

THE NEWSletter

The Newsy Little Paper That Supplements Other Media

Volume 34 Number 5 August 2025

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Eileen W. Mooney, editor/publisher

Community Forum on Proposed New High School, Final Tour of MMRHS Will Be Tuesday, Sept. 16

A tour of the present Monument Mountain Regional High School followed by a community forum on its proposed replacement will be **Sept. 16** starting at 5:15 p.m.

Donna DiNisco, president of DiNisco Design, and members of her staff will present the design and answer questions about it and estimated costs. Although the Building Committee has scheduled more meetings about the proposed school at senior centers and other locations, the same DiNisco Design representation is not expected. This is the last scheduled tour of the high school.

The forum, but not the tour, will be available on Zoom. That link is on the website monumentbuildingproject.org.

Shown below, copied from that website, is a sketch of the proposed three-story building that would replace the present one if voters agree in the special election **Nov. 4**. The view is from Route 7, with the entrance on the opposite side, athletic fields in back and Beartown Mountain in the background.

The building is expected to cost \$152,566,466. Earlier estimates were that the cost to the three Berkshire Regional Hills School District towns of Great Barrington, Stockbridge and West Stockbridge would be \$89,862,262 after state and other contributions.

(SCHOOL continues on page 3)



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Meetings & More in September and October



MEETING AGENDAS are posted on the town's website at townofgbma.gov and sent by THE NEWSletter. Agendas tell where to attend and provide a Zoom link, if needed. Not all meetings are on Zoom.

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

Watch Past Meetings Online

Recordings of meetings are on Community Television for the Southern Berkshires at ctsbtv.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).

Town libraries and some town boards have their own website.

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

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

September

-Selectboard meets Sept. 8 & 22, 6 p.m.
-Community Preservation Committee meets Sept. 9, 5 p.m.

-Berkshire Hills Regional School Committee's Building Committee meets Sept. 10, 5:30 p.m.

-Planning Board meets Sept. 11 & 25, 6 p.m.

-BHRSC meets Sept. 11 & 25, 6 p.m.
-Tour of Monument Mountain Regional High School, Sept. 16, 5:15 p.m., followed

by community forum on plans for new high school building. Also see October, below, and page 1 and 3.

-Finance Committee meets Sept. 16, 6 p.m.

-Affordable Housing Trust Fund board meets Sept. 16, 6:30 p.m.

October

Communication forums about the proposed new high school will be held at:

-Mason Library, Oct. 7, 4:30 to 5:30 p.m.

-Stockbridge Library, Oct. 7, 6:30 to 7:30 p.m.

-Ramsdell Library, Oct. 15, 4:30 to 5:30 p.m.

-Claire Teague Senior Center, Oct. 16, 12:30 to 1:30 p.m.

Libraries, Senior Center, Bus Services, Recycling

THE LIBRARIES' website at gblibraries.org lists programs for many interests and different ages at both libraries.

Programs in September include on **Sept. 26 from 4 to 5 p.m. at Mason** "Author Talk" by Dr. Claudia Gold, who will present her book "Getting to Know You," which describes how taking a stance of not-knowing can help find a way into another person's experience.

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 masonramsdel@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 Sunday and open Monday

through Friday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Saturday from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Its phone number is 528-2403.

Ramsdell Library

Ramsdell Library on Main Street, Housatonic, is open Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.; closed Thursday and Friday; open Saturday, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.; and open Sunday, 1 to 4 p.m.

Its phone number is 274-3738.

Ramsdell's knitting group meets Tuesdays from 4:30 to 5:30 p.m.

Ramsdell has a loaning **Library of Things** that includes visual reality goggles, a sewing machine, a staple gun and a button maker.

THE CLAIRE TEAGUE SENIOR CENTER at 917 South Main St. offers activities and fitness classes, lunches and help with technology and applications such as SNAP, housing, fuel assistance, and more. Its phone number is 528-1881.

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

Staff is available Mondays through Fridays to answer calls and offer counseling for

SHINE, Serving the Health Insurance Needs of Everyone.

SOUTH COUNTY CONNECTOR, aka Tritown Connector, bus service has a new website, soconide.org.

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

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

Berkshire Regional Transportation's website is at Berkshirerta.gov.

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 listed 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 \$55.

Cost to get 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

News of BHRSD, Continued from Page 1

The building is expected to cost \$152,566,466. Earlier estimates were that the three Berkshire Regional Hills School District towns of Great Barrington, Stockbridge and West Stockbridge would be \$89,862,262 after state and other contributions.

A screenshot from a June 16 community forum shows that the state School Building Authority would contribute \$61,119,226. But that has changed.

Amount To Be Less Than Shown

An Aug. 27 letter from the SBA states that the "Board" approved an Estimated Maximum Total Facilities Grant of \$59,983,482, which does not include any funds for Potentially Eligible Owner's or Construction Contingency Expenditures.

The letter adds:

"In the event that the MSBA determines that any Owner's and/or Construction Contingency Expenditures are eligible for reimbursement, the Maximum Total Facilities Grant for the Monument Mountain Regional High School Project may increase to as much as \$61,024,725."

It cautions:

"The final grant amount may be an amount less than \$59,983,492."

The Building Committee expects to provide estimated assessments for each town before the vote.

Voters To Decide on Nov. 4

Voters in the district's three towns will be asked to approve building a new high school building on Nov. 4 in an election.

The total number of "yes" or "no" votes will determine whether or not the building project is approved. Unlike previous votes on projects and annual school budgets, the number of towns approving the project or budget will not decide the outcome.

Building Committee Meeting

The school committee's Building Committee will meet **Sept. 10** at 5:30 p.m. by Zoom and in the district's development room at 50 Main St., Stockbridge, the former Plain School, now the Stockbridge Town Hall.

The agenda includes the SBA's project scope and budget.

Next Budget Process Will Be 'Tough'

Meanwhile the school committee's finance subcommittee has scheduled meetings for the district's budget that will be voted on at town meetings next year.

With state and federal considerations, it's "clear as day, we're going into a tough budget process," district superintendent Peter Dillon observed.

Selectmen and members of finance committees of district towns will not have a meeting at which the budget will be presented, the finance subcommittee agreed Aug. 28.

Instead, they are invited to attend the subcommittee's meetings, where they can ask questions.

The subcommittee will discuss operations and technology on **Sept. 25**, special education on **Oct. 9** and the three schools on **Oct. 30**. Meetings **start** at 4:45 p.m.

Business administrator Sharon Harrison has the meeting schedule through next year.

To get information, people should come to the meetings, stated Steve Bannon, a subcommittee member and school committee chairman. He is also chairman of the Great Barrington Selectboard.

Attendance is better at public hearings on the budget when a separate meeting with those town officials is not held, finance subcommittee chairman Rich Dohoney observed.

Finance subcommittee members are Bill Fields, Mr. Dohoney and Mr. Bannon of Great Barrington; Bill Vogt of Stockbridge and Andy Potter of West Stockbridge.

Almost \$500,000 in Grants

Meanwhile, the school district has almost \$500,000 in grants, plus a \$1,000 donation to the food box program.

A Bard Foundation grant has been renewed for \$300,000 to be used over two years included for curriculum development and assessment and student voice.

In recent years, the foundation has given the district more than \$1 million, Mr. Dillon noted. It gave \$150,000 last year.

The PRISM II grant of \$164,000 is a state grant that is "really a big deal" because it will be used to help choose and start a new English language arts curriculum, Mr. Dillon told the school committee.

Funds for that were pulled from the school budget last year, he noted.

The donation is from the Linda & Frank Russell Charitable Fund of Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation.

The program provides food to almost 160 families a week, Mr. Dillon told the school committee Aug. 28 when it voted to accept the donation and thank the fund.

MMRHS Rated Third Best in County

US News & World Report has rated Monument Mountain Regional High School

Comment, Question About New School?

THE NEWSletter will try to get answers to your questions about the proposed new school building and will print your comments.

This school year's enrollment will be provided as soon as THE NEWSletter gets it.

If you're not on the email list but want to keep up with this topic, you can provide your email for a special short-term email list. This is a free service intended to ensure that people get information before the Nov. 4 school vote.

90th best in Massachusetts and 2,270 in national rankings.

The overview states that "Students have the opportunity to take Advanced Placement coursework and exams. The AP participation rate at Monument Mt Regional High School is 42%. The total minority enrollment is 23%."

The ratings are at usnews.com/education/best-high-schools/search.

New Business Administrator

Kristen Behnke will start Oct. 27 as business administrator, succeeding Sharon Harrison, whose last day with the district is Nov. 3 — 19 years and two days after she began.

Ms. Behnke has been assistant superintendent for business and finance of the Pittsfield school system since 2012. She began with the school system in 2008, after a year as deputy treasurer of West Springfield.

From 2005 to 2007, she was a fiscal policy analyst of the state Executive Office for Administration and Finance.

She was a program officer with the American Councils for International Education, including in Washington, D.C., from 1997 to 1997 and in Moscow from 1999 to 2001.

(NEWS continues on page 4)

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School News cont.; Selectmen Settle Law Suits, More Actions

Ms. Behnke was a district aide for former state Sen. Andrea Nuciforo Jr. from 2002-2003 and then a research assistant with the Center for Education Policy of the University of Massachusetts.

Received Awards from MASBO

She received the President's Award from the Massachusetts Association of School Business Officials in 2020 and its Friend of MASBO Award in 2016.

In 2015, she received the Emerging School Business Leaders scholarship from the Association of School Business Officials International.

Ms. Behnke graduated in 1995 from Tufts University with a degree in international relations and Russian studies. She received a master's degree in public policy and administration with a specialization in education policy from UMass in 2005.

She will be paid \$165,000 a year.

Serving on the search committee with Mr. Dillon were school committee members Steve Bannon and Bill Vogt; operations director Steve Soule; Du Bois Regional Middle School principal Jake McCandless; student services director Kate Burdshall; and, from the district office, Vonda Amstead.

New Job Description for Program

The draft of a new job description for the program director of Out of School Time is in the packet on the district's website.

JP Okin, who had been director, has resigned.

* * *

FOR THE PAST SEVERAL MONTHS, the selectmen have been going into executive sessions to consider **lawsuits involving Housatonic Water Works and to acquire the company and, separately, cannabis businesses** that sued the town for return of funds.

At the board's Aug. 11 meeting, chairman Steve Bannon read a statement explaining why the board agreed to stop litigation against the state Department of Public Utilities' rate increase for Housatonic Water Works.

The statement, which explains what led to the litigation, is reproduced in this issue.

West Stockbridge dropped its lawsuit for the same reasons. Stockbridge had not filed suit.

The Board of Health dropped its separate litigation, as reported elsewhere in this issue.

The Aug. 25 meeting ended with a statement, also read by Mr. Bannon, about why the selectmen voted to pay the businesses and end the litigation.

That statement also is reproduced in this issue.

Easing Traffic in East Street Area

Town manager Chris Rembold described steps intended to ease traffic in the area of East Street, Anderson Street, Cottage Street, Hillside Avenue and Gilmore Avenue.

Work was recently done on streets, sidewalks and drainage in the area.

Stop signs and crosswalks will be added for a nine-month trial intended to calm traffic in the area, Police Chief Paul Storti explained.

Eleven residents of that area spoke of the need to calm traffic. They suggested more speed bumps and enforcement of speed limits.

Speed bumps need some engineering for drainage and the police are seeking a grant to hire people to help monitor the neighborhood, Chief Storti said.

A stop sign costs \$185, it was explained when someone asked.

The selectmen agreed with the proposal. "It's time that we do something," Mr. Bannon observed.

Permits, Licenses Given

The board granted:

-A wine and malts on-premises license for outdoor alcohol service area at Half Rats at 343 Main St.

-A temporary liquor license to Stanton Home Life Needs Co-op at 205 North Plain Road for a harvest roast fundraiser **Sept. 13** from 5 to 9 p.m.

-A common victualler license to Odd Bird Farm Bakery, unit 5 at 490 Main St.

They agreed that a liquor license will be invalid within 60 days of the business closing. The resolution resulted when Gorham-

Norton closed but its former owner retained the license so he could sell it. This prevented the space's new occupant from getting a license until the selectmen in July declared the existing void.

Town Manager Search Continues

More people have applied to be town manager and the search committee is meeting again to review applications.

Tom Blauvelt was appointed Aug. 11 meeting to succeed Marie Ryan, who resigned.

Other members are former selectmen Ed Abrahams, Peter Fish, Kate Burke and Sean Stanton and residents Erik Bruun and Fred Clark.

The committee's reviews of resumes and interviews of applicants are in executive session. Finalists are interviewed in public by the Selectboard, which makes the hiring decision.

Appointed to Finance Committee

Michelle Loubert was unanimously appointed to the Finance Committee, filling the vacancy caused when Phil Orenstein resigned after being elected a selectman.

Mrs. Loubert, of 70 Division St., is a former member and vice chairman of the committee.

She is executive assistant to the director of student services in the Lenox school system and has a graduate degree in public administration from Westfield State College.

The Finance Committee unanimously voted to recommend that she be appointed.

The other applicant was Dr. Jan Wojcik of 253 Long Pond Road, a retired surgeon who for 12 years was division chief at Baystate Medical Center in Springfield.

In his application for appointment to the committee, he wrote that "Current members are not doing their homework — I feel that we can improve our fund of knowledge."

Also, "Town voters are not being adequately represented in terms of priorities and fiscal responsibilities."

Other members of the Finance Committee are chairman Richard Geiler, vice chairman Milna Cerna, Anne O'Dwyer and Madonna Meagher.

(NEWS continues on page 6)

Looking for a Home?

Call Tom Doyle

email: scarnaghtom@gmail.com

cell: 646-438-1329

Podcast Link: (best @38 minutes for real estate info)

<https://youtu.be/YATqYuLSVC8>

Bishop West Real Estate Inc. in Massachusetts, New York, Florida, Vermont, and Dunes Real Estate, South Carolina

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AN UNPAID PUBLIC SERVICE AD

Sharon Shaloo, chairman of the Board of Library Trustees, and Dawn Jardine, library director, presented the following report to the Selectboard Aug. 25. More information is on page 4.

Great Barrington Libraries Annual Report FY25

Library Holdings



GBL houses **82,182** physical items.
71,522 are print books, **26,670** for youth



A selection of **7,838** DVDs kept
viewing affordable for patrons.



The Library of Things contains **140** tools,
toys, and equipment.

Library Lending



Total Circulation was **119,495**.
Of that, **38,185** was for youth.

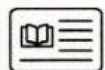


Circulation of ebooks, e-audiobooks
and e-magazines was **34,165**.



Digital usage included **13,850** New York
Times articles and **748** Ancestry searches.

Library People



Cardholders in FY25 = **6,032**



More than **71,000** people visited the
libraries in FY25.



GBLs meeting and study rooms were used
1,508 times!

Interlibrary Loan



Daily book delivery
at Mason

GBL patrons have access to
over **50 Million** items across
the state!

Through ILL, the libraries
brought in **14,124** books and
shared **13,662** books
with other libraries.

Library Activity



Ramsdell
Propagation Station



GBL presented **346** programs and
activities in which **3,885** participated



About **10,430** reference questions
were answered in FY25.



About **17,000** WiFi sessions were provided,
and **7,100** public computer sessions.



Poetry at Mason

It's a great big world in here!

News of Selectboard, cont. from page 4; New Assessor

Historic District Commission

Annalynn Lacombe of 12 Pothul Drive was named an associate member of the Historic District Commission.

She is also on the Cultural Council.

Don Howe, chairman of the Historic District Commission, supported her appointment. Other commissioners are vice chairman Jim Mercer, secretary Abby Schroeder, Carrie Chen and Fred Clark. Marilyn Bisiewicz and now Ms. Lacombe are associate members.

Cultural Council

Rees Shad of 146 West Ave. has been named to the Cultural Council. He had served on it in 2019 and 2020 but, he wrote in his application letter, resigned "as my academic work became more hectic and often caused me to miss meetings."

Mr. Shad, a singer and song writer, was recommended by the council.

Other Cultural Council members are co-chairs Melanie McCarthy and Ellen Shanahan, Annalynn Lacombe, Peggy Reeves, Aimee Molloy and Elissa Haskins-Vaughan.

The council has two vacancies.

Tree Committee

Sara Parker was named to the Tree Committee. She is also chairman of the Housatonic Improvement Committee.

Other Tree Committee members are chair Julie Anidjar, tree warden and vice chair Michael Peretti, Eileen Rosenthal, Mary Stephen, Christopher Wiltshire and Brooke Davida.

Presentation on Libraries

Sharon Shaloo, chairman of the Board of Library Trustees, and Dawn Jardine, library director, presented a report on Mason and Ramsdell libraries during the Selectboard's Aug. 25 meeting.

A page of information they provided is on page 5.

Ms. Jardine said the libraries are used by many people who work remotely, and they can provide a meeting site for small businesses, a place for tutoring and a way to avoid isolation.

Two libraries are not a luxury — they're an opportunity," Ms. Shaloo stated, adding that this community is "incredibly literate."

More library news is elsewhere in this issue.

Who Paid for Prosperity Way Work?

During citizens' speak time, resident Jim Bailly said he was curious about who paid for foundations on Prosperity Way.

The site, off North Plain Road in Housatonic, was bought by the Affordable Housing Trust and has been turned over to Habitat for Humanity, which is developing it for 20 affordable homes.

Mr. Bailly said he had asked in June who was paying for the foundations and was told by Mr. Bannon that Habitat was, but then learned Great Barrington is paying for them through a grant.

He wanted to know, among several questions, what grant is being used to pay Rifenburg Construction of Troy, N.Y., the contractor making the foundations. He also wants grant balances and administrators.

Transparency is important and the work needs oversight, Mr. Bailly stated.

He did not receive an answer, although Chris Rembold, interim town manager who handles grants, was present.

After listening to Mr. Bailly's questions, THE NEWSletter filed a public records request with Josh Risen, town clerk and town public records officer, for information about who paid to prepare foundations at Prosperity Way and the source of such funding -- DPW account, another budget category or a grant.

If the source was a grant, the request seeks information about it and any document showing that the grant provider allowed the grant to be used for foundations.

Apartments Okayed on South Main

At their Aug. 11 meeting, the selectmen approved a special permit for 21 apartments at 546 South Main St., with the entrance off Mahaiwe Street.

Conditions placed on the special permit are:

-Before a building permit is issued, construction staging plans must be approved by the planning department staff. [NEWSletter note: That's basically Mr. Rembold, who is director of planning and development as well as interim town manager].

Those plans should describe and/or illustrate where contractors, equipment, and materials will be parked, operated, stored and staged during various phases of site preparation and building construction.

-Before a certificate of occupancy is granted, "the Applicant shall demonstrate their efforts to secure off-site, off-street, parking spots within a one-quarter mile radius of the site, to serve as overflow spots for tenants of the project."

Phil Orenstein sought to amend that condition to require that the applicant acquire three off-site parking spaces but the motion failed.

-Before a certificate of occupancy is granted, "the Applicant shall demonstrate to the Board that the building marketing materials and lease agreements that tenants indicate there is not more than one on-site off-street parking space per unit."

Mr. Bannon said if it were up to him, the curbcut for the property would be on South Main Street. The developer's engineer had said this would be expensive but who cares? he stated.

However, this was not made a condition.

Selectman Garfield Reed did not participate in the special permit request.

The recording is on the CTSBV website. The 13-page record of proceedings is available from Mr. Rembold, and THE NEWSletter has a copy.

Special Permit Issued for 250 Maple

The selectmen on Aug. 11 granted a special permit so Katherine Reisfeld may operate a home occupation — Ashtanga Yoga — at 250 Maple Ave. and erect a free-standing sign for the business.

Conditions on the special permit limit the business to one class a day and for not more than two hours.

Complaint About Sound from Busk

At the board's July 28 meeting, Carrie Chen, who said she owns a business on Railroad Street, complained that Berkshire Busk was very loud — so loud, she said, that she can't eat at her home at 281 Main St.

Shops can't have lectures or special events when Busk performers are out, she added.

Berkshire Busk had performers in downtown Great Barrington Fridays and Saturdays from about 6:30 p.m. June 27 through Aug. 30. Railroad Street was closed for performances and restaurants could have tables outdoors.

The selectmen agreed to review this next year. While some Railroad Street merchants have complained that their businesses are hurt by the performances and sales by vendors, others have praised Berkshire Busk because of the number of people — and potential customers — it brings to town.

* * *

THE TOWN HAS A new principal assessor. She is Emily Schilling, who has been principal assessor in Clarksburg since

(NEWS continues on page 7)



THOMAS ROY

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Fall 2025 Flu and COVID

Vaccine Clinic Schedule

Pre-Registration is Required- Assistance Available

<https://home.color.com/vaccine/register/tritown>



Day	Date	Time	Clinic Site Name	Address	Town
Mon	9/29/2025	3 - 6 pm	Mt Everett Regional High School	491 Berkshire School Rd	Sheffield
Tues	9/30/2025	3 - 6 pm	W.E.B. Dubois Middle School	313 Monument Valley Rd	Gt Barrington
Weds	10/1/2025	1 - 3 pm	Sheffield Senior Center	25 Cook Rd	Sheffield
Mon	10/6/2025	2 pm - 4 pm	Housy Dome	1064 Main St	Housatonic
Weds	10/8/2025	3 - 6 pm	Lee Middle/High School	300 Greylock St	Lee
Thurs	10/9/2025	3 - 6 pm	Lenox Memorial Middle/High School	197 East St	Lenox
Tues	10/14/2025	10 am - 12 pm	Monterey Town Library	452 Main Rd	Monterey
Weds	10/15/2025	1:30 - 3:30 pm	New Marlborough Fire Station	205 Norfolk Rd	Southfield
Thurs	10/16/2025	1:30 - 3:30 pm	Lee Senior Center	21 Crossway St	Lee
Mon	10/20/2025	11 am - 1 pm	St. Ann Catholic Parish	134 Main St	Lenox
Tues	10/21/2025	1:30 - 3:30 pm	Sandisfield Old Town Hall	3 Silverbrook Rd	Sandisfield
Weds	10/22/2025	1:30 - 3:30 pm	Stockbridge Town Hall	50 Main St	Stockbridge
Thurs	10/23/2025	1 - 3 pm	Claire Teague Senior Center	917 Main Street	Gt Barrington
Mon	10/27/2025	10 am - 12 pm	Alford Town Hall	5 Alford Center Rd	Alford
Tues	10/28/2025	11 am - 1 pm	Tyringham Town Hall	116 Main Rd	Tyringham
Weds	10/29/2025	11 am - 1 pm	Otis Town Hall	1 N Main Rd	Otis
Thurs	11/20/2025	2:30 - 5:30 pm	Farmington River School District	555 N Main Rd	Otis
M-F	Ongoing	By Appt	<u>In-Home Vaccinations</u>	In- Home, Call 413 243 5540 x109	In Home
M-F	Ongoing	By Appt	Trit-Town Health Department	50 Main St, Call 413 243 5540 x109	Stockbridge

Vaccines available at these clinics include updated COVID vaccine and regular dose flu (ages 6 months+) and senior dose flu (ages 65+)

Contact SBPHC staff for assistance registering or to schedule an in-home appointment by calling 413 243 5540 x109

SBPHC is a shared services arrangement providing comprehensive public health services to the Boards of Health in Alford, Great Barrington, Lee, Lenox, Monterey, Mount Washington, New Marlborough, Otis, Sandisfield, Sheffield, Stockbridge, Tyringham

Visit www.southernberkshirehealth.com for more information

New Assessor, continued; News of More Town Boards

September 2023 and assistant assessor for the City of Pittsfield since January 2023.

Mr. Rembold, interim town manager, hired her. She was the only one interviewed, he told THE NEWSletter.

The position was posted in April on Indeed.com.

Ms. Schilling is being paid \$83,000 with a six-month probationary period. The salary will increase to \$85,000 once she is certified by the Massachusetts Association of Assessing Officers, Mr. Rembold said.

Ms. Schilling's Resume

Before joining Pittsfield's assessors' office in 2021, she worked for TJ Maxx in Pittsfield, starting as a sales associate, then a department coordinator and key carrier coordinator.

She received an associate degree in business administration in 2020 from Berkshire Community College. She has taken several courses from MAAO.

* * *

THE ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS will continue on **Oct. 7** at 6 p.m. its hearing on a request for a **farm-to-table restaurant**, which would be a 48-seat new building at 87 Alford Road.

More information is sought from the applicant, including use of the land. The application is available from ZBA chair Michael Wise or THE NEWSletter.

* * *

DURING ITS AUG. 27 MEETING, the **Housatonic Improvement Committee** elected Sara Parker as chairman with Eric Gabriel as vice chairman.

Ms. Parker succeeds Angela Lomanto, who resigned from the committee.

Before resigning, Ms. Lomanto wrote minutes of a Housatonic visioning session held Aug. 2 and attended by 45 people.

Her summary of the session is reproduced in this NEWSletter. The entire report is available as HIC's minutes for Aug. 2 on the town website, townofgbma.gov.

The committee has also prepared "Recommendations for Future Master Plan" for the Planning Board. That document is too long to be reproduced in THE NEWSletter but it is available from a HIC member.

HIC has a vacancy. Other members besides Ms. Parker and Mr. Gabriel are Ben Elliott, Louise Goldsmith, Scott Shortt and Beverly Nourse.

* * *

AFFORDABLE HOUSING TRUST board members considered Aug. 27 **how they can provide affordable housing** besides buying land for it and providing funding for accessory dwelling units and mortgage down payments.

There is not enough money to buy a way out of housing needs, co-chairman Fred Clark said.

The board can work with other towns but legally, it can't pool its money, he noted.

It would be difficult to make a regional approach work, members Bill Cooke and Joseph Method felt.

Cook: One of Board's Best Uses

"One of our best uses is getting property and keeping it out of a developer's hands," Mr. Cooke stated.

Land on Alford Road will be available soon, member Peter Most commented, referring to the Simon's Rock property, expected to be advertised for sale in September.

The property isn't affordable, Mr. Cook told him. Not once you've seen it, Mr. Most responded.

The college, part of Bard College, has closed and classes have been moved to a campus Bard owns near its main campus at Annandale-on-Hudson, N.Y.

At the board's next meeting, **Sept. 16** at 6:30 p.m., members intend to discuss an application for Community Preservation Act funds.

Besides the board's page on the town website, it has a website at gbhousing.org that describes its programs.

* * *

THE LIBRARY TRUSTEES' **Ramsdell Building Committee** met with representatives of its architectural firm, Perry Dean Rogers, and project manager, CHA Solutions, Aug. 26 to discuss what a renovated building needs.

A proposed design of Ramsdell Library is expected to be shown to the committee and trustees later this year, followed by a community presentation.

Community Input Said Needed

Community input is needed or the committee will be like Russia, member Patrick Hollenbeck commented.

Meetings with the community are being planned, committee chairman Ruby Chang said. She noted that the building committee will show three plans to the Board of Library Trustees, which makes the final decision.

Ms. Chang and Mr. Hollenbeck are both trustees.

Dr. Chang said a cost estimate of the work will be provided after the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners approves the plan for its wait list for funding.

That is not expected in time to request funds at next May's annual town meeting, she said.

Sharon Shaloo, chairman of the Board of Library Trustees, said she is in discussion with the Community Preservation Commission about a possible application for funds.

Cooperative Plan for Parking?

During the committee's Aug. 5 meeting, Karen Clark said the Unitarian Universalist Meeting of Southern Berkshires, which is next to Ramsdell Library, wants to extend its parking.

She suggested a cooperative plan for parking could be developed, according to the minutes by Dawn Jardine, library director.

* * *

The **Board of Health** has voted to drop its litigation against Housatonic Water Works. Its reason, presented by chairman Michael Lanoue after an executive session Aug. 7, is the same as in the Selectboard's

statement, reproduced in this NEWSletter — that litigation apparently prevents HWW from getting funding for necessary improvements to its system.

The health board's vote to do this was unanimous. A recent DEP order to HWW, reproduced in the last NEWSletter, requires what the health board had sought in its Sept. 13, 2024, order. HWW had appealed the order and the health board contested that appeal.

Complaint About Solar Field's Noise

Also during the meeting, the health board continued to their meeting **Oct. 2** a complaint by Steve Pedigo of 263 Park St. about noise from the Altus Solar field behind his property.

The meeting had been scheduled for Sept. 4 but Altus was not prepared. It is planning a site inspection **Sept. 19**.

If the problem is not resolved, the health board can proceed under the nuisance bylaw, Mr. Lanoue stated.

Topographical problems on their site would make sound reduction expensive, Rebecca Hughes and Liam Breslin of Altus explained. The sound comes from the solar inverters, they said.

(NEWS continues on page 8)

Sign Up for Releases

SUBSCRIBERS CAN SIGN UP to receive minutes of Great Barrington board meetings, obituaries when THE NEWSletter receives them from the funeral home, and information listed below.

This is part of your NEWSletter subscription. There's no added cost. You can sign up for one or two or everything.

On the list are:

-1Berkshire, BEAT, Berkshire Agricultural Ventures, Berkshire Black Economic Council, Berkshire Community Land Trust, Chamber of Commerce, CHP;

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

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

-Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education; New Marlborough Meeting House; RSYF, Schumacher Center for a New Economics,

-Releases from area schools, including Berkshire Hills Regional, Lee, Lenox and Southern Berkshire Regional; Train Campaign, and Volunteers in Medicine.

Feel free to suggest more.

Everyone gets information about town libraries and the Attorney General's Division of Open Government. That's because the libraries serve all ages and the Division oversees the Open Meeting Law, which helps ensure government transparency.

News, Continued

The property has water resources, and a turtle habitat, Ms. Hughes said.

Dr. Chang said the panels are not where they were shown in the application.

Mr. Pedigo and his husband, Brian Bitner, said noise is constant and they have been told this is not typical, the inverters are cheap and there are no sound barriers.

(NOTE: An inverter is defined as a the device that converts direct current (DC) electricity generated by solar panels into alternating current (AC) electricity that can then be fed into the electrical grid.)

Altus is a \$2.2 billion company and can afford to fix the constant buzzing, they said.

Mr. Breslin of Altus said the site has been operational for nine years and the inverters can still be serviced.

No Beach Closures This Summer

During the Sept. 4 meeting, health agent Rebecca Jurczyk said because of goose droppings, Lake Mansfield was tested twice a week in August and did not have to be closed this summer.

Update on HWW, Water Filter

The Department of Environmental Protection has told the board it may perform 10 more tests of water a year from any location, chairman Michael Lanoue reported. DEP is inspecting work here, he noted.

Not as many complaints about HWW water were received as last year, he said.

HWW has not yet installed a filter at the Housatonic Community Center for people to receive free water 24 hours a day, as ordered by the DEP.

Other Board Actions

During the Aug. 7 meeting, board members extended correction orders for 675 and 535 Egremont Road. They noted that all violations have been corrected at 212 Highland Ave.

THE PLANNING BOARD agreed Aug. 14 that **Prosperity Way** development on North Plain Road may have 18-foot light poles rather than the 15-foot ones specified in its site plan approval and the special permit.

Interim town manager and director of planning and development Chris Rembold said the poles will be solar-powered, which requires the extra height.

It's a "reasonable ask," he said, nothing the poles will have no cost for electricity.

Board members agreed, although associate member Jackie Kain was concerned about the poles' appearance. As houses are built and landscaping is developed, they'll be OK, chairman Brandee Nelson assured her.

Mr. Rembold noted that the road, water, sewer and electricity are installed and the first house is going in soon.

Concerns About Website Redesign

During the meeting, Ms. Kain said she is concerned about town communications and how the website is used to provide information.

It is not being built or organized for that, and town assets are hidden, she said.

Prevention Need Assessment Reveals New Trends in Youth Substance Use

The following is from a news release by South Berkshire Community Health Coalition, a program of Railroad Street Youth Project, about findings from the 2025 Prevention Needs Assessment Survey. The biennial survey is administered to 8th, 10th, and 12th graders in public schools in South County. The complete report is at www.rsyp.org/programs/south-berkshire-community-health-coalition-sbchc.

This year's results reveal a concerning upward trend in alcohol and cannabis use among youth, reversing nearly a decade of progress.

"These numbers are somewhat of a mixed bag," said Laura Rodriguez, SBCHC director. "We're definitely seeing the longer-term effects of the pandemic — particularly how substance use became more normalized in homes. And that's where the solution starts: with us. We need parents, families, and trusted adults to step into leadership roles in shifting norms and expectations. This isn't something young people can navigate on their own."

Key Findings from the 2025 PNA:

Alcohol Use Rebounding: After declining for several years, alcohol use among South County youth began to rise in 2021 and is now the most commonly used substance.

Among students who were in 8th grade in 2021, 30-day alcohol use rose by 87% by the time they reached 10th grade in 2023. For 10th graders in 2021, rates increased by 84% by the time they reached 12th grade in 2023.

Twenty-five percent of all surveyed students who reported using alcohol in the previous year got it from home with parental permission.

Cannabis Use Nearly Doubled: From 2021 to 2025, 30-day cannabis use almost doubled across all surveyed grades. This surge is strongly linked to increasingly permissive attitudes among parents and shifting social norms around cannabis—highlighting the crucial role adults play in shaping youth behavior.

Thirteen percent of all surveyed students who reported using cannabis in the previous year got it from home with parental permission.

Positive Trends in Tobacco Use: Encouragingly, 12th-grade e-cigarette use dropped from 29% to 13%, and cigarette use fell from 7.3% to 3.7% from 2021 to 2025.

Improved Youth Mental Health

After a peak in 2021, reported depressive symptoms among youth declined in both 2023 and 2025, which SBCHC attributes to more robust school-based mental health supports and youth-centered prevention efforts.

Community-Driven, Data-Informed Solutions

The SBCHC works with youth, schools, parents, and regional organizations to design and implement coordinated prevention strategies rooted in local data and lived experience. Efforts are focused on reducing risk factors—such as youth isolation and low perception of harm—and building up protective factors like strong peer networks, accurate information, and consistent adult engagement.

A youth-led approach includes the Peer Health Educator Program and Restorative Prevention Fellowship, providing students in Southern Berkshire and Berkshire Hills Regional School Districts with tools to lead prevention efforts in their schools.

Parent and Community Engagement: Parents and caregivers are being equipped with the tools to shift community norms. SBCHC's *Kitchen Table Talks* peer model creates space for candid conversations and encourages adult community members to challenge permissive attitudes toward youth substance use.

Two Free Training Opportunities

-*Kitchen Table Talks* facilitator training **Sept. 10 and 17** from 5:30 to p.m. at Great Barrington Family Resource Center. To register, email laura@rsyp.org.

-*Invitation to Change* training **Oct. 18**, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Berkshire South Regional Community Center. To register, email laura@rsyp.org.

Maps could show access to walking trails and playgrounds, Jonathan Hankin suggested.

(NOTE: THE NEWSletter has gripes about the new version of the website. Others who have them are invited to share. - EWM)

HERE'S WHY THE STATE Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities has budgeted \$530,000 for the septic system at Dewey Court in Sheffield, a property of the **Great Barrington Housing Authority**:

According to a May 2023 report by Michael Kulig, president of Berkshire Engineering, a pump chamber's "unprotected metal

components are heavily deteriorated and appear in danger of immediate failure."

Also, manholes are supposed to be watertight but water has infiltrated into them and four septic tanks are undersized and should be replaced.

The systems were inspected earlier in 2023 with the former GBHA director and the former facilities manager present part of the time, the report notes.

Dewey Court has 22 senior/handicap one-bedroom units and eight family units. Two family units are vacant.

Police Report for July

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

The station is at 465 South Main St.

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

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.

July Police Report

The following is from the month's police report. It does not include all police actions. Police respond when the fire department is called. Those calls are reported in the Fire Report elsewhere on this page.

Thirteen vehicular accidents were reported in June, including 33 involving two cars.

One vehicle hit several pedestrians on Park Street with one taken to Fairview Hospital and another to Berkshire Medical Center. The driver was arrested.

A car hit a tree at Berkshire Bank on Stockbridge Road and the driver was taken to Fairview. Another car rolled over at Plaza Package at South Main Street and Maple Avenue and damaged an electric pole.

A truck crashed into a gate and damaged a car at Formel Auto Salvage on Van Deusenville Road. A bicyclist reported that a vehicle knocked him off his bicycle at Guido's on South Main Street.

Police ran radar on 20 public ways. That included eight times on North Plain Road; five times on Division Street; three times each, South Main Street and Egremont Plain and Old Stockbridge roads.

Also, twice each, State, Stockbridge, VanDeusenville, Monument Valley and Blue Hill roads and Park and East streets; and once each, Egremont, Hurlburt, Seekonk Cross, Monterey, Alford and Christian Hill roads, Taconic Avenue and Main Street.

SBAS Report

SOUTHERN BERKSHIRE AMBULANCE SQUAD is based at Fairview Hospital and serves Alford, Ashley Falls, Egremont, Great Barrington, Housatonic, Monterey, Mount Washington and Sheffield, with mutual aid agreements with six other municipalities.

Great Barrington police handle dispatch for this town at 911. The SBAS number is 413-528-3632. Its website is sbvas.com/

Of the 233 calls in July, 76 people were transported from one hospital to another; 132 people were taken to a hospital; 17 people refused transport; and eight calls were canceled.

Great Barrington had 73 transfers and 72 people taken to a hospital. It had 10 refusals and four cancellations.

Police stopped 47 vehicles, resulting in 45 citations/warnings, one arrest and one summons.

They unlocked 17 vehicles and one house.

They responded to reports of 12 disturbances, resulting in one arrest. The co-responder provided services four times. Two people were taken to facilities for possible mental illness.

Reports of Graffiti

Graffiti was reported at the First Congregational Church on Main Street. Anti-Semitic graffiti was reported at a stop sign at West and Lewis avenues. The town Department of Public Works replaced the sign.

A portable toilet was tipped over at the Housatonic Commons.

A business reported that a fraudulent check was cashed from its account, resulting in a \$35,000 loss.

Nineteen people reported dog problems, mostly ones they saw running loose or left in cars on hot days. Police told two dog owners not to leave their dogs in vehicles without air conditioning going or windows down.

One dog was found abandoned, apparently left from a truck with New York plates. Another apparently lost dog was taken to a veterinarian.

Police and firefighters retrieved a dog, reportedly frightened by fireworks, that got stuck in walls of a house.

Bears, Bearded Dragon, Raccoon, Bat

A bear was seen in a driveway on Main Street. It or perhaps another one was reported in the Main Street area and one was seen near a front door on South Main Street.

A large bear was reported on State Road and Fairview Terrace. Multiple bears were reported in a garage on Lake Mansfield Road.

A bearded dragon lizard was found in Housatonic. It was returned to its owners.

Someone trying to trap a stray kitten got instead an angry raccoon. Police helped free it.

Police helped someone remove a bat from a West Avenue home.

Arrests

Arrested or given a summons to appear in court were the following:

-Patricia Jane Wright, 49, of Great Barrington, operating a motor vehicle with a suspended license, possession of a class B drug, subsequent offense.

-Eduardo Edison Cambi Uruchima, 21, Sheffield, operating under the influence of liquor.

-David C. Magadini, 78, Great Barrington, violating harassment prevention order.

-Makayla Elise Foss, 31, Great Barrington, court-issued warrant.

-Adam N. Dupont, 32, Stockbridge, disturbing the peace.

-Ffion Dhani Greene, 18, Great Barrington, conspiracy, larceny over \$1,200, trespass, breaking and entering vehicle/board in nighttime for felony.

July Fire Report

GREAT BARRINGTON FIRE DEPARTMENT'S headquarters at 37 State Road, Great Barrington, is open from 8 to 11:30 a.m. weekdays.

Its telephone number is 528-0788, its page on the town website is www.townofgbma.gov/332/Fire-Department and its Facebook page is www.facebook.com/gbfiredpt

Firefighters responded to 113 calls in July, with 111 responding from the State Road station and two from Housatonic.

One call was for a fire caused by a malfunctioning light fixture in a trophy case at the Veterans of Foreign Wars post at 800 South Main St. Damage was limited to the trophy case.

Firefighters from Monterey also responded while the Sheffield Fire Department covered the State Road station.

Unauthorized burning was reported on VanDeusenville Road.

Firefighters helped EMS crews 50 times and at motor vehicle collisions four times.

They also were called 33 times for false alarms for release of hazardous materials or carbon monoxide or fire alarms activated because of malfunction or unintentionally.

-Juvenile, 17, domestic assault and battery on family member.

-John W. Tynan Jr., 83, North Egremont, negligent operation of a motor vehicle, alcohol in motor vehicle and possession of open container.

-Jose Emmanuel Robles, 18, Great Barrington, disturbing peace and court-issued warrant.

-Juvenile, 17, domestic assault and battery on family member.

-John J. Zaccaro, 40, Great Barrington, court-issued warrant.

-Alexander Jon Tatro, 31, Great Barrington, shoplifting by concealing merchandise.

-Westley Hampton vanSant, 18, Great Barrington, larceny over \$1,200, breaking and entering vehicle/boat in the nighttime for felony, trespass, conspiracy.

-Juvenile, 17, larceny over \$1,200, breaking and entering vehicle/boat in the nighttime for felony, trespass, conspiracy.

-Paul Naventi, 18, Richmond, larceny over \$1,200, breaking and entering vehicle/board in the nighttime for felony, trespass, conspiracy.

-Ivonne Esquivel-Salazar, 31, Pittsfield, knowingly attaching plates to vehicle, uninsured and unregistered vehicle.

-Thomas Roberts, 24, Hillsdale, N.Y., assault with dangerous weapon.

--Melissa A. Marusz, 57, Housatonic, operating motor vehicle with suspended license, subsequent offense.

Police, Continued

(POLICE continued on next page)



*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.*

-Elise Ring Abrams, trustee, Revana Realty Trust, to Danielle Sugarman, property on Egremont Plain Road, Great Barrington, \$410,000.

-Christina Bardwell, trustee, Christina Bardwell 2019 Revocable Trust & Matti Kiin 2019 Revocable Trust, to NMBS LLC, 5 Stockbridge Road, West Stockbridge, \$500,000.

-Donna A. Bailey & estate of Anita E. Coons to Hypotenuse Holdings LLC, 12 West Plain Road, Great Barrington, \$435,000.

-Robert J. Lebeau Sr. & Denise M. Lebeau to Tenovations LLC, 268 East Road, Alford, \$316,500.

-Gentleman Farmer LLC & Givati 18 LLC to Ensueno Education Group LLC, 445, 449 & 450 Monterey Road, Great Barrington, \$695,000.

-Sheila E. Shepardson to Katrina Curtiss, 75 VanDeusenville Road, Great Barrington, \$375,000.

-Senta Reis & Heather N. Alston to Shailajap P. Rao, 26 High St., West Stockbridge, \$435,000.

-Christina van Hengel & Charles Miller to Marilyn Leibowitz & Michael Leibowitz, trustees, Michael Leibowitz & Michelle Leobowitz Living Trust, 119 Egremont Plain Road, Egremont, \$700,000.

-Lisa M. Decubellis to Johanna Wise & Brett R. Shiel, 18 Glendale Road, West Stockbridge, \$800,000.

-Katherine Pyles & Kevin Wendell to Nicolas Piris & Lucila Gorosito, 270 Hillsdale Road, Egremont, \$915,000.

-Lynn J. Maier & Joel M. Douglas to Joseph Lytle, 12 Harrison Calkins Road, Alford, \$975,000.

-Arthur R. Hebert & estate of Linda R. Hebert to Emilie West Cohen, 6 Tyringham Road, Monterey, \$655,000.

-Dale Emil Stackhouse, trustee, Max Lynn Stackhouse 2006 Revocable Trust, to Alexander Taupier & Erica Taupier, 256

Police, Continued

-Anne M. Sommers, 75, New Marlborough, unlicensed operation of motor vehicle.

-Gabrielle Brooke Carbonel, 25, Great Barrington, operating uninsured motor vehicle.

-Maurice Wyatt Brazie, 18, New Marlborough, operating under the influence of liquor and operating unregistered motor vehicle.

Recent Real Estate Transactions

Great Barrington Road, West Stockbridge, \$667,500.

-Michael J. Farina & Kristina M. Farina to Jourdan Messenger & Tristan Hadley, 45 State Line Road, West Stockbridge, \$472,000.

-Samantha 563, trustee, Diana Smith Florida Revocable Trust, 26 North Egremont Road, Alford, \$1.44 million.

-Andrew M. Freedberg & Leslie E. Roberts to Victor Hollender, trustee, Victor Hollender 2014 Revocable Trust, & Gretchen L. Hohenstein, trustee, Gretchen Hohenstein Revocable Trust, 32 Ox Bow Road, Egremont, \$3,192,750.

-Sherri Waggoner to Arnold Cody & Mary Rae, unit A-4, 8 Stanley Drive, Great Barrington, \$449,000.

-STT LLC to Alexander Thorp & Elizabeth Keen, 9 Jug End Road, Egremont, \$337,500.

-00011Marc Harris Gamsin & Sharon Gamsin Restated & Amended Trust to Lily B. Turonsky, 34 Creamery Road, Egremont, \$655,000.

-Mary Kornman to John Chambers Christopher, property on Great Barrington Road, West Stockbridge, \$172,000.

-Cheryl L. Ovitt, William J. Briggs Sr. & estate of Louise M. Briggs to Zoe C. Ayinbora, 39 Christian Hill Road, Great Barrington, \$250,000.

-Ian Cahn-Fuller & Katherine Cahn-Fuller to Christopher O. McHugh, trustee, Christopher O. McHugh Revocable Trust, & Yvonne J. Kruten, trustee, Yvonne J. Kruten Revocable Trust, 617 Main Road, Monterey, \$785,000.

-Miriam Rose Shapiro & Jason Saul Shapiro, trustees, Hilda Banks Shapiro Family Trust, to Matthew P. Goldshore & Marco D. Carpenter, 81 Egremont Plain Road, Great

Permits for \$70,000 Or More

GREAT BARRINGTON IS PART of a four-town building department with Lee, Lenox and Stockbridge. Building commissioner is Matthew Kollmer, building inspector is Rian Dowd and administrative assistant is Jesse Self.

Their offices in the Town Hall are open weekdays from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. or by appointment. The telephone number is 528-3206.

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

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 occupations.

Following are recent permits for projects estimated to cost \$70,000 or more, with the owner's name, reason for permit, applicant if not the owner, and estimated value:

-Jessie Cooney, replace kitchen cabinets, install new bathrooms and refinish all floors at 80 Taconic Ave., estimated cost \$72,489, applicant Steven MacLeay.

-James Pardoe, Clark Hill Construction, inground pool at 23 Kalliste Hill, \$138,000, Michael Ginnamore.

-Keith Seidman, trustee, remodel three bathrooms at 11 Kalliste Hill, \$150,000, Jeff Homeyer.

-Hunt Slonem, modify elevator hoist way and install Savaria eclipse elevator at 389 Main St., \$190,000, Will Macmillan.

-Bill Cooke, build detached garage connected to main house by deck at 26 Dresser Ave., \$195,247, Austin Rybacki.

-Central Berkshire Habitat for Humanity stick-built ranch with three bedrooms, one bathroom at 13 Prosperity Way, \$205,250.

-Joan Griswold, build four-bedroom home at 275 Division St., \$312,000, Timothy Martin.

-Berkshire Bank, tenant fitup/selective demolition in commercial building at 255 Stockbridge Road, \$390,000, James W. Culliton.

-30 Stockbridge Road LLC, alteration/selective demolition in commercial building at 30 Stockbridge Road, \$400,000.

-Berkshire Bank, tenant fitup/alteration/selective demolition of 244 Main St., \$605,000, James W. Culliton.

-Three Black Rabbits LLC, Erect 7,000-square foot pre-engineered steel building with interior stud walls, concrete foundation and interior slab at 414 Park St. North, \$762,578, Ronald Carver.

-Alan Strassler, build two-story, modular, wood frame residence at 376 Maple Ave., \$942,000, Robert Segalla.



**HOUSATONIC
REAL ESTATE**

402 Park Street
P.O. Box 547

Housatonic, MA 01236
housatonicrealestate.com
413.274.5065

THE NEWSletter unfortunately lacks the space to include all details and all survivors. It emails obituaries when it receives them to subscribers who requested them. **THE NEWSletter** does not charge to list an obituary.

Anna Marie Boldyga

Anna Marie Boldyga, 89, of Great Barrington died Aug. 13 at home.

The former Anna Marie Dennis, she grew up in Connecticut.

Mrs. Boldyga leaves her son, Dennis Boldyga of Great Barrington, and daughter, Constance Capasse of New Mexico; four grandchildren; six great-grandchildren; and two great-great-grandchildren.

She and Bernard Boldyga were married for 70 years before he died in 2024. She was also predeceased by her grandson Richard Morey.

Birches-Roy Funeral Home handled arrangements.

Carolyn P. Chase

Carolyn P. Chase, 77, of Southfield died July 30 at Berkshire Medical Center.

A graduate of Bennett College and New York School of Interior Design, she traveled in Africa and South America in the 1970s.

She founded Lynn Chase Designs in 1988. Her Jaguar Jungle design won Best Pattern and the Impact Award at the International Tabletop Association in 1991.

She founded Lynn Chase Wildlife Foundation, a nonprofit dedicated to preserving endangered animals around the globe.

The foundation has contributed to the Cheetah Conservation Fund in Namibia and the Amboseli Trust for Elephants in Kenya. She has served on the Amboseli Trust's board.

Her husband of 22 years, Richard A. Flintoft, died in 2020.

Ms. Chase leaves her sister, Susan Culver of Wayland and Charleston, S.C.; her brother, Brewster Jennings Chase of Ithaca, N.Y.; and her stepsons, Philip Grant Flintoft of Millerton, N.Y., and Peter Flintoft of New York.

Finnerty & Stevens Funeral Home is handling arrangements, to include a celebration of life later this year.

Memorial donations are suggested to the Cheetah Conservation Fund or the Amboseli Trust for Elephants.

Shepley Evans

Shepley Evans, 84, of Great Barrington died July 18.

An obituary has not been issued but according to his Linked In page, he had been the Great Barrington Conservation Commission's agent since 2013 and the town's animal control officer.

Recent Obituaries

The site notes that he was a past president of the Stockbridge Land Trust and a former member of the Massachusetts Association of Conservation Commissions.

Recent Selectboard and Conservation Commission meetings in Great Barrington started with a minutes of silence in his memory. During the Great Barrington Affordable Housing Trust board meeting, co-chairman Fred Clark praised Mr. Evans as "a longtime friend to the Affordable Housing Trust," attending every meeting and lending his technical expertise.

Belle Fox-Martin

The Rev. Belle Fox-Martin, 73, of Glendale, died Aug. 1.

She was raised in New York City and Quogue, N.Y., and attended Nightingale-Bamford School in New York, the former Foxhollow School in Lenox and Newport School in Newport, R.I.

She received a master's degree in theater arts in 1992 from New York University.

Ms. Fox-Martin was a certified substance abuse specialist and worked with homeless people through the Neighborhood Coalition for Shelter in New York.

She had also been a VISTA Volunteer poverty law paralegal in Newport.

Ms. Fox-Martin had also worked for the Royal Court Theater in London and as a producer at the Equinox Theater in New York.

For five years, until 2001, she owned Fox-Martin Fine Art Gallery in Housatonic.

She became a licensed minister in 2000. She was pastor of the West Stockbridge Congregational Church UCC, Housatonic Congregational Church UCC, Second Congregational Church of Williamstown and West Stockbridge Village Congregational Church.

She retired from the ministry in 2025.

Ms. Fox-Martin leaves her wife of 34 years, Cheryl Hutto; her first partner of 13 years, Dorothy Carpenter; and her half-sisters, Marcia Bradley, Lynn Joyce and Shana Fox-Martin.

She was predeceased by her half-sisters Pam Detels and Lisa Fox-Martin, and her half-brother, Ludlow Fox-Martin.

Birches-Roy Funeral Home handled arrangements.

Memorial donations are suggested to Berkshire Immigrant Center or Doctors Without Borders.

Donald O. Goranson

Donald Otto Goranson, 96, of Great Barrington died Aug. 27 at Berkshire Medical Center.

He graduated from Fitchburg High School in 1947 and from Massachusetts State Teacher's College in 1951 with a degree in education.

He was a second lieutenant in the Korean conflict from 1952 to 1954. He then attended the University of Colorado, where he received his master's degree in education in 1956.

Mr. Goranson began with the Berkshire Hills Regional School District as an industrial arts teacher at Searles High School in 1957, then as a guidance counselor and summertime high school principal.

He concluded his career as a clinical psychologist.

Mr. Goranson served on the Great Barrington Planning Board for 35 years, the last 10 as chairman. He retired in 2011.

He also had served on the Great Barrington Historical Society and the town Housing Authority.

He and his wife, Natalie, traveled extensively, including to Egypt and Italy. In 2016, he and his daughters went to the World War II beaches in Normandy, France.

Mr. Goranson leaves his twin sister, Astrid Jean; his three children, David of Orlando, Fla., Heidi Maughan of Centennial, Colo., and Melissa Goranson of Fitchburg; and four grandchildren.

He was predeceased by Natalie, his wife of 63 years, in 2015 and his sister, Ann Porter, in 2010.

Finnerty & Stevens Funeral Home is handling arrangements, to include a memorial service Sept. 29 at 11 a.m. at the funeral home, followed by a burial with Military Honors at Elmwood Cemetery.

The family will receive friends from 9 a.m. until the service.

Memorial donations are suggested to the Berkshire Humane Society through the funeral home.

Neil Rochford Ivey

Neil Rochford Ivey, 53, of Clayton, N.C., died Aug. 22.

After graduating in 1990 from Monument Mountain Regional High School, he attended Canterbury as a post graduate and then graduated in 1995 from Skidmore University with a degree in business administration.

He moved to North Carolina in 1999 to be a nursing home administrator.

Mr. Ivey leaves his wife, Sara; his children, Jackson Arthur and Lindsey Leigh; his mother, Pamela Heady Ivy; and three sisters, Hilary, Emily and Courtney.

He was predeceased by his father, Arthur J. Ivey.

Birches-Roy Funeral Home handled arrangements.

Memorial donations are suggested to Housy Hoops through the funeral home.

(OBITUARIES cont. on next page)

HAVING A TAG SALE? You need a \$5 permit from the town clerk's office and if you don't own your property, you need a letter from the owner stating it's OK.

Recent Obituaries, continued from previous page

Anton Luttenberger

Anton Francis "Tony" Luttenberger, 80, of Great Barrington died Aug. 22 at Albany (N.Y.) Medical Center.

He graduated from Archbishop Malloy High School in Queens, N.Y., and Stonybrook University.

He traveled the world for many years, buying art and textiles for a gallery in New York City. Among his many adventures, he climbed Mt. Everest.

He studied yoga in India and made teaching it his life's work, continuing his daily yoga practice until he was hospitalized in mid-July.

Mr. Luttenberger lived in New York City, San Francisco and Great Barrington and for two decades maintained a home in Key West, Fla., where he specialized in yoga therapy for pregnant women and AIDS patients. He used yoga to help recovering addicts.

For many years, he directed the yoga and fitness program at New Age Health Spa in Neversink, N.Y.

Mr. Luttenberger leaves his wife of 33 years, Karen; his sons, Aaron Z. Luttenberger of Austin, Texas, and Eli G. Luttenberger of Great Barrington; his daughter, Crystle Maillet of Woodstock, N.Y.; and two granddaughters.

He was predeceased by his daughter Frederica Luttenberger and his brother, Robert Luttenberger.

Finnerty & Stevens Funeral Home handled arrangements.

People are asked to perform an anonymous act of goodness in his honor.

Rev. Dr. Alan C. Macy

The Rev. Dr. Alan C. Macy, 100, of Great Barrington died Aug. 1.

He was raised in Hyde Park, N.Y., and graduated from Roosevelt High School and The Peddie School. He attended Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in 1942 and then enlisted in the Navy.

He served three years in the Pacific Fleet during World War II. After the war, he graduated in 1951 from RPI with a degree in management engineering.

He then became an associate editor for High Fidelity magazine. He also was a partner in a company that designed and installed high-fidelity equipment. In 1954, he secured a patent for a loud speaker enclosure.

In 1961, he was licensed as a journeyman electrician and joined the Massachusetts Department of Public Works as a traffic signal electrician. He retired in 1988 as district traffic engineer.

Rev. Macy became a lay minister in the United Church of Christ in 1975. He graduated from Andover-Newton Theological Seminary with a master of divinity and doctor of ministry and was ordained when he was 62.

He served churches in Westfield and throughout the Berkshires, specializing in leading congregations through pastor transitions.

Rev. Macy was interim associate conference minister for the western area of the Massachusetts Conference United Church of Christ.

He retired in 2002 and delivered his last official sermon at age 90.

Rev. Macy leaves three children, David Macy of North Haven, Maine, Marsha John of Randolph, Vt., and Nancy Macy of Great Barrington; four grandchildren; and five great-grandchildren.

He was predeceased in 2020 by his wife of 72 years, Maryanna.

Finnerty & Stevens Funeral Home handled arrangements.

Memorial donations are suggested to the Alzheimer's Association through the funeral home.

Betty Jo Marek

Betty Jo Marek, 70, of Great Barrington died Aug. 15 at Berkshire Medical Center.

Ms. Marek leaves her life partner, Nicholas Sotis; her elder sister, Evelyn Marek-Parker; her children, Kelly Wilcox-Wigginton and John Milkowski; six grandchildren; and five great-grandchildren.

Finnerty-Stevens Funeral Home handled arrangements.

Memorial donations are suggested to Save The Children through the funeral home.

Cecelia Sitnik Meade

Cecelia Sitnik Meade, 87, of West Stockbridge, died Aug. 2.

She graduated from the former Searles High School in 1955 and from the former North Adams State College, now Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts, with a bachelor's degree in 1959 and a master's degree in 1961.

She began her career as an elementary school teacher in Richmond School and then for many years taught in the Berkshire Hills Regional School District.

She also was a substitute teacher in the Southern Berkshire Regional School District and in Lee schools.

Mrs. Meade leaves her husband of 66 years, Thomas B. Meade; three children, Thomas, Kathleen and John; and three grandsons.

Birches-Roy Funeral Home handled arrangements.

Memorial donations are suggested to the St. Patrick's Building Fund or Edith Steward Chase Foundation through the funeral home.

Louis James Oggiani

Louis "Lou" James Oggiani, 73, of Great Barrington died Aug. 25.

He attended schools in Great Barrington and graduated in 1973 from the College of

the Holy Cross and in 1977 from Suffolk University Law School.

He then returned home to Great Barrington, where he practiced law for nearly 50 years.

In 1978, he became an emergency medical technician and for more than 40 years was a director and member of the Southern Berkshire Volunteer Ambulance Squad; for two decades, an EMT at Bousquet Ski Area, and for many years a volunteer EMT at Tanglewood and County Ambulance.

He was emergency management director for the Town of West Stockbridge.

Mr. Oggiani had been a Eucharistic minister, lector, and catechism teacher at All Saints Church and Blessed Teresa Church.

He was a 40-year participant and recurrent board member of the Josh Billings Run-Around. He was also an official scorekeeper and track and field assistant at Monument Mountain Regional High School.

He acted in plays to benefit the Fairview Hospital Auxiliary and the Berkshire Bar Association and directed plays to raise money for the James P. Dohoney Scholarship Fund. He was on its selection committee.

He also was on the Stockbridge Scholarship Selection Committee.

Mr. Oggiani leaves his wife of 44 years, Joan; their twin sons Peter and Michael; and a granddaughter.

Birches-Roy Funeral Home handled arrangements.

Memorial donations are suggested to Southern Berkshire Volunteer Ambulance Squad or HospiceCare in The Berkshires through the funeral home.

Elisabeth Pizzichemi

Elisabeth Pizzichemi, 89, of Monterey died Aug. 8.

She was born in Grebin, Germany, and lived in Wankendorf after her family's Kiel home was destroyed by a bomb.

She met her future husband, John Pizzichemi, on the SS America in 1957 when she was coming to New York to work for the German ambassador. They later divorced.

She became a United States citizen in the early 1970s.

Ms. Pizzichemi worked at several retailers, including Caligari's and Jack's Country Squire, before retiring.

She also made custom wedding cakes/Her lampshades with pressed dried flowers were sold at Berkshire Pottery.

Mrs. Pizzichemi leaves five children, Andrena Perkins of Springfield, Remo Pizzichemi of Monson, Agnes Bourque of Lee, Monika Pizzichemi-Mckay of Dalton and John Pizzichemi of Savannah, Ga.; 11 grandchildren; and four great-grandchildren.

Finnerty & Stevens Funeral Home handled arrangements.

Statement on Cannabis Litigation Settlement

The following statement was prepared by attorney David Doneski of town counsel KP Law and interim town manager Chris Rembold. Selectboard chairman Steve Bannon read it after an executive session on the matter held during the board's Aug. 25 meeting.

In March of 2024, three of the marijuana establishments in Great Barrington sued the Town, claiming that the Community Impact Fees they had paid under their host community agreements with the Town (HCAs) were unlawful and demanding a refund of those fees. Those businesses are Theory Wellness, Community Growth Partners (which operates as Rebelle), and Highminded LLC (which operates as Farnsworth Fine Cannabis). After a series of discussions, the Selectboard has reached an agreement to settle the litigation.

Though the Selectboard has taken the position that the Community Impact Fees were collected and spent in accordance with the HCAs and with applicable regulations, and after an application process and Town Meeting vote, the Selectboard does not want to risk an unfavorable court ruling that could put a significant burden on Great Barrington's taxpayers.

Therefore, the Selectboard has agreed to return a portion of the Community Impact Fees paid by the establishments and still held by the Town.

The three companies paid the Town a combined total of approximately 5.8 million dollars in Community Impact Fees between April of 2019 and September of 2023. The total amount that will be returned is approximately 4.7 million dollars. The general return ratio will be the same for each establishment, but the overall amount will be in proportion to the amount of fees paid, meaning that Theory Wellness, the first establishment in Town and the one that paid the most, will receive the largest return. The approximate breakdown is \$4.16 million to Theory Wellness, \$360,000 to Community Growth Partners, and \$189,000 to Highminded.

The settlement will also include a new or renewed HCA with each of the three companies, using the agreement form the Town has recently adopted for new establishments. Under that model, Community Impact Fees may still be assessed to an establishment but the process for doing so involves an annual computation and accounting of particular Town costs that might arise as a result of operation of the individual business.

I do want to point out that the Community Impact Fees that were collected were in addition to the 3% local excise tax levied on cannabis retail sales. The settlement does not affect the collection or receipt of cannabis excise taxes. From FY19 through FY25, the Town has received more than \$8.3 million from local cannabis excise taxes for all establishments in Great Barrington. Those monies are deposited into the Town's general fund each year and are subject to appropriation by Town Meeting.

The Selectboard has authorized the settlement, through the negotiation process and discussion in executive session. For the public record, I will ask for a motion to approve the settlement of the Theory Wellness, Community Growth Partners, and Highminded marijuana litigation, Middlesex Superior Court Civil Action No. 2481CV00693, as I have described it, and to authorize Town Counsel to complete and file the necessary documents to end the litigation.

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Why Selectboard Stopped HWW Litigation

Following is the Great Barrington Selectboard's statement that chairman Steve Bannon read at the Aug. 11 meeting explaining why the board agreed to stop litigation against the state Department of Public Utilities' rate increase for Housatonic Water Works. The statement was prepared by attorney David Doneski of town counsel KP Law and interim town manager Chris Rembold.

THE NEWSletter added paragraphs and subheads to the statement. Wording was not changed.

In July 2024, the Department of Public Utilities issued a decision approving a rate increase settlement agreement between the Housatonic Water Works Company and the office of the Attorney General.

The approval allows for a graduated approach to increased water rates as the Company undertakes a series of capital improvements to its water system including:

- addressing HAA5 in the distribution system,
- constructing a manganese filtration plant,
- interconnecting with the Great Barrington Fire District,
- constructing a water storage tank, and, finally,
- undertaking the first stage of a 10-year water main replacement program.

Manganese Filtration Timeline

The timeline for the manganese filtration plant was an in-service target date of fourth quarter of 2024. In August 2024, the Towns of Great Barrington and West Stockbridge filed an appeal for judicial review of that rate increase settlement agreement.

In January of 2025 Housatonic Water Works filed a notice with the DPU that Phase 2 of the capital improvements, the manganese filtration plant, would be delayed because the Company's lender was unwilling to approve financing for the project on account of the pending litigation between the Board of Health and the Company regarding the Board of Health's September 2024 order for remedial action, including daily distribution of bottled water to the Company's customers.

Specifically, the Board of Health had appealed the Berkshire Superior Court injunction against enforcement of the Board of Health's order.

Stockbridge, West Stockbridge Act

In February, the Town of Stockbridge filed a motion with the DPU for an investigation into the Company's compliance with the settlement agreement, including construction of the manganese filtration plant. Great Barrington and West Stockbridge joined in that motion.

The Attorney General opposed the Towns' motion. In early July 2025, the DPU rejected the Towns' motion.

DEP's Administrative Consent Order

Meanwhile, on July 14, 2025, the Department of Environmental Protection issued an Administrative Consent Order to the Company regarding the manganese filtration plant and other water quality matters.

That order was described in the Town's July 30 press release. It specifies that the filtration plant construction must be completed by March 1, 2026.

However, the order includes language that could delay construction of the plant. That language relates to the pending appeal of the Superior Court injunction in the Board of Health case and the Town's appeal of the DPU order approving the rate case settlement.

Specifically, the order says that if the Company is unable to obtain the financing required to construct the filtration plant because of the ongoing litigation, then it may request an extension of the completion deadline by submitting evidence that the financing has been denied for reasons outside of the Company's control.

The Selectboard has received what it believes is reliable information that the Company cannot get financing approval for the filtration plant while the Town's litigation remains active.

In light of the importance of the manganese filtration plant and other remedial actions contained in the DEP's Administrative Consent Order, the Selectboard will consider dropping its appeal of the DPU's approval of the manganese filtration plant to be funded and completed according to the DEP-settlement agreement, in order to allow the ordered schedule, and be operational for next summer.

'Challenging Situation'

This has been a challenging situation, but the Selectboard finds that the systemwide benefits which are expected from the manganese filtration plant are a reason to consider ending the litigation.

In addition, the Selectboard wants to encourage the Company's full compliance with the remedial measures stated in the Administrative Consent Order, which include:

- water sampling at locations with discoloration complaints, as approved by the DEP;
- installation of a water blow-off valve at the end of Wright Lane; — additional water sampling as directed by the DEP, with results provided to the DEP and the Board of Health within five days; and
- the installation of a community water filtration unit.

Community Water Filtration Unit

That unit will be installed at the Housatonic Community Center at 1064 Main St., and will be set up to provide for daily 24-hour public access to filtered water. The DEP Order sets timelines and performance standards for the Company to meet, which is something that the Town's litigation to date has not been able to achieve.

Lawsuit Obstacle To Acquisition Talk

Finally, the pending litigation has also been an obstacle to progress on talks relative to the Town acquiring the Company, and this is another factor to consider in deciding whether to drop the litigation.

Massachusetts School Building Authority

Deborah B. Goldberg
Chair, State Treasurer

James A. MacDonald
Chief Executive Officer

Mary L. Pichetti
Executive Director / Deputy CEO

August 27, 2025

Dr. Peter Dillon, Superintendent
Berkshire Hills Regional School District
50 Main Street, P.O. Box 617
Stockbridge, MA 01262

Re: Berkshire Hills Regional School District, Monument Mountain Regional High School

Dear Dr. Dillon:

I am pleased to report that the Board of the Massachusetts School Building Authority (the "MSBA") has voted to approve the Monument Mountain Regional High School Project in the Berkshire Hills Regional School District (the "District") to replace the existing Monument Mountain Regional High School with a new facility serving students in grades 9-12 on the site of the existing school.

The Board approved an Estimated Maximum Total Facilities Grant of \$59,983,492, which does not include any funds for Potentially Eligible Owner's or Construction Contingency Expenditures. In the event that the MSBA determines that any Owner's and/or Construction Contingency Expenditures are eligible for reimbursement, the Maximum Total Facilities Grant for the Monument Mountain Regional High School Project may increase to as much as \$61,024,725. The final grant amount will be determined by the MSBA based on a review and audit of all Project costs incurred by the District, in accordance with the MSBA's regulations, policies, and guidelines and the Project Funding Agreement. The final grant amount may be an amount less than \$59,983,492.

Pursuant to the MSBA's regulations, the District has 120 days after the date of the MSBA's Board vote to acquire and certify local approval for an appropriation and all other necessary local votes or approvals showing acceptance of the cost, site, type, scope, and timeline for the Monument Mountain Regional High School Project. After receipt of the certified votes demonstrating local approval, the MSBA and the District will execute a Project Funding Agreement, which will set forth the terms and conditions pursuant to which the District will receive its grant from the MSBA. Once the Project Funding Agreement has been executed by both parties, the District will be eligible to submit requests for reimbursement for the Monument Mountain Regional High School Project costs to the MSBA. The Project Scope and Budget Agreement signed by the District and the MSBA will form the basis for the Project Funding Agreement.

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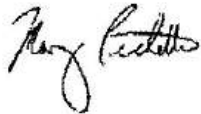
August 27, 2025

Berkshire Hills Regional School District Project Scope and Budget Authorization Board Action Letter

We will be contacting you soon to discuss these next steps in more detail, but in the meantime, I wanted to share with you the Board's approval of the Monument Mountain Regional High School Project in the Berkshire Hills Regional School District to replace the existing Monument Mountain Regional High School with a new facility serving students in grades 9-12 on the site of the existing school.

I look forward to continuing to work with you during the MSBA's grant program process. As always, feel free to contact me or my staff at (617) 720-4466 should you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Mary L. Pichetti
Executive Director

Cc: Legislative Delegation
Stephen Bannon, Chair, Berkshire Hills Regional School Committee
Steven Soule, Director of Operations, Berkshire Hills Regional School District
John Benzinger, Owner's Project Manager, Skanska USA Building, Inc.
Donna DiNisco, Designer, DiNisco Design, Inc.
File: 10.2 Letters (Region 1)

Master Plan Housatonic Visioning Session
Hosted by the **Housatonic Improvement Committee (HIC)**
Saturday, August 2nd, 2025
9am - 12pm, 420 Park Street

Moderator: Angela Lomanto
Committee Members in Attendance:
Ben Elliott, Beverly Nourse, Eric Gabriel, Louise Goldsmith, Sara Parker

45 community members in attendance.

No remote participation. No formal votes were taken at this meeting.

Visioning Session Summary

Over 45 community members joined the Housatonic Improvement Committee (HIC) for a Saturday morning visioning session to shape priorities and recommendations for Great Barrington's next Master Plan. The discussion was grounded in a draft set of recommendations shared in advance by HIC, which served as a starting point for dialogue. These are included at the end of this document. Participants responded to three key questions: *What's missing in Housatonic? What makes you proud to live here? And what would success look like five years from now?* Through conversation, shared stories, and written comments, residents painted a clear picture of what's working—and what's needed—to build a thriving, future-ready village.

Core Themes

1. **Basic Needs Come First:** Clean, municipally-managed drinking water remains the most urgent community priority. Residents voiced frustration with aging infrastructure and the absence of long-term solutions. This concern sits alongside calls for safer roads and sidewalks and more consistent, transparent communication from the town.
2. **Invest in What's Already Working:** The Ramsdell Library, Housatonic Commons, and the walkable layout were named as core strengths. "People-sized, village scale" became a refrain that resonated most with participants. Residents highlighted the strong identity already present—and called for deeper investment in the assets that hold the community together. The Commons, in particular, was seen as a central anchor for programming and gathering, especially stemming from the success of Party in the Park.
3. **Create More Space to Gather, Connect, and Stay:** From food trucks and multicultural cafés to kayak lending and PorchFest, residents called for more informal ways to be in community with one another. They emphasized the need for spaces that are affordable, noting in particular the hope for places that could cater to families and were open during the day. Activation of the Housatonic Dome; performances at Ramsdell, Unitarian Universalist Meeting of South Berkshires, or Guthrie Center; and visible public art were offered as ideas that reflect the village's creative character.
4. **Restore the River as a Public and Ecological Asset:** Participants spoke about the river as landscape and scenery, serving as a deep marker of history and identity, which could bring a plethora of opportunities. They envision a continuous Riverwalk with native

plantings and ecological signage; expanded access points for kayaking and walking; and a commitment to dam removal and PCB remediation that prioritizes safety and restoration.

5. **Plan With—Not For—Housatonic:** A repeated theme was for the need for agency and partnership. Residents want more influence over town budgeting, housing development, and infrastructure projects. Ideas included a Housatonic-specific website and greater youth involvement in civic decision-making. Trust can't be assumed—it has to be built through clarity and action.

This session confirmed what many already know: Housatonic has a deep well of creativity and pride. With strategic investment and transparent processes, the village is ready to lead—not follow—in the next chapter of the Master Plan.

Comments electronically submitted to the Committee are to be found at the end of this document and have been integrated into the summaries of each section, as well as the overarching Visioning Session Summary.