Would income from a rental apartment help to pay your taxes? The AHTF is offering financial help to homeowners who want to add an *affordable* apartment to their property!

For more information, visit:
www.gbhousing.org/adu-pilot

GB AHTF
 GREAT BARRINGTON • AFFORDABLE HOUSING TRUST FUND

D.O.G.: Assessors' Minutes Are Fine

THE SECRETARY OF STATE'S Division of Open Government oversees the Open Meeting Law and assistant attorney general Carrie Benedon has determined that Great Barrington's principal assessor, Ross Vivori, did not violate the law in his minutes of an Aug. 26 meeting.

I had felt they and the agenda did because the applicants for abatements were not identified.

They don't have to be, Ms. Benedon wrote in a Dec. 30 determination. She wrote (and I divided this into paragraphs for easier reading):

"Applications for tax abatement or exemption are confidential under G.L. c. 59, § 60. Although certain information, such as the name or title in which the tax stands assessed and the amount of any abatement, must be made public once an abatement has been granted, the Board is not required to release that information before that time. See G.L. c. 59, § 60.

"It was therefore sufficient for the meeting notice to state generally that the Board was considering applications for abatement or exemption under chapter 59, section 60, and the Board did not violate the law by not listing on the notice for its August 29 meeting the specific applications to be discussed in executive session."

Also, she wrote (and I divided the paragraph):

"Nonetheless, we remind the Board that the Open Meeting Law requires public bodies to 'create and maintain accurate minutes of all meetings, including executive sessions,' and that minutes must include, among other things, 'a summary of the discussions on each subject, a list of documents and other exhibits used at the meeting, the decisions made and the actions taken at each meeting, including the record of all votes.'" G.L. c. 30A, § 22(a).

"Furthermore, once the purpose for which a valid executive session was held has been served, the minutes 'shall be disclosed unless the attorney-client privilege or 1 or more of the exemptions under [the Public Records Law] apply to withhold' the minutes, or any portion of the minutes, from disclosure. G.L. c. 30A, § 22(f).

Assessors' Page Has Many Links

The assessors' page on the town website (townofgb.org) has many helpful links.

If you've ever wondered how much different properties pay in taxes, you can go to https://www.axisgis.com/great_barringtonma.

Links are also there if you want to file for an abatement from the Community Preservation Act or see its property guidelines or file for an abatement from real or personal property tax.

Other links include one for general information about taxes and assessments.

"Accordingly, once the Board has completed its review of abatement applications in executive session, it may no longer withhold the executive session minutes under the Open Meeting Law, although it may redact or withhold the executive session minutes as otherwise required or allowed by law.

"The Board may not, however, create insufficient executive session minutes as a means to protect confidential information; instead, it must create sufficiently detailed and complete minutes of each executive session and then redact the minutes as appropriate before release. See OML 2022-189."

Apologized To Mr. Vivori

I hadn't felt that chapter 59, section 60 enabled that information to be withheld from minutes. Now I know, and I have apologized to Mr. Vivori for causing a fuss.

I had already asked D.O.G. to review executive session minutes to ensure they comply with the Open Meeting Law.

Information Available in 'Book'

The applicant and abatement are kept in a "book" that actually is on a computer.

When I asked to see the "book," Mr. Vivori promptly gave me a printout of all abatement requests and the results in 2024. It's a public document for anyone.

And anyone who wants to read Ms. Third, The total amount of the tax Benedon's determination can get it from me or town clerk Josh Risen.

-Eileen W. Mooney

New 3-Story High School Proposed; Lots More News

HWW Fines, cont.

The letter states that two test labs were involved and neither conducted a confirmation sample. Neither a lab nor HWW notified DEP within 24 hours of receipt as required that standards for manganese were exceeded.

The Oct. 8 letter was reproduced in the October NEWSletter.

Reasons for Fines

The \$10,205 is the total of assessments for fines for four different reasons. They are, with the fine:

- **310 CMR 22.03(1)(b): \$8,625**, “(1) No source of water used by a Public Water System, no system of water supply used by a Public Water System, and no treatment facilities or treatment works used by a Public Water System shall be deemed by the Department to be safe, fit, or pure, or in any other way approved; and no Supplier of Water, or other Person subject to a requirement of 310 CMR 22.00 shall supply drinking water to the users of a Public Water System, including without limitation for emergency use; unless that Public Water System complies with 310 CMR 22.00.”

- **310 CMR 22.03 (2), \$290**, “A Supplier of Water, upon request by the Department, shall sample and analyze its water for any parameter, at any location and frequency, deemed necessary to prevent the pollution of and secure the sanitary protection of waters used as sources of water supply and to ensure the delivery of a fit and pure water supply to all consumers, in accordance with 310 CMR 22.00. All results of such sampling and analysis shall be reported to the Department as directed and in accordance with 310 CMR 22.00. A Supplier of Water that fails to report such results to the Department as directed, and in accordance with 310 CMR 22.00, shall be presumed to have failed to conduct such monitoring.”

- **310 CMR 22.15 (2): \$290**, “Unless a shorter reporting period is prescribed elsewhere in 310 CMR 22.00, the Supplier of Water shall report to the Department the results of every test, measurement or analysis the Supplier of Water is required by 310 CMR 22.00 to make within the shorter of the following time periods: (a) the first ten days following the month in which the results are received; or (b) the first ten days following the end of the required monitoring period as stipulated by the Department.”

- **310 CMR 22.16 (3): \$1,000**, “Public Water Systems Required to Notify. Each Supplier of Water for a Public Water System (Community Water Systems, Non-transient Non-community Water Systems, and Transient Non-community Water Systems) shall give notice for all violations of National Primary Drinking Water Regulations ...” (3) covers required special notices.

(NOTE: The above was pasted from regulations online.)

That letter notified Jim Mercer, treasurer and, with his father, an owner of HWW, that HWW failed to provide missing iron and manganese analytical results from a July 24 test.

THE BUILDING COMMITTEE overseeing plans for an improved Monument Mountain Regional High School building has submitted to the state’s School Building Authority its preferred schematic report for a **three-story school to be built against the side of a hill on the present campus.**

The vote Dec. 17 was unanimous and followed a Dec. 4 vote of 14-1, with building committee member and school district building administrator Sharon Harrison the only “no.”

She had said she preferred the design for a new two-story building.

Renovation Choice Eliminated

A third option -- renovating the present building and adding a large addition -- was unanimously eliminated when discussion began Dec. 4 on which option to choose.

Members had said in several meetings that renovation would take longer and be disruptive. That would hurt enrollment, member Bill Fields observed.

Also, as shown in the last NEWSletter, it might cost almost as much as a new building.

Choice Seems Least Expensive

As presented, the preferred building is the least expensive, with perhaps a district — or taxpayer — cost of \$99 million or \$109 million, depending on whether a contractor’s agent is used. That’s after deducting School Building Authority financial aid of an assumed \$53,533,000 from the total cost of \$131,130,000 or \$127,238.

Donna DiNisco, principal of DiNisco Design, said costs were separately estimated three times and stayed the same. She emphasized, however, that they are only estimates at this point.

More definite costs and SBA funding will be available before the final plan goes to voters in the district’s three towns, probably next October.

Ms. DiNisco updated the school committee Dec. 12 with plans and estimated costs. Monument staff also preferred the chosen option, she noted.

The school committee did not vote on the building committee’s preference. School committee chairman Steve Bannon had told THE NEWSletter that the building committee would recommend and the school committee would decide but it seems only the building committee’s decision is needed, at least at this stage.

Where To See, Hear Information

Recordings of the building committee’s meetings and additional information are on its website at monumentbuildingproject.org

The next committee meeting is **Jan. 22** at 5:30 p.m.

New Vocational Program Requested

The school district is asking the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to support a new vocational program at the high school.

Monument now has nine vocational programs — advanced manufacturing, healthcare, business and finance, computer science and information technology, all in Innovative Pathway, plus Monument Mountain TV (MMTV).

It also has, as accredited, state-approved vocational technical education Chapter 74 programs, automotive, agriculture/horticulture, early education and care, and wood technology/carpentry.

That last program would be shifted to a Chapter 74 program for either carpentry, electricity or plumbing.

The goal is to have the program in place when the proposed new high school opens, probably in 2029 -- that is, if voters in district towns Great Barrington, Stockbridge and West Stockbridge vote next fall to fund it.

Automotive Program Gets Grant

The automotive vocational program has received a \$129,810 Skills Capital grant, awarded by the state’s Workforce Skills Cabinet, which works to align education, economic development, and workforce policies to meet employers’ demand for skilled workers in every region of Massachusetts.

The competitive grants are awarded to educational institutions that demonstrate partnerships with local businesses, as well as align curriculum and credentials with industry demand to maximize hiring opportunities, according to a news release.

The funds will be used for such equipment as a 10,000-pound Scissor rack, tabletop tire changer, and high-capacity wheel-balancer.

(NEWS continues on page 8)



402 Park Street

P.O. Box 547

Housatonic, MA 01236

housatonicrealestate.com

413.274.5065

HIC, Police Captain, Library Reception, EMS Regional

FLOORPLANS from an architectural charrette, or design session, considering reuse of the **former Cook's Garage at 426 Park St. in Housatonic** will be considered at a **Jan. 23** meeting of the Housatonic Improvement Committee.

The meeting will start at 6:30 p.m. at Ramsdell Library and by Zoom.

Also attending the charrette was Ashkahn Pajoohi, an adjunct instructor at New York University, who said funding is easier if 20 or more housing units are provided, HIC chairman Angela Lomanto reported at the Dec. 26 session.

After reviewing the plans and possible costs, HIC expects to send the Selectboard a recommendation of how the site could be reused.

The property abuts the Housatonic River. The town owns it because of unpaid taxes.

* * *

LIBRARY TRUSTEES will hold a reception, "**For the Love of Libraries,**" **Jan. 18** from 5 to 7 p.m. at Ramsdell Library in Housatonic.

The event is intended to introduce the public to the librarians.

Those attending are asked to notify librarians at Mason (528-2403) or Ramsdell (274-3738) so the trustees are sure that enough refreshments will be provided.

Poetry Series Starts Jan. 25

A poetry series will be offered at Mason Library from 4 to 7 p.m. on the fourth Saturday of every month from January through April, plus May 31 and June 28.

The trustees received liquor licenses for both programs at the selectmen's Dec. 2 meeting. Friends of the Libraries, a private group, provides the refreshments at library gatherings.

What's Most Distributed Item?

THE NEWSletter asked chief librarian Dawn Jardine: What was circulated the most in the past 12 months?

The New Yorker magazine, she replied.

For books, in order of popularity, the results are:

- "The Covenant of Water" by Abraham Verghese;

- "North Woods" by Daniel Mason;

- "The Women" by Kristin Hannah;

- "The Paris Novel" by Ruth Reichl;

- "The Heaven and Earth Grocery Store" by James McBride;

- "James: a novel" by Percival Everett;

- "The Fraud" by Zadie Smith;

- "Lady Tan's Circle of Women: a novel" by Lisa See;

- "Tom Lake: a novel" by Ann Patchett;

- "Master Slave Husband Wife: an epic journey from slavery to freedom" by Ilyon Woo.

* * *

ADAM CARLOTTO has been named the **Great Barrington Police Department's captain**. He had been a sergeant.

Capt. Carlotto joined the department in 2006. He has also been deputy commander of the Berkshire County Special Response Team.

"Over the past four years, Adam has been second in command for our department. He has demonstrated the ability to oversee the department's operations in my absence," Chief Paul Storti said.

As captain, he will help with oversight of operations, community outreach and training.

Also in the department are sergeants Tim Ullrich and Christopher Peebles, plus 13 police officers.

* * *

GREAT BARRINGTON IS ONE OF 11 towns that will share a \$180,500 grant from the Massachusetts Efficiency and Regionalization Grant Program to support a **Southern Berkshire EMS Regionalization Study**.

The study, led by the Collins Center for Public Management at UMass-Boston, aims to evaluate and implement a regional model to deliver emergency medical services, according to a news release.

A regional task force will work with the Collins Center project team and include representatives from each participating town and service agency.

The task force will start meeting in January at Fairview Hospital.

Besides Great Barrington, towns involved are Alford, Becket, Egremont, Lee, Lenox, Monterey, Mount Washington, New-Marlborough, Otis, Sheffield, and Stockbridge, plus service agencies Action EMS, Berkshire Health Systems and Southern Berkshire Ambulance Inc.

Challenges Facing EMS

Challenges facing emergency medical services in Southern Berkshire include a lack of trained volunteers, increasing service demands and sustainability concerns for ambulance operations.

Purpose and Goals

The study's primary goals are to:

- Develop a sustainable and efficient EMS delivery model for Southern Berkshire County.

- Analyze financial and operational data to recommend governance structures and service delivery strategies.

- Strengthen local EMS capacity through collaboration and shared resources.

Rep. Pignatelli Praised for Project

Heather Barbieri, director of emergency management at Berkshire Health Systems, thanked former state Rep. Smitty Pignatelli "for his vision and advocacy in making this project possible."

Mr. Pignatelli, who retired Jan. 1, said the grant "represents a crucial step in addressing the EMS challenges in our region.

"Ensuring access to reliable emergency medical services is essential for the health and safety of our residents."

About Collins Center

The Collins Center, established in 2008, is part of the McCormack Graduate School of Policy and Global Studies at UMass-Boston, provides technical assistance to municipalities, school districts, regional governments, and state agencies on public management challenges.

EMS, Fire Services Studied in 2018

A previous study, "EMS Organizational Analysis for the Southern Berkshire Region," was prepared in 2018 by Hanifen & Associates LLC and Kramer & Associates and Meyers Emergency Management.

It considered Alford, Egremont, Great Barrington, Monterey, Mount Washington, New Marlborough, Otis, Sandisfield, Sheffield, Stockbridge, Tyringham and West Stockbridge.

The study noted that fire operations and emergency medical services overlap.

Executive Summary

Its executive summary noted:

"While the majority of the emergency service agencies are volunteer or have a small paid crew, the future of many Fire and EMS agencies will focus on staffing to ensure 24-hour service coverage... Paid staffing will only be affordable through a district model of funding."

EMS and fire apparatus were found to be "serviceable but aging."

For new fire and EMS stations, "The importance of a quality location is shown to be an investment far beyond construction costs."

"Regionalization of a paid force coupled with the current volunteer forces will increase the ability to meet the stands on a greater percentage of time and increase the service level to the community."

**Need a ride?
Call the TriTown
Connector!**

The **TriTown Connector** is a *call-for-ride* service, serving Egremont, Great Barrington/Housatonic, and Stockbridge. Call **413-591-3826**.

Visit www.tritown.org

**TRITOWN
CONNECTOR**

AN UNPAID PUBLIC SERVICE AD

Police Report For November

GREAT BARRINGTON POLICE can be reached by calling 911 for an emergency or 528-0306. Police handle ambulance dispatch.

The department's website is greatbarringtonpolice.com and its Facebook page is [facebook.com/GBPDMA/](https://www.facebook.com/GBPDMA/)

The station is at 465 South Main St.

Police officers wear cameras to help document investigations and incidents.

The department participates in the state Disability Indicator Program. Forms are at mass.gov/doc/disability-indicator-form.

The following is from the month's police report. THE NEWSletter identifies people who are arrested but not those who receive a summons.

THE MONTH BEGAN with a fatality. According to a news release from the department, shortly after 6 p.m. Nov. 2, police responded to reports of a single motor vehicle crash on Division Street. They found that a driver had been ejected from a car that rolled over.

The driver, Caleb Carlson, 23, of South Lee, was pronounced deceased at the scene.

The Great Barrington Fire Department, Southern Berkshire Ambulance Squad, and Egremont and West Stockbridge police departments assisted at the scene. Great Barrington police, Massachusetts State Police and the Berkshire County District Attorney's office are investigating.

26 More Collisions Reported

Two other collisions involving one car, 18 involving two cars and one with three cars were reported in November.

Four other vehicles collided with deer. One was on North Plain Road, two on Stockbridge Road, including one at Monument Mountain Regional High School, and one on South Main Street.

One vehicle hit a bear on Alford Road.

Police stopped 47 vehicles, resulting in 44 citations/warnings.

Radar on 15 Public Ways

Police ran radar on 15 public ways. They were, 13 times each, Egremont Plain and Old Stockbridge roads; seven times, State Road;

Also, five times each, Main Street and Van Deusenville and North Plain roads; four each, Taconic Avenue and Monument Valley Road;

Twice each, South Main, Division, Park and East streets and Stockbridge Road; and once each, Oak Street and Egremont Road.

Also during the month, police unsuccessfully helped a hiker at Fountain Park look for his dog, which chased a deer and didn't return.

They unlocked 10 cars.

Seven people were taken to area hospitals after threatening to harm themselves or others.

Comfort dog Archer visited someone who requested he come. Police provided oil to someone whose vehicle had run out.

Butternut Fire Is Controlled

THE BUTTERNUT FIRE was declared controlled on Nov. 28 but the area remains dangerous, Lieut. Brian Mead of the Great Barrington Fire Department has cautioned.

Trees and limbs could fall because root systems were burned out and ground and boulders shift, he cautioned.

"New growth will come in the spring, this area will once again flourish and be as healthy as it ever was," he said in a news release.

"Not one single home or structure was lost or even damaged, nor was any firefighter injured. At the end of an incident of this magnitude that had such risk, that is without a doubt, a victory," Lieut. Mead pointed out.

Cause Being Investigated

Great Barrington fire and police departments and state police assigned to the state fire marshal's office have investigated the cause of the blaze but Fire Chief Scott Turner has said he doesn't think this will be known.

According to the police report, late on Nov. 18, police were notified of a brush fire in the area of Brush Hill Road. A drone showed a large fire behind the Eisner Camp and "far up on the mountain."

3 Miles Long, 10 Miles Wide

The blaze burned about 1,670 acres and, the fire department reported, was more than three miles long and just over 10 miles wide before it was declared "controlled" on Nov. 28.

More than 400 firefighters fought the fire, coming from fire departments in Berkshire, Franklin, Hampshire and Hampden counties, plus an engine crew with wildfire knowledge from Wyoming, the Massachusetts Air National Guard Wing and other state agencies.

The closed Brookside Bridge was opened for emergency use and drones were used to monitor. As reported on page 1 of the last NEWSletter, the fire on East Mountain spread to Sheffield and became known as the Butternut Fire. Butternut Ski Area was used as an operations center but was not otherwise affected by the fire.

Because of drought, the fire department on Nov. 9 had prohibited outdoor fires "at least until Friday, Nov. 15."

Firefighters Appreciated

People left food, beverages and thank you notes for the firefighters. The department wrote on Nov. 26:

"The outpouring of support and encouragement from our community – especially the children that flooded our station with cards, drawings, and letters – makes this job worth it."

Several Brush Fires During Month

Coincidentally, on Nov. 2, Sheffield and Great Barrington responded to the report of a fire at the Eisner Camp's conference center. It turned out to be smoke, according to the police report.

Firefighters also responded to mutual aid requests for a house fire in Stockbridge and a large brush fire in West Stockbridge.

They extinguished spot burning from improper disposal of a cigarette on Alford Road, a small brush fire on Castle Street and unauthorized burning from a fire pit, not allowed because of the then-drought conditions. They also responded to a car on fire.

Also during November, firefighters helped emergency medical services 50 times, including at five vehicular accidents.

Other calls included three smoke concerns, two gas leaks, two electrical wiring incidents and a carbon monoxide incident with no injury.

In another call, low levels of carbon monoxide were found because of a boiler malfunction.

Firefighters also responded to 21 false alarms involving smoke or other alarms that sounded because of malfunction or unintentional activation.

Three calls were cancelled en route. Two false alarms and one malicious false alarm were reported.

The report shows 103 calls during November. Firefighters from the State Road station responded to 99 and those from the Housatonic station to four.

-Richard Minacci, 60, homeless, trespass.
-Michael Neil, 30, of Southfield, court-issued warrant.

-Christopher Fields, 41, of Agawam, assault and vandalize property.

-Kuliette Abrex, 27, Housatonic, operating an uninsured vehicle with suspended registration and being unlicensed.

-Dominick Daniel Guglielmo, 57, of Becket, court-issued warrant for operating a motor vehicle with a suspended license.

-Jose Alexis Leon Ayala, 42, of Great Barrington, operating under the influence of liquor and being unlicensed.

-Nixon Alberto Cardozo-Mendez, 21, of Bronx, N.Y., larceny over \$1,200, unlicensed operation of a motor vehicle and concealing the number plate.

Someone reported a leaf blower taken from a truck. Another person said money was stolen from an EBT card.

Another person said someone broke into a car and took items. Someone said \$13,000 was taken from a bank account.

Coyotes were reported on Oak Street, Housatonic.

Arrests During November

-A juvenile, name and age withheld, drove a vehicle off a road and was arrested for operating a vehicle under the influence of liquor, for being a minor in possession of alcohol.

-Adam Galuska, 41, of Glenmont, N.Y., protective custody.

-John Torres-Marin, 42, of Great Barrington, domestic assault & battery.

Want to meet Archer, the police department's comfort dog? Just call the station at 528-0306 for an appointment.



*THE SOUTH-
ERN Berkshire
Registry of Deeds
is in the Great
Barrington Town
Hall and open
from 8:30 a.m. to*

*4:30 p.m. weekdays. Documents are online at
www.masslandrecords.com.*

*Following are recent transactions of
\$35,000 or more in Great Barrington
(including Housatonic), Egremont, Monterey,
Alford & West Stockbridge.*

-Kathleen A. Shields to Andrew L. Turrell
& Kaeleigh McCone, 8 Abbey Hill Drive,
Great Barrington, \$515,000.

-Ephraim A. McDowell & Susan M.
Pelletier to Callie Hernandez & Ariel Nehoray-
off, 77 New Marlboro Road, Monterey,
\$700,000.

-Cinbad LLC to Gregory Seidell & Devon
Seidell, 16 Woodland Drive, Great Barrington,
\$1,022,250.

-R. Eric Montgomery & Holly H. Mont-
gomery to June Stephens, trustee, Moose
Family Trust Dated April 20, 2007, 29 Fair-
view Road, Monterey, \$5.6 million.

-Daniel K. Orlow, Arielle Orlow Hendel
& estate of Eva D.K. Orlow to Ergis Aliai &
Eleni Barka, 20 Pixley Hill Road, West Stock-
bridge, \$395,000.

-Timothy J. Barrett to Carrie Negrini, 6
Washington Square, West Stockbridge,
\$79,000.

-COP LLC to Buel Lake Associates LLC,
170 Deerwood Park Drive, New Marlbor-
ough, 25 Deerwood Park Drive, Monterey, 93
Lake Buel Road and property on Lake Buel
Road, Great Barrington, and property on
Northwest Cove Road, Monterey, \$2 million.

-Douglas D. Anzalone & Carolyn M.
Anzalone to Sarita Anzalone & Brian M.

Recent Real Estate Transactions

Tenney, 27 Iron Mine Road, West Stock-
bridge, \$290,000.

-Kathryn Frank & Stephen G. Frank to
Edmond J. Sannini & Concetta Frezzo, 40
Sylvan Road, Monterey, \$2.1 million.

-Nathaniel S. Green, Lucas S. Merchant
& Nathaniel S. Gopen to Christopher M. Prin-
dle & Anne S. Walsh, 18 Castle Lane, Great
Barrington, \$820,000.

-Sam M. LaCroix, Lauren E. Shor &
Charles E. Loeser to Eric Dyer & Brooke
Buzzerd Dyer, 6 Berkshire Circle, Great Bar-
rington, \$660,000.

-James Hendrick to Robert Tutnauer, unit
6B, 281 Main St., Great Barrington,
\$381,500.

-Derek D. Sanders & Michelle Kessler-
Sanders to Jug End Road LLC, 92 Jug End
Road, Egremont, \$1.4 million.

-Carousel Phoenix LLC to Leslie Mintzer
& Mark Baum, 302 Egremont Plain Road,
Egremont, \$550,000.

-H. Otis Pond III & Otis Pond to Richard
J. Bourdon, unit 1, 360 Park St. North, Great
Barrington, \$230,000.

-Kenneth J. Dyer, Susan E. Dyer & K.J.
Dyer to David Masterman & Marie Margoli-
us, 65 Baldwin Hill Road, Egremont, \$1.385
million.

-Michael Merriman, trustee, Joe Edwards
Trust, to Noah Meyerowitz, 144 Green River
Road, Alford, \$635,000.

-Hosea Frank & Jody Brandt to Donald S.
Dickson Jr. & Jennifer B. Pennington, 89
Division St., Great Barrington, \$915,000.

-Richard Brophy Jr., Cheryl Brophy,
Cheryl A. Reynolds, Raymond J. Brophy,
Melanie A. Brophy, Melanie A. Graf, George
Reynolds, Mathew Graf & Kim M. Brophy to
Robert Koch & Kimberly E. Koch, 27 Swamp
Road, West Stockbridge, \$375,000.

-Stephen A. Gabriel & Anne Marie
Fogarty, trustees, ARG Living Trust, to 4
Depot Street LLC, 4 Depot St., Great Bar-
rington, \$394,000.

-Diane L. Pate to Patrick Cain Sargent &
Monica Ann Hauer, unit A-5, 10 Stanley
Drive, Great Barrington, \$397,000.

-William Grossman & Melanie D. Gross-
man, trustees, William Grossman 2001 Trust
& Melanie D. Grossman 2001 Trust, to Bana-
na Canyon LLC, property on Hurlburt Road,
Great Barrington, \$215,000.

-Mark A. Pruhenski & Melissa A. Van-
Sant to Jeanne Will & Andrew Will, 168 Ta-
conic Ave., Great Barrington, \$605,000.

-Cloud Kingdom 2020 LLC to Timothy J.
Scholler & David L. Press, 274 East Road,
Alford, \$895,000.

-Bruce McCarter & Kim Kaufman to
Laird C. Townsend & Heidi E. Roots, 2 Ram-
sey Ave., Great Barrington, \$400,000.

-Mary Kate McTeigue to Benjamin
Strassfeld & Joanne Barlow, 53 River St.,
Great Barrington, \$595,000.

-Karen J. Allen to Sarah A. Keeyes, trus-
tee, Sarah A. Lesley Family Trust, 17 Cronk
Road, Monterey, \$2.15 million.

-Gregory Schneider & Cynthia Schneider
to Jessica S. Curtis & Todd A. Curtis, 27
Whites Hill Road, Egremont, \$462,500.

-Stephen Glick to David Ott & Isabelle
Foster, 258 Great Barrington Road, West
Stockbridge, \$1.07 million.

-Daniel E. Aks & Michaelanne C.
Discepolo to Robert Rominger & Eileen
Rominger, 30 North Egremont Road, Alford,
\$1 million.

-Studio One LLC to Berkshire Pulse Inc.,
410 Park St., Great Barrington, \$3.947 mil-
lion.

-William J. Ryan, trustee, Ryan Oppen
Realty Trust of 2021, to Jonathan M. Perloe
& Malaine R. Muller, 297 East Road, Alford,
\$890,000.

-Christopher R. Thomas to Lauren Dris-
coli & Bryan Cerenzio, 28 Manville St., Great
Barrington, \$550,000.

-Alan English & Janice Rowley to Barba-
ra J. Churchill, 20 State Line Road, West
Stockbridge, \$559,000.

-Courtney Kulik Wanosky & Courtney J.
Kulik, trustees, F. K. Nominee Realty Trust,
to Thomas Gray & Jodie A. Abbatangelo, 12
Mearns Way, Egremont, \$535,000.

Stockbridge

*The Middle Berkshire Registry of Deeds
at 44 Bank Row, Pittsfield, is open from 8:30
a.m. to 3:59 p.m. weekdays. Documents are
online at masslandrecords.com/BerkMiddle/*

-Anthony W. Kalm to Daniel E. Dietch &
Dana R. Kulvin, 20 Ice Glen Road, Stock-
bridge, \$950,000.

-Michael A. Kornfield & Barbara R.
Kornfield to Steven L. Goldfarb & Deborah
A. Silodor, trustees, Steven L. Goldfarb Rev-
ocable Trust & Deborah A. Silodor Revocable
Trust, 8 Arthur Fiedler Lane, Stockbridge,
\$650,000.

-Maria Bolstad Barrett to Margaret A.
Rosenburg & Jonathan E. Wolfe, 11A Interla-
ken Cross Road, Stockbridge, \$1.429 million.

Building Permits of \$75,000 Or More

Great Barrington is part of a four-town
building department with Lee, Lenox and
Stockbridge. Building commissioner is Mat-
thew Kollmer and building inspector is Rian
Dowd. Their offices in the Town Hall are
open weekdays from 8:30 a.m. to noon or by
appointment.

The building inspector issues permits and
inspects projects and is Great Barrington's
zoning enforcement officer.

The telephone number is 528-3206.

Inspectors; What Needs Permit

Other inspectors are gas, Robert Gennari
at 274-0267; plumbing, Robert Krupski, 229-
8019; and electrical, Theodore Piontek, 274-
6605.

Permits are needed for siding, roofs,
signs, foundations, fences, and temporary
structures; to demolish structures; and to
install chimney linings, alarm systems; new
windows, wood stoves, insulation, sprinkler
system, photovoltaics; tents, hot tubs;

Also, pools, spas, alarms, sprinklers,
sheds, solar installations, and home occupa-
tions.

*Following are recent permits for pro-
jects valued at \$75,000 or more, with the
owner's name, estimated value & the appli-
cant if not the owner:*

-Joseph S. Roth, renovate existing barn
into music studio & garage space at 34 Castle
Hill Ave., Asher Goldman-Israelow,
\$413,956.

-William Nappo, two-story addition to 5
Meadow Lane, Cami Jorgo, \$240,535.

-Michael C. Mucci, make openings for
windows at 232 Main St., James Hendrick,
\$140,585.

-Greg Nolan, remodel Dunkin restaurant
with new cabinets, wall fixtures and exterior
paint at 494 Main St., Cafua Realty Trust
LLC, \$101,000.

-Charles Gardner, convert 281 Main St.
into condos, Berkshire Pleasure LLC,
\$94,000.

-Alex Komlev, remediate lead & install
new siding, windows & gutters at 145 Maple
Ave., Linda Traficante, \$83,420.

THE NEWSletter unfortunately lacks the space to include all details and all survivors.

THE NEWSletter emails obituaries it receives to subscribers who request them. However, Finnerty & Stevens no longer provides obituaries. Therefore, its obituaries are not sent to subscribers but are taken from its website for use in these pages.

Constance E. Friedrich

Constance E. Friedrich, 91, of Great Barrington, formerly of Garden City, N.Y., died Nov. 22.

She had three degrees from Hofstra University and had been an educator.

Mrs. Friedrich leaves her children, Carrie Ann Ferry, Claudia Schmitz, Christiana Bunn, Carl Jr. and Catherine Kaderavek; 15 grandchildren; three great-grandchildren; and her twin sister, Eleanor Roland.

She was predeceased by her husband, Carl Robert Friedrich, and brother, Bruno Org.

Finnerty & Stevens Funeral Home handled arrangements.

Memorial donations are suggested to the First Congregational Church through the funeral home.

Rev. Frances Ann Hills

The Rev. Frances Ann Hills, 75, of Pittsfield died Nov. 24.

She had attended Southern Methodist University and graduated from Oklahoma State University with degrees in journalism and music. She received a master of divinity degree from Episcopal Theological Seminary of the Southwest in 1991.

She was ordained as a deacon by the Diocese of Northern Texas in 1992 and served as a priest at St. Andrew's in Amarillo, Texas, and at St. Paul's in Maumee, Ohio. She was rector of St. Paul's from 1993 to 1996, when she became rector of St. Andrew's in Elyria, Ohio.

Rev. Hills left there in 2007 when she was called as rector of St. James Church in Great Barrington. That church transitioned to Grace Church in the Southern Berkshires. She began Gideon's Garden, a youth-oriented farm, and served until 2013.

Rev. Hills leaves her husband, Marc Lawrence Britt, and her brother, Cecil Hills.

Finnerty & Stevens Funeral Home handled arrangements.

Jean N. Larkin

Jean Nalty Larkin, 81, of Great Barrington died Dec. 2 at Fairview Hospital.

She graduated in 1960 from the former Searles High School. She owned and operated Hazel's Beauty Shop, which she ran until 2012.

Mrs. Larkin leaves her husband of 36 years, Barry Larkin; her sisters, Della Nalty Johnson and Donna Nalty Kirchner; her stepsisters, Rosie O'Brien, Tina Tarnawa, Carol Hammer and Betty Budz; and her stepbrothers, Butch Powell.

Obituaries

She was predeceased by her son, Richard Bellinger, and her parents, Donald A. Nalty and Hazel Stewart Nalty Powell.

Birches-Roy Funeral Home handled arrangements.

Memorial donations are suggested to Fairview Hospital's annual fund through the funeral home.

Margaret Rose Moran

Margaret Rose "Babe" Moran, 90, of Great Barrington died Dec. 7 at Fairview Hospital.

The former Margaret Rose McGuire, she graduated from the former Searles High School and received her nursing degree from St. Luke's College.

She and her future husband, John E. Moran, were "king and queen" at their high school prom. They were married in 1958 but she became a single mother when he died in 1976.

Mrs. Moran returned to Great Barrington in 1983 after her youngest children, twins, graduated from high school in New Jersey. She worked at Fairview Hospital for the next 25 years.

Mrs. Moran leaves six children; nine grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren.

Birches-Roy Funeral Home handled arrangements.

Clifford David Perreault

Clifford David Perreault, 86, of Housatonic died Dec. 10 at Fairview Hospital.

He graduated in 1956 from Pittsfield High School and from St. John's Seminary in Boston in 1960. He earned a master's degree in education in 1995.

Mr. Perreault and his wife, Barbara, moved to Housatonic in 1996.

He taught Latin and French in the Berkshire Hills Regional School District for more than 40 years and chaperoned educational trips to Europe.

He had also served on the Great Barrington Conservation Commission, the Housatonic Hose Company and Southern Berkshire Volunteer Ambulance Squad.

After retiring from teaching, he worked at Carr Hardware for nearly 10 years and continued to travel.

Mr. Perreault leaves his wife of 60 years, Barbara; their children, Cynthia Perreault Joyner and Matthew Perreault; six grandchildren; and two great-grandchildren.

He was predeceased by his siblings, George, Leon and Jean.

Birches-Roy Funeral Home handled arrangements.

Memorial donations are suggested to the Great Barrington Fire Department or Corpus Christi Church.

Gail B. Ranzoni

Gail B. Ranzoni, 83, of Great Barrington died Dec. 5.

She graduated in 1958 from the former Searles High School and in 1961 from Bishop Memorial School of Nursing.

Her husband, Albert P. Ranzoni Jr., was in the military. They lived in California, North Carolina and Boston before building a home in Alford.

Mr. Ranzoni died in 2004. They had been married for 40 years.

Mrs. Ranzoni leaves three daughters, Angela Ranzoni of Silver Spring, Md., Ginni Ranzoni of Lanesborough and Robyn Hoy of Peyton, Colo.; and two grandchildren.

Finnerty & Stevens Funeral Home handled arrangements.

Memorial donations are suggested to the Great Barrington congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses or Berkshire Humane Society through the funeral home.

Peter J. Schuyten

Peter Johannes Schuyten, 80, of New Marlborough died at home Dec. 9.

He received bachelor and master degrees in English literature from New York University and worked for McGraw Hill's Electronics magazine, Fortune magazine, and, as a science and technology writer, the New York Times.

In 1980, he began working for Dow Jones' first online information service. He retired from the company in 2010.

In New Marlborough, he wrote for 5 Village News. He was on the board of Music Mountain.

Mr. Schuyten leaves his former wife, Jodi Rothe of New Marlborough; three sisters, Kathy Sebestyen, Candace Massey and Vicki Fuscaldo; and his stepmother, Dolly Schuyten.

Finnerty & Stevens Funeral Home handled arrangements.

Memorial donations are suggested to Music Mountain or Christ Trinity Lutheran/Episcopal Church through the funeral home.

George Yonnone

George Yonnone, 80, of Housatonic died Dec. 16.

He worked in Daytona, Fla., for many years, pinstriping during Bike Week.

He started George Yonnone Restoration; a timber framing restoration business of 16th to 18th century buildings, and designed specialty jacks, tools and methods. This work led to him to travel the country, working with his sons.

For many years he was Santa at St. Paul's Church in Stockbridge. He was also an artist and musician.

Mr. Yonnone leaves his sons, Connor Yonnone and Nolan McCormick; his daughter, Jessie McCormick; his former wife Carla McCormick; and four grandchildren.

He was predeceased by his son Nicholas Yonnone.

Birches-Roy Funeral Home handled arrangements.

Memorial donations are suggested to the Alzheimer's Association online at ALZ.org or by mail to 320 Nevada St., Suite 201, Newton, Mass. 02460.

Reproduced below is the resume of the attorney retained by the Selectboard to negotiate the town's acquisition of Housatonic Water Works. More information is on page 3. The resume is from the board's Dec. 2 packet.

4A. HWW - Rep. from Rich May Law page 1 of 1

Eric J. Krathwohl, a partner at the firm of Rich May, PC, concentrates on regulatory matters arising in the water, energy, and telecommunications industries. He also does corporate and finance work for water, energy and telecommunication companies. Mr. Krathwohl is a magna cum laude graduate of the University of Connecticut and has a law degree from Cornell Law School and is a member of the academic honorary societies, Phi Beta Kappa, and Phi Kappa Phi.

For over forty years, Mr. Krathwohl has counseled clients on all aspects of regulatory and utilities law and has had an active practice before the Massachusetts Department of Public Utilities and Siting Board and numerous other state utility commissions, primarily in the northeastern United States. His clients include real estate developers and managers that have issues with provision of water to their residents/purchasers, water utilities, energy companies (including renewable energy developers, as well as electric and gas utilities), telecommunications providers and consumers of each of such utility services. Also, this practice has included representation of industry associations in regulatory matters and clients in commercial transactions (including on-site energy and power plant development, permitting and financing and power purchase and sales and transportation contracts) and regulatory proceedings before numerous state utility commissions, including extensive siting and rate related matters. He represents numerous water utility companies in Massachusetts, as well as real estate developers that encounter issues of availability of water service to their properties, as well as other customers seeking innovative solutions to problems involving water supply.

Mr. Krathwohl has assisted various emerging companies and municipalities in developing, siting and financing renewable power resources and technologies. He has been active in matters relating to restructuring of the electric, gas and telecommunications industries and increasing competition in those industries. Mr. Krathwohl has successfully represented clients in several matters before the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court and has often been a panelist with top industry and government officials at conferences on a wide range of energy and telecommunications matters.

He served as the Co-chair of the Northeast Energy and Commerce Association's Renewable Energy and Distributed Generation and Retail Markets Committees and as Chairman of the Boston Bar Association Energy and Telecommunications Committee from 1995 to 1998 and is a member of several other energy and bar associations. Mr. Krathwohl co-authored the portion of an administrative law treatise dealing with public utility regulation and has co-authored several articles concerning energy matters in energy trade journals. As a member of the founding committee of the MIT Enterprise Forum Energy Group, he helped organize and present the very successful IGNITE Massachusetts' Clean Energy Future Competition, the business plan competition for renewable energy start-up companies, now the Clean Tech Open, for which he has served as a mentor for several years. Mr. Krathwohl has also done considerable pro bono and volunteer work for non-profit organizations, community groups, the Town of Ipswich, and local youth sports.

The Selectboard voted to form the following committee at its meeting Dec. 19. The information below is reproduced from the packet for that meeting.

4E. Childcare committee page 1 of 1

At their meeting on Monday, November 18, 2024 the Great Barrington Selectboard voted to form a Childcare Committee. This committee will examine and discuss the state of childcare options and accessibility in Great Barrington and provide recommendations to the Selectboard and town staff on issues related to childcare.

MEMBERSHIP

- Members will be appointed by the Selectboard. The terms of the first members shall be for one, two, or three years, and so arranged that the term of one-third of the members expires each year, and their successor shall be appointed for terms of three years each.
- The committee shall consist of seven (7) members at-large. Members must be a resident of Great Barrington. A preference is given to parents and residents with relevant professional experience.
- If any member is absent from three (3) regularly scheduled meetings in any one calendar year, a recommendation shall be made to the Selectboard that they be removed from the committee, unless any or all absences have been excused by the chairperson.
- Resignation shall be made by notifying the chairperson of the Committee and the Town Manager and Town Clerk in writing.
- The Selectboard may remove any member(s) of said Committee, or disband the Committee at any time and for any reason, by majority vote of the board.
- The Selectboard shall fill any vacancy in the same manner as an original appointment.
- Members shall get the approval of the committee prior to making statements or joining activities on behalf of the committee.
- All members shall have full voting rights in Committee matters.

OFFICERS

Officers will include a Chairperson and Clerk.

The chairperson shall: Develop the agenda in coordination with the other committee members and preside over all meetings following Roberts Rules of Order.

The clerk shall: Keep records of all meetings, attendance, minutes, and correspondence. Post notices of all meetings forty-eight (48) hours before each meeting and regularly file minutes with the Town Clerk in accordance with the Massachusetts Open Meeting Law.

MEETING SCHEDULE

The committee will determine the time, place, and frequency of meetings at their first meeting. All meetings will be conducted in accordance with the Open Meeting Law.

The Affordable Housing Trust board increased the \$100,000 exemption on page 3 to \$150,000.**MEMORANDUM**

TO: Affordable Housing Trust Fund (AHTF)
FROM: Peter J. Most, Trustee
DATE: December 7, 2024
RE: AHTF Tax Exemption Subcommittee Meeting – Trustees’ Recommendation

On December 4, 2024, Trustees Bill Cooke, Krysia Kurzyca, and I met for the noticed meeting of the Affordable Housing Trust Fund Subcommittee on Tax Exemption to consider the new local option affordable housing property tax exemption pursuant to Mass. G.L. c. 59, § 50 (“the Act”). Following are a description of (i) the Act, (ii) guidelines for the tax exemption provided by the Municipal Finance Law Bureau (“MFLB”), and (iii) the Subcommittee’s recommendation to the Trustees. In addition, STF 50, the form “Application for Affordable Housing Exemption” prepared by the MFLB for municipal use, is attached as Exhibit A.

I. Affordable Housing Property Tax Exemption Description

The Act, signed into law on October 4, 2023, provides that a town or other municipality may establish a property tax exemption for real property classified as Class One residential (i.e., residential property containing one or more dwelling units). The Act sets forth the necessary elements to qualify for the exemption and also provides that a town may include additional restrictions or regulations consistent with the intent of the law and local rules and procedures.

To qualify for the tax exemption, the property must meet each of the following criteria:

- a. Rented at an affordable housing rate, as determined by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) guidance and regulations;
- b. Rented on a yearly basis; and
- c. Occupied year-round by a person or persons whose income does not exceed an amount to be set by the town, provided, however, that said income shall not be more than 200 per cent of the area median income (AMI).

The Act requires the following for implementation of the exemption:

- d. The property tax exemption shall be for an amount determined by the city or town, provided, however, that the amount shall not be more than the tax otherwise due on the parcel based on the full and fair assessed value multiplied by the square footage of the housing units rented and occupied by a person or persons whose income is not more than the income limit set pursuant to (c) above, divided by the total square footage of a structure located on the property.

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December 7, 2024

- c. Assessment of property seeking an exemption shall assume fair market rent for all units.
- f. The property owner seeking the exemption shall submit documentation the town deems necessary, including, but not limited to, a signed lease and proof of the occupying person or persons' household income, to confirm the eligibility of the property for exemption.
- g. Once a municipality has approved the affordable housing property tax exemption, it may not be revoked until at least three years after acceptance.

II. MFLB Guidelines for Property Tax Exemption Implementation

The MFLB provided municipalities in its March 2024 release with guidelines for implementation of the affordable housing tax exemption, as follows:

1. Applicants, including the trustees of a trust, must be the assessed owner of the property on which the tax is to be abated on the applicable July 1 exemption qualification date.
2. The property owner applicant does not have to be domiciled on the property to qualify for the exemption unless the municipality adopts a local rule requiring it.
3. Applicants must timely submit STF 50 (Exhibit A, attached) annually to the town's assessor. Applicants must include the items set forth in II.f above and submit the application before the abatement deadline (the first actual tax bill due date).
4. The property tax exemption only applies to residential units, which may include an accessory dwelling unit (ADU).
5. The exemption amount will be determined by the tax due on the parcel, multiplied by the square footage of the qualifying housing unit(s) and divided by total square footage of the structure on the parcel.

By way of example, if the tax obligation on a three-unit home is \$12,000, each of the units is 900 square feet, and one of the units qualifies for the exemption, the property owner would receive an exemption equal to $1/3$ ($900/2700$) of the tax due. In this example, the exemption would be \$4,000 for the unit.

6. There are no age-related criteria for qualifying renters.
7. A municipality should adopt rules to determine the following: (i) the maximum amount of the exemption; (ii) annual occupant household income limit; (iii) affordable housing rate of rent; (iv) domiciliary requirements of the owner, if any; and (v) any additional restrictions consistent with the intent of the law.

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III. AHTF Subcommittee Recommendation

The AHTF Subcommittee recommends that the Trustees vote in favor of adoption of the Affordable Housing Property Tax Exemption and recommendation to the Selectboard with the following provisions consistent with the Act:

1. To qualify, renters shall earn no more than 100% AMI as calculated by HUD.
2. To qualify, renter(s) shall pay no more than 30% of the occupant's(s') monthly household income.
3. Applicants need not be domiciled in Great Barrington to qualify for the exemption.
4. To minimize the fiscal impact of the tax exemption on the town, property tax exemptions in any one fiscal year limited to \$100,000. Applications will be time-stamped upon submission, reviewed and approved on a "first come, first served" basis until the exemption ceiling has been met for the fiscal year.
5. The affordable housing property tax exemption is intended promote the availability of *new* affordable housing rentals in Great Barrington. Accordingly, rental units currently rented on an affordable basis that would otherwise qualify (i.e., renters earning no more than 100% AMI and paying no more than 30% of monthly household income in rent) are not eligible for exemption. Additionally, to prevent gaming of the system, any such currently rented unit may not apply for exemption earlier than 3 years following the departure of the current qualifying rental occupant(s).

PJM