



Fairhaven Neighborhood News

A **FREE!** publication of all things Fairhaven



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with a big voice!

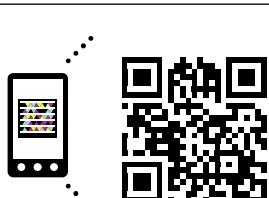
Volume 16, Issue 9 • February 25, 2021

Teaning with information you need.
(And some you don't need, but will be glad you have anyway.)

Bask opens recreational marijuana dispensary



Bask CEO Chapman Dickerson cuts the official ribbon to commemorate the opening of Bask's recreational marijuana dispensary in Fairhaven on 2/19/21, while members of the One Southcoast Chamber of Commerce and Bask employees look on, L-R: Albert Mui from One Southcoast chamber of commerce; Bask President Tim Keogh; Ian Abreu of One Southcoast; Bask Director JoAnne Leppanen; Bask CEO Chapman Dickerson; Bask Board Member Melanie Dixon; and Tom Menchi of One Southcoast. See page 12 for story *Photo by Jean Perry.*



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First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

Judge Murray Gurfein, Pentagon Papers case, June 17, 1971:

"The security of the Nation is not at the ramparts alone. Security also lies in the value of our free institutions. A cantankerous press, an obstinate press, a ubiquitous press must be suffered by those in authority in order to preserve the even greater values of freedom of expression and the right of the people to know."

From The Editor

WEST ISLAND —
A day late and many dollars short.

OOO MMM GGG! Really. You can't make up this stuff. If I did, it wouldn't even make it in the fiction world because it's too ridiculous.

First, the Selectboard continues to be an embarrassment. Shutting people off, muting them, rudely just shutting them down, all of that would not be possible if people could be in the room. Some power-hungry little snits are getting their jollies off of pushing people around, and it has to stop. Grow the hell up. Really. (See page 4.)

Okay, that was Monday. Let's move on to Tuesday.

The big interview with Wendy Graves, the special one, y'now because she wasn't good enough to make it to be a finalist so they had to make a special meeting just for her, well, that didn't happen. Why? Hold your hats, grab your drinks, and settle in: Because Ms. Graves had her lawyer send a cease and desist letter to Selectboard member Bob Espindola about something he allegedly said about her with the threat of a lawsuit behind the C&D (see page 6).

I kid you not.

So, I know times are tough and people are trying to find creative ways to stand out from the crowd to get considered for a job. But, well, suing the guy who'll be your boss? Maybe I'm just old school, but that doesn't seem like a winning strategy.

On the other hand, with this board, who knows? They make not sense half the time, and the other half they're just rude and bullies.

But they're at the top of their game. They have their little voting block, the chairperson has latitude for a lot of things, especially being the one with the gavel (hee hee, it's a gavel), and they are using their little bit of power to push around anyone they can. And THAT, Mr. Freitas, is shameful.

We have lots of other good stuff in here, of course, including Board of can-you-say-shut-up Health(no, really, that happened, see page 13), and our cover story. Bask has opened for recreational marijuana.

Maybe they all should get high before a meeting. They could all use some mellowing out.

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Until next week then, see ya



Beth David, Publisher

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CORRECTIONS/CLARIFICATIONS

Oops...I don't know my own deadline. It's THIS Friday not last, for candidate statements. Sorry about that.

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No one does local like a local newspaper. And it does not get more local than the *Neighb News*. Any small amount will help. Just clip the coupon and send check or money order to *Fairhaven Neighborhood News*, 166 Dogwood St., Fairhaven, MA 02719. Ask for a bumper sticker that says "I Support the *Neighb News*." And thank you for reading the *little paper with a big voice*.

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COVID-19 update: schools might reopen

By Beth David
Editor

Massachusetts education officials are working to get students back in the classroom full-time by April. The plan calls for elementary students to go back first, then older students.

Governor Charlie Baker and state education officials cited the drop in COVID-19 cases statewide, deteriorating mental health among students and the challenge to learning many students have by attending school remotely. No firm timeline has been established. Meanwhile, schools will continue to use a hybrid model with some students in classrooms, and others learning remotely on an alternating basis.

More categories of people are now eligible for the vaccine. The list now includes people 75+, low income and

affordable housing senior residents and staff; first responders, people age 65-74; health care workers, people in congregate care settings, people with 2+ certain medical conditions, long term care settings. Visit <https://www.mass.gov/> for details.

As of 2/16, Acushnet was still in the red, with a total case count of 1109, 74 within the last 14 days (active cases), and a positivity rate of 7.96%. Fairhaven had dropped from the red zone to yellow, with a total of 1697 cases, 103 active, and a 4.81% positivity rate. New Bedford remained in the red zone.

A call center line to make vaccine appointments can be accessed by dialing 211 and selecting the prompt for "help scheduling a vaccine appointment." Or visit <https://www.mass.gov/covid-19-vaccine>.

Free Political PR

The *Neighb News* will give all candidates for townwide public office in Fairhaven and Acushnet a chance to get their message out. You may submit an article of approximately 500 words, with a picture, and we will publish at no charge before the election.

Please contact the *Neighb News* as soon as possible so we can plan for space allocation in the issues leading up to the election.

DEADLINE: Friday, 2/26, for Fairhaven (4/6 election); Friday, 4/16, for Acushnet (5/15 election)

Send by email (preferred) at NeighbNews@comcast.net, or by fax, 508-991-5580, or mail to 166 Dogwood St., Fairhaven, MA 02719.

Call 508-979-593 or email with questions.



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Selectboard meeting devolves, yet again, into rudeness

By Beth David
Editor

In what has become a routine occurrence, the Fairhaven Selectboard meeting devolved into rudeness and abruptness as members talked over each other and the chair abruptly cut off discussion on at least two agenda items, even electronically muting one member of the public who was trying to address a matter in which his name was invoked.

At their meeting on 2/22, the board did not discuss the item about the changes to the Town Administrator Screening and Interview Process, presumably in response to the board's failure to choose a TA from three finalists, deciding instead, to grant an interview on Tuesday, 2/23, to Wendy Graves, the town's Finance Director/Treasurer/Collector, who is also serving as the Interim TA.

Selectboard chairperson Daniel Freitas shut down that discussion when Mr. Espindola started the item by saying that the three board members had received a new envelope with information in their inboxes. Mr. Espindola wanted to recess so the members could read the information.

Mr. Freitas, however said if "something was in the box today, we're not gonna read it tonight."

"I agree," said board member Keith Silvia.

Mr. Freitas said it should be tabled, as Mr. Espindola said it was the "most important" — then he got interrupted when Mr. Freitas said there was a motion on the floor.

Mr. Espindola insisted that the board discuss the item because it related to the meeting scheduled for the next day (to interview Ms. Graves).

Mr. Silvia said he wanted to table it.

Mr. Espindola said if they did not discuss the item, then he would ask the next night for that meeting to be postponed.

"I don't know what's waiting in our inbox," said Mr. Freitas.

The two went back and forth, with Mr. Silvia interjecting about seconding a motion.

"I was ready to rock and roll with this one until you told us something was waiting for us in our inbox," said Mr. Freitas.

"I'll second the motion to table it," said Mr. Silvia.

Mr. Espindola tried again to get his fellow board members to look at the information. At some point, Mr. Freitas cut off Mr. Espindola and called for the vote to

table the item, which passed 2-1 with Mr. Espindola voting "no."

Mr. Espindola then made a motion to postpone the Tuesday meeting.

"If I knew what was in that," said Mr. Silvia.

"You will by tomorrow, so will you agree," asked Mr. Espindola.

Mr. Freitas said "will you agree there's something out there you may not know about?"

Then they went back and forth about scheduling another meeting with Mr. Freitas saying something about a "mystery in another room" that "popped up."

Mr. Freitas then chided Mr. Espindola about "communication" and another agenda item and back to the current issue and on for a bit, with Mr. Espindola saying he would read it.

"No, you're not gonna read," said Mr.

"I'll make it simple for you,"
said Mr. Freitas, saying he
would give information
on other candidates
because "this opened up
a can of worms."

Freitas.

"I'll make it simple for you," said Mr. Freitas, saying he would give information on other candidates because "this opened up a can of worms."

The two tussled for a bit more and Mr. Espindola made a motion to postpone the next day's meeting for 48 hours to be able to include the new information.

"I'm not gonna second it because I want to get tomorrow over with," said Mr. Silvia.

The motion died.

The board also discussed an ethics complaint by Andrew Jones against Doug Brady, a member of the Rogers Reuse Committee. Mr. Jones alleged in his complaint that Mr. Brady had a conflict of interest and should not be on the committee because he lives across the street from the Rogers School, which the town is trying to sell. The current proposal is for more than 60 apartments.

Mr. Brady spoke at the meeting, noting that he had already filed a disclosure of his proximity to the school in 2015. He said he had been a member of that committee for six years and never had a complaint until he voted "no" on the

recent proposal.

Mr. Brady said, "if anything I think it would be a plus," living so close to the project. He decried the level of "hostility," of Mr. Jones and said it was retaliation for the vote.

Mr. Brady said he did his "due diligence" and to appease everyone, filed the "shiny, new printed up form with all the new dates on it."

"It's a shame you had to go through this," said Mr. Freitas, noting that the Selectboard had voted each year to put him back on the committee. He said it takes "one person to come out of the woods" and make a "scene."

"It's shameful," said Mr. Freitas.

Mr. Espindola, noting that his name was invoked as a protagonist in the issue, said his role was just as the messenger. He said he received a call from Mr. Jones and passed it on to the town clerk's office. He said the earlier disclosure form was not found by the clerk, and they ascertained that it was probably because the committee's name had been changed.

"I want to make it clear that I did not have any part in pushing this in any direction," said Mr. Espindola. "I was hoping it wouldn't come to any kind of public concern."

When Mr. Jones asked to speak via the Zoom chat, Mr. Freitas ignored him and said he wanted to "move forward."

"I asked to speak, since my name was brought up," said Mr. Jones.

But Mr. Freitas said they were moving on. Mr. Espindola tried to interject, saying if someone had been named...

"We're not going to make it a circus," said Mr. Freitas.

"But you already made it a circus," said Mr. Jones.

"Can you mute him," said Mr. Freitas.

Mr. Jones got one more word in, "no," before he was muted via the Zoom program.

"I would prefer people to speak," said Mr. Espindola before he was interrupted by Mr. Freitas.

The board voted to accept the new form from Mr. Brady.

In the Zoom chat, Mr. Jones did get a few words in, he wrote: "I will go on record, that the entire Board of Selectmen AND the Rogers School Committee have a letter from me which they refuse to acknowledge. Additionally, continued misrepresentations and outright lies have been presented in this Meeting. Shame on you Mr. Chairman."

In another matter, the board voted to

SELECT: cont'd on page 22

AROUND TOWN HAPPENINGS

Dollars for Scholars

Fairhaven Dollars for Scholars announces nearly 20 scholarships now available for 2021. Application period is open until April 20, 2021.

Create profile/apply online at <https://fairhaven.dollarsforscholars.org>

NEW scholarships are being added constantly. Check your profile weekly to see what NEW scholarships you qualify for both at the local and national level. Scholarships are awarded for a variety of reasons, including academics, sports, community service, chosen major, and more.

Fairhaven Dollars for Scholars chapter is a nonprofit foundation that supports academic success in our community. As part of Scholarship America's national network of locally based, volunteer-driven Dollars for Scholars chapters, our mission is to mobilize our community on behalf of postsecondary education success for our students.

Thank You To First Essential Workers

The Fairhaven Public Schools wanted to take a moment to say thank you to all of the front line workers who have sacrificed so much for us to be able to stay safe during the pandemic. Thank you!!

The schools recently created a video to thank them. It features staff and students from throughout the district holding signs and reading statements thanking essential workers, and includes some archival footage of visits to the school by town officials including police and fire personnel.

Visit <https://youtu.be/HE936kqEAfc>

Teachers

The League of Women Voters Southcoast (LWVS) has partnered with the LWV Greenwich (Connecticut) on a Civics Workshop using a case method approach.

The case method civics project is a collaboration between the Case Method Institute and the League, working closely with Harvard Business School Professor David Moss. Currently, most students learn history as a set narrative, which is analogous to saying everyone remembers events the same.

This spring, the Case Method Institute will again invite Leagues

across the country to nominate high school history, government, and civics teachers to attend its free virtual professional development workshop. After completing this workshop, teachers will be equipped to lead case-method style discussions in their classrooms and community forums.

After completing the workshop, nominated teachers are expected to pilot at least one case in their classes during this school year and to help moderate at least one community case discussion that will be organized by the League of Women Voters Southcoast before June 30, 2022.

The League of Women Voters Southcoast is eager to nominate teachers from the SouthCoast area. The deadline for teachers to let us know they are interested is Friday, February 26th. Please respond to Kristen Eastman at 508-758-6051 or Email: kriseastman1@gmail.com We look forward to hearing from you!

At the Millicent

The Millicent Library is excited to announce upcoming virtual programs!

Take Home Craft Story Time: Looking for a craft to keep your kiddo busy with creativity? Pick one up from the library!

This week we're starting to do take-home-crafts story times. If you'd like to order a Mouse Paint Craft Kit, fill out our online form at MillicentLibrary.org. All supplies are included, best for ages 3-8. We will call you when your kit is ready for pick-up.

Watch the Mouse Paint Storytime on our YouTube channel next week. Follow along, or do the craft on your own whenever! https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCtX28om0QS_MCYK12022N1w

For more information about take home craft story time or to request a craft kit contact Youth Services Librarian Allie Thiel at 508-992-5342, extension 112 or email athiel@sailsinc.org.

Tech Time: On Monday March 1 from 1:00-2:00 join two librarians for Tech Time, a virtual event for answering technology questions. Need help using your phone, e-reader, or other device? Have questions about downloading e-books? Please

join us with any technology help you need. To register please visit millicentlibrary.org/events

Chess Basics: Caught up in "The Queen's Gambit" hype and want to learn chess? Join Nolan DeMott on Wednesday, March 17 at 7:00 as he takes you on the beginning of your chess journey. Learn the basics of chess, as well as fundamental chess principles. This one-time session will get you started on what you need to know in order to start playing chess and checkmating your opponents.

The Millicent Library has a limited number of chess sets available to checkout for Fairhaven residents. These game sets can be checked out on the SAILS online catalog at www.sailsinc.org by searching for "classic chess." You can also call or email the library at 508-992-5342, Millicent@SailsInc.org.

Advanced registration is required for this event at millicentlibrary.org/events.

Youth Baseball Reg.

Fairhaven Acushnet Youth Baseball registration is open. Players signing up for the Majors please keep in mind we are moving to a 50/70 format. This means in summary the mound will be 50 ft and bases 70 ft along with a few additional rule changes.

Also if you are interested in coaching please make note of this in the comments section of the registration process.

Please visit <https://www.fayb.org> to register by Feb. 27.

Scholarship

A \$1000 scholarship recognizing a graduating Fairhaven-resident high school senior planning to pursue post-secondary education at an accredited institution of higher learning will be awarded by the Fairhaven Historical Society.

The Enrique Goytizolo Scholarship is open to any graduating high school senior whose primary residence is in Fairhaven, Massachusetts and plans to matriculate to an accredited institution of higher learning in the fall of 2021. **Deadline for scholarship applications is April 1, 2021.**

For more information or a scholarship application contact historical societyfairhaven@gmail.com.

TA candidate sends cease & desist to Selectboard member

Jean Perry

Neighb News Correspondent

Within 24 hours of her interview for the Fairhaven town administrator position, Finance Director/Treasurer/Collector and Interim Town Administrator Wendy Graves had an attorney deliver a cease and desist order to Selectboard member Bob Espindola, which ultimately resulted in her interview for the TA position on February 23 being tabled for another day.

Inside documents that Mr. Espindola's wife, Ann Espindola, posted to the Facebook Group "Hometown Fairhaven" as the meeting was in progress was a 2/22 formal legal notice to cease and desist alleged defamatory remarks that Ms. Graves claims Mr. Espindola made against her.

In the letter to Mr. Espindola from Attorney Ernest Horn, Ms. Graves accuses Mr. Espindola of "a series of unwarranted and defamatory attacks... namely that she has mismanaged town funds and is involved in racketeering."

In Mr. Espindola's 2/22 email forwarding Ms. Graves's allegations to Town Counsel Thomas Crotty and John Beauregard from Sylvia Group, the town's insurance provider, Mr. Espindola wrote, "I have absolutely no idea what she is referring to..." Nonetheless, he wrote, "I believe you both need to see these documents."

Mr. Espindola sent that email at 5:35 p.m. the night before, about one hour before the board was scheduled to meet Monday (*See story on page 4*). What ensued at the Monday meeting, was an ambiguous and rather contentious conversation among board members that Selectboard Chairperson Daniel Freitas did not want to continue. Mr. Espindola attempted to read something into the record, but Mr. Freitas did not allow it.

Mr. Crotty responded to Mr. Espindola in a 2/23 email finding that, despite Ms. Graves's actions, Mr. Espindola could still attend Ms. Graves's interview and participate in the vote to appoint the next TA because Mr. Espindola does not have a financial interest to create a conflict of interest.

As a result, Mr. Espindola sub-

mitted a "disclosure of the appearance of a conflict of interest" form which states, "I would always be completely objective and vote to do what is in the best interest of the Town of Fairhaven. I will not allow these allegations against me to influence my ability to do what is in the best interest of the people in the Town of Fairhaven that I was elected to represent."

During the 2/23 meeting, Mr. Freitas said, "I had a long discussion this afternoon with ... [Mr. Crotty] and after speaking with him on this, I'm going to ask that this [Ms. Graves's interview] be passed over and that we schedule this interview for another date and time."

Mr. Freitas asked for a motion to

The letter from the attorney also instructs Mr. Espindola not to publish or post the letter.

Mr. Crotty, however, in his letter to Mr. Espindola, advises him to file a disclosure document and to include the letter in the filing [and] to "make that disclosure publicly..."

table the interview along with the agenda items calling for a vote to appoint a TA and then enter into an executive session for TA contract negotiations. There was no specific mention of Ms. Graves's cease and desist order.

Mr. Freitas said that after the meeting he would meet with Mr. Crotty and the town's hiring consultant, Bernie Lynch from Community Paradigm Associates, to ask questions about "hiring or not hiring or whatever we're going to do at that point."

Mr. Espindola made that motion, seconded by Selectboard member Keith Silvia, but Mr. Espindola sought confirmation from Mr. Freitas that "any actual outcome will come before our board before it progresses,

right?"

Mr. Espindola continued, "I'm not sure what's going to come out of that meeting, but before any further action is taken on this process... from where we are right now, it will come back before our board, correct?"

"...The information that I gather ... will definitely be shared with the board and you guys will know exactly what is going on," Mr. Freitas said.

In the cease and desist order letter, Atty. Horn writes, "If you do not comply with this cease and desist demand... [Ms. Graves] has asked me to communicate to you that she will pursue all available legal remedies, including seeking monetary damages and an order that you could pay court costs and attorney's fees. Your liability and exposure under such legal action could be considerable. Any further remarks made by you will be deemed harassment and grounds for a restraining order against you."

In Mr. Crotty's response to Mr. Espindola explaining his legal opinion, he wrote, "You have told me that you have made no statements that suggest Wendy Graves has mismanaged town funds, or is involved in racketeering."

Mr. Crotty continues, "...The letters from Attorney Horn do not suggest that a lawsuit will be brought if you participate in the interview of Wendy Graves, or if you participate in the vote on the appointment of a permanent town administrator. The letter threatens litigation only if you make defamatory statements suggesting mismanagement of town funds or involvement in racketeering."

Mr. Crotty also wrote that, as a Selectboard member, Mr. Espindola is covered under the Town's insurance in such matters.

The letter from the attorney also instructs Mr. Espindola not to publish or post the letter "in any manner," and threatens if he does it will "subject you to further causes of action."

Mr. Crotty, however, in his letter to Mr. Espindola, advises him to file a disclosure document and to include the letter in the filing. Mr. Crotty also advises Mr. Espindola to "make that

TA: cont'd on page 21

Seen in the center: Local Spring Training?



Rogers School provides a venue for Matt Cataldo to help his daughter, Maddie, prepare for the coming softball season on Tuesday, 2/16/21. TOP LEFT: Maddie Cataldo keeps her eye on the ball. ABOVE LEFT: Maddie Cataldo connects with the ball thrown by her father Matt. ABOVE: Maddie and Matt Cataldo stop to pose for the local free sheet on 2/16/21. Photos courtesy of Jim Mahaney

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HAPPENINGS OVERTOWN

Free Food Boxes

The New Bedford Police Department is partnering with the Mass. Military Support Foundation (MMSF) and New Life Church to provide FREE FOOD BOXES to New Bedford residents. The Farmers to Families Food Boxes contain 32 pounds of perishable and nonperishable food items including fresh fruits and vegetables, dairy products and meat products.

Distribution will be on Saturdays:
Feb. 27, Mar. 6, from 10 a.m.–Noon, at New Life Church (behind the church), 1331 Cove Rd. his program will be held once a week for the foreseeable future.

COVID-19 health guidelines will be followed.

Families must register by visiting <https://mmsfi.org/farmers-to-families/> (and scroll down to find New Bedford). For information, please contact Sargent Samuel Ortega of the New Bedford Police Department at Samuel.ortega@newbedfordpd.com or 774-510-0649.

LGBTQ Film Series

The New Bedford LGBTQ Winter Film Series returns in 2021 in a new virtual format, with a slate of popular movies chosen to inspire conversation about relationships and other topics relevant to the LGBTQ community. The event is made possible by funding and support from Mass Humanities.

This year, fans are asked to watch the films prior to joining a Zoom conversation moderated by members of the Film Series. The movies are available either through online streaming platforms or on DVD, with DVDs available to check out from the New Bedford Free Public Library with a SAILS library card (call in advance to reserve).

- Sun., 2/28 at 3 p.m., *Brother to Brother* (2004). Directed by the critically acclaimed filmmaker Rodney Evans, the film shows the parallel lives of Perry, a Black gay man in the 21st century, and Bruce Nugent, who was part of the Harlem Renaissance.
- Sun., 3/14 at 3 p.m. *Tucked* (2018) is a raw, heartfelt drama about Jackie, an aging 80-year-old drag queen, and her unlikely friendship with a younger queen Faith. They both

struggle with gender and, along the way, they realize how to truly be themselves.

For more information about The New Bedford LGBTQ Winter Film Series and to access the Zoom links, follow the organization on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/nblgbtqfilmseries/events/> or visit The South Coast LGBTQ+ Network at <https://www.sclgbtqnetwork.org/winter-film-series.html>

Moby-Dick Institute

The New Bedford Whaling Museum, in association with Melville Society Cultural Project, will welcome 25 teachers from around the country for a two-week, virtual institute "Teaching Melville: Moby-Dick & the World of Whaling in the Digital Age." The institute will be a two-part, virtual series June 21 through July 1, and July 6 through 9, 2021. The program will illuminate Herman Melville's famous 19th-century American novel and help educators interpret the book for 21st-century students. The institute is funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) and is free for the teachers who are selected. **The application period is open until March 1, 2021.**

Teachers who are interested in learning more or applying should visit www.teachingmelville.org.

WHALE Convers.

Community Conversation on WHALE neighborhood revitalization program. Wed., 3/3, 6 p.m., remote only via Zoom. Register at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/community-conversation-on-whales-neighborhood-revitalization-program-tickets-140306158497>

WHALE is hosting a community conversation on our Neighborhood Revitalization Program for community stakeholders to gain a deeper understanding of our organization and have a voice in future WHALE projects. This specific program restores vacant and deteriorated historic properties to preserve the character of New Bedford's historic neighborhoods and create affordable housing and homeownership opportunities. At this meeting, WHALE board and staff will share the history of WHALE, our current projects and

information on the Massachusetts Attorney General's Abandoned Housing Initiative. There will be ample time for comments and questions from residents. We hope to see you there!

Winter Jazz Fest

Let's quarantine together with some amazing music, food and drink.

New Bedford Winter JazzFest: ONLINE! Featuring:

- Fri., 3/5, 7:30 p.m., Marcus Four
- Sat., 3/6, 7:30 p.m., Zinno Garzone & Barata
- Sun. Jazz Brunch, 3/7, 11 a.m., Svetlana & The New York Collective

Three bands, three days, musician interviews, food and drink videos and it's all

FREE/Donate what you can. Register at <https://yourtheatre.org/yti/index.php>. Full lineup and info at www.NewBedfordJazzFest.com

Donation packs available. Pay any amount, get VIP demand access; donate \$50+, also get official JazzFest wear, calendar and more; donate \$100+, get all that plus Jazz CD pack.

Free Arts Series

UMass Dartmouth's College of Visual and Performing Arts (CVPA) is launching a 13-week performing and visual arts series at the Star Store, its campus in Downtown New Bedford. The CVPA * Series will present free public programs every Thursday evening, 6:00 to 8:00 pm, in its Swain Studio space at the corner of Union and Purchase Streets. Dynamic live performances, video projections and installations will be inside but viewable from the sidewalks outside this corner gallery.

The CVPA * Series kicks off on Thursday, February 4, featuring live spoken word, with projected video images filling the backdrop. Poetry or spoken word will be the running theme for the first Thursday of each month, followed by a visual arts component during the AHA! Nights on the second Thursdays, live music on third Thursdays, and fourth Thursdays are dedicated to performing arts – all with site-specific projections that will bring the walls of the space to life. A full schedule with artists' names will be published soon on the CVPA's website www.umassd.edu/cvpa/galleries.

HAPPENINGS/OTHER LATITUDES

Acushnet COVID testing

We are very pleased to announce a regular schedule of Covid testing in Acushnet.

- Fridays from 10 a.m.–noon in the parking lot behind the Council on Aging (59 South Main Street) using our trailer (see page 12)
- Saturdays from 9 a.m.–noon at the elementary school gym

This schedule will be used through the end of February and may be delayed or cancelled due to possible snow/weather conditions. We will post updates during the week on our Facebook page/Acushnet Fire & EMS.

Author Event

The New Bedford Historical Society presents an afternoon with Beth Luey, author of *At Home: Historic Houses of Central and Western Massachusetts*, on Sat., 2/27, at 2 p.m.

Beth will share the story of Elizabeth Freeman, affectionately known as Mum Bett, who successfully sued her owners in 1781 bringing about the end of enslavement for all African Americans in Massachusetts.

This will be a Zoom talk. For a link to the talk, please send your email to info@nbhistoricalsociety.org

Visit www.nbhistoricalsociety.org or www.facebook.com/nbhistory

Live Performance

Hub Theatre Company of Boston is excited to return to the virtual stage this winter with the world premier of Trent England's *Solitaire Suite*, directed by local favorite Daniel Bourque. The show will be performed live online on Friday, Feb. 26, and Saturday, Feb 27 at 7:30 pm. All performances are Pay-What-You-Can. For tickets and information please visit our webpage at www.hubtheatreboston.org

Bikes for All

We are thrilled that the long-awaited Mattapoisett Rail Trail connection to Depot Street is opening this year. To celebrate, Mattapoisett Recreation (MATTREC) and the Friends of the Mattapoisett Bicycle and Recreational Path (the Friends) have teamed up to ensure that every Mattapoisett resident/family has an

opportunity to fully enjoy it. This new initiative is called Bikes for All. We are asking for donations of gently used bicycles, children's sizes with training wheels to adult 26" bikes, to be given to any town resident in need of a bike. Any outgrown children's bicycle may also be traded in for a larger bike.

So, take a look in the corners of your garage/basement or shed. Is there an unused bike that is taking up space? If so, dust it off and call at Jane at MATTREC (508-758-4548) for pickup.

During this time of increased demand, higher prices and waiting lists for new bicycles, recycling unused bikes is one way to make Mattapoisett Rail Trail accessible to all town residents!

If you are handy and have some knowledge of bicycles, we'd love you to join us in our quest! We will be refurbishing the gently used bikes and are in need of volunteers who have the knowledge to help make this happen. If interested, please call Jane at 508-758-4548.

If you would like to make a donation to help the Friends purchase/repair bicycles, please make your checks out to: Friends of the Mattapoisett Bike Path, PO Box 1336, Mattapoisett, MA 02739. Please specify on your check that your contribution is for Bikes for All.

The Friends is a 501 (c)(3) charitable organization, so contributions to the Friends for Bikes for All are tax deductible to the extent permitted by law. The Friends will apply 100% of contributions toward the bicycles.

Contact Jane Finnerty 508-758-4548 JANE.MATTRAIL@gmail.com and Liz DiCarlo, 508-942-9343, lizdicarlo@comcast.net for more information or visit our Website: mattapoisettrailtrail.org.

Black Hist. Month Exhibit

On Thursday, February 25, 2021, from 6:00 to 8:00 pm, UMass Dartmouth College of Visual and Performing Arts presents an artistic collaboration between New Bedford-based 3rd Eye Youth Empowerment and Bronx-based multimedia artist Art Jones, as part of its ongoing CVPA Star Series. The Series takes place

every Thursday through April, from 6:00 to 8:00 pm on stage inside the Swain Studio at the CVPA Star Store Campus on the corner of Purchase and Union Streets in Downtown New Bedford. Audiences are invited to watch the programs safely from outside the large street-level windows or tune in from home via live stream on www.facebook.com/umassdcvpa.

Adam Clayton Powell, Jr.

An unapologetic activist, Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., left his mark on Congress during his 12 terms in the House of Representatives. Viewed by his Harlem constituents as a dedicated crusader for civil rights, Powell earned the loyalty and respect of many African Americans with his confrontational approach to racial discrimination. Learn more at <https://history.house.gov/People/Detail/19872>

Rev. Henry Jeter

Rev. Henry N. Jeter was pastor of the Shiloh Baptist Church in Newport and nurtured a family of stringed musicians who traveled the country performing as the Jeter Family. Learn more at <https://www.redwoodlibrary.org/blog/mfarias/2017/02/03/pastor-henry-n-jeter-shiloh-baptist-church>

Roberta Dunbar

Roberta Dunbar was a leading member within the Black women's club movement. She was a founder of the F. E. Harper Club of Pawtucket and was instrumental in merging this club with the Northeast Federation of Women's Clubs, in which she served in a number of capacities, including secretary in 1899 and president from 1902 until 1905, and again in the 1930s. Affiliated with the National Association of Colored Women's Clubs she worked tirelessly and, it was said, helped establish eighty-five new branches and recruit 3,000 new members. Learn more at http://www.richeritagehalloffame.org/inductees_detail.cfm?id=864

Discover Black Past

This 6,000 page reference center is dedicated to providing information to the general public on African American history and the history of more than one billion people of African ancestry around the world. We invite you to explore and use all the resources of BlackPast. Visit <https://www.blackpast.org>

Recipe of the Week

Pumpkin Cookies

1/4 cup butter
1 1/2 cups sugar
1 large egg
1 cup pumpkin
1 tsp vanilla
1 1/2 cups flour
1 tsp baking soda
1 tsp baking powder
1/2 tsp salt
1 tsp nutmeg
1 tsp cinnamon
1 8 oz. pkg. chocolate chips

Cream butter and sugar until light and fluffy; beat in egg, pumpkin and vanilla. Add flour, baking soda, baking powder, nutmeg and cinnamon, mix well. Add chocolate chips and mix until well blended.

Drop by tablespoonful onto a well greased cookie sheet and bake in 350° oven for 15 minutes.

Remove from cookie sheet and cool on wire rack.

Submitted by Claire Ryan

To share a recipe with your neighbors

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Dear Frankie

Maintaining Sanity During COVID

Dear Frankie,

I am really stressed over this Covid thing. At first, I thought everyone in the family was at home because it was school vacation. But after they didn't go back to

school or work for over a month, I knew something was up. When I asked them why they were not leaving the house, they told me there are germs outside, carried by people that don't live with us, so they had to stay home to stay safe.

I still go out a couple of times a day, and never once have I seen a germ, all I ever see are people wearing masks. Maybe it's me. Vision has never been my strong suit. That aside, I haven't had a peaceful day for almost a year. You can't believe the constant bickering between my parents and the kids about school-work. Then there are the threats they make if anyone makes noise when they have to talk to the Zoom on the computer.

Do you have any suggestions for how I can feel better about living with my family during Covid?

Cordially, Victoria

Dear Victoria,

I would be lying if I told you living with humans during Covid is a walk in the park. Whenever I get upset about my



life, I wonder how dogs cope when they are given up by their "forever families" and left at a shelter or by the side of the road?

If these aren't sobering thoughts to snap you back to being grateful for the life you live, I don't know what is. However, if thinking like I do doesn't offer you any consolation, keeping in mind that Covid isn't going to last forever might help. Pretty soon, the weather will be warmer, and you'll be able to spend more time outside by yourself and away from the fray.

In the meantime, I would suggest you reframe the way you think about living with your family 24/7. Focus on the perks they provide, like; the extra walks, company during the day, and the treats you'll get from the food they inevitably will drop on the couch and the floor. In sum, hang in there Victoria, this too shall pass.

Best, Frankie

© 2021, Geneva Woodruff

Frankie is an eight-year-old schnauzer poodle and a rescue. She is a certified emotional support animal for a single retired educator.

Letters and comments can be sent to dearfrankiecolumn@gmail.com. The column is available through the Fairhaven Neighborhood News. Readers can request a free subscription, by emailing Neighnews@comcast.net and asking to be put on the email list; or visit www.neighnews.com to read online or download the latest issue.

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DaCunha's Dispatches



News from high
school in the
age of COVID

By Elizabeth
DaCunha

Special to the Neighb News

Vacations have always been something that students look forward to, but now? There isn't really anywhere to go without quarantining for at least 10 days, and nobody wants to be stuck at home more than they already have to.

So, this week we gave students the opportunity to let out their frustration and explain how their vacation has been modified by COVID restrictions.

Once COVID became a pandemic, hopes, plans, and dreams were ruined, and this especially applies to vacation trips. The restrictions regarding airlines and traveling state to state have made it difficult for families to get out of town and spend their vacation elsewhere.

FHS student Paige Blackburn explained how her family was personally affected by the virus this vacation.

"I was actually supposed to go to New Hampshire and see the ice castles with my family, but my sister and mom caught COVID and we had to cancel the trip. We couldn't get a refund either. It's sad we can't travel or go anywhere because of COVID, but it's better to be safe than sorry."

Ms. Blackburn also mentioned that

she had been tested for COVID five times just that week, and has been spending her vacation at the nursing home, working safely with elders, taking the necessary precautions to keep the people there safe!

Most students are upset by the fact that they can't spend their February vacation somewhere nice away from home, or even here in Fairhaven with their friends, because of the rules and regulations that have been put in place due to COVID.

Ninth grader Taylor Desmarais shared how the pandemic has ruined her own plans, and also shared what she has been doing this week instead.

"I can't hang out with my friends, and go on planned vacations we

I think students, including myself, are especially looking forward to the days when we can spend time with each other without constraints around every activity.

previously booked. Instead of using this time to hang out with my friends and enjoy the time off, I have to just sit at home for another week."

I can very much relate to Taylor's comment as I've spent most of my time studying over this winter break, getting ready for my next in-school week. I know it's lame, but I had all this time at home doing nothing, so I figured I might as well be productive!

Samantha Suave shared how her

vacation plans were limited this year, having to plan accordingly with limitations surrounding pretty much everything: "Typically, during the break I would have plans hanging out with friends and seeing extended family, but this virus has limited my social life, and had a negative impact on my plans during this February vacation."

Another student explained how their original vacation plans had to be changed in order to ensure the safety of her friends and family: "Usually every winter break we have family parties and sometimes we go skiing, however this year it's different. We are on Zoom hanging out or we may get together according to the COVID state restrictions."

While many, like the aforementioned students, have had to stay at home due to cancellations, restrictions, and limitations, there were also several students like Brooke Boucher who shared how they were still able to see family and spend time together safely this break.

"To be honest, COVID has not really affected my plans personally which I'm so grateful for," said Ms. Boucher. "I actually just got together with my grandparents for dinner and a movie over vacation.

As a precaution, we all wore masks around each other."

As you can see, for the most part, this vacation has not been what we all wanted it to be, which is kind of a bummer.

I think students, including myself, are especially looking forward to the days when we can spend time with each other without constraints around every activity.

Well, that's all I have for you this week. Stay tuned for my next article!



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Bask holds ribbon cutting for recreational marijuana sales

Jean Perry

Neighb News Correspondent

This is a dream come true, said Chapman "Chappy" Dickerson, CEO of Bask, on Friday, 2/19, the first day of adult-use cannabis sales inside Fairhaven's only marijuana dispensary.

Bask team members, colleagues from One Southcoast Chamber of Commerce, and an eager crowd of 21-and-over gathered in front on 2 Pequod Road that snowy afternoon for a traditional ribbon-cutting ceremony and an early peek inside the new 2,000 square-foot adult-use cannabis shop ahead of the official opening the next morning.

"This has been a long journey," said Mr. Dickerson, scissors in hand, standing behind a shiny red ribbon before a crowd of about 40 in face masks.

Some time has passed since September of 2012 when Mr. Dickerson, business partner and Bask President Tim Keogh, and the Bask team began the licensing process to sell medical cannabis to card-carrying patients.

"And here we are eight years later opening up for recreational," said Mr. Dickerson.

A year ago this month, Bask opened as Fairhaven's first and only medical cannabis dispensary and later moved its cultivation operation to Freetown to make way for the separate adult-use counter. The

operation is now up to 69 employees and grown from a 2,000 square-foot medical marijuana dispensary to 4,000 square feet split into sections: one for medical and the other recreational.

"This is a big deal, and we're excited," said Mr. Keough.

He passed the microphone to Bask Director JoAnne Leppanen, who told the crowd, "I knew these guys years ago when they were operating a co-op in Rhode Island. So, to be here now and to see all of you and to be standing in front of a dispensary ... now opening for adult-use is sort of an out-of-body experience, actually. I never imagined it would actually happen."

Ms. Leppanen said one thing those at Bask have witnessed over the past year is how often someone rings the medical-use dispensary door buzzer but cannot enter because they don't have a state-issued medical marijuana card.

"We don't have to turn people away anymore," said Ms. Leppanen. "We can say, 'Come on in.'"

Mr. Chapman cut the ribbon, gave a few fist pumps toward the sky, and then walked a man older than him toward the entrance. The two paused for a moment to take in the experience. Their smiles were hidden behind face masks, but their similar-looking sets of eyes hinted that there

was a story behind the story making headlines in Fairhaven that day.

Mr. Dickerson said the man with him was "a big part of my dream and my goal." That man beside him was his father, Bob Dickerson.

"When I grew up, my dad went to prison for a drug-related crime when I was seven years old and got out when I was 18," Mr. Dickerson said. "So, this is super important to me. I have a nine-year-



old son, and he doesn't ever have to experience collect calls or writing letters or anything like that. I appreciate everything my old man has taught me, and nobody should go to jail for drug crimes. That's just the way it is."

Mr. Dickerson then ushered his dad to the front of the line so he could be the first legal adult-use cannabis customer of his son's brand-new recreational dispensary.

"Congratulations, son; I'm so proud of you with," the older Mr. Dickerson said as he hugged his son and then asked him what he would recommend from the selection.

"We're selling legal weed, and nobody has to go to jail," said the older Mr. Dickerson. He made his purchase and then raised his paper bag of legal goodies in celebration.

He had driven for hours from his home in Delaware to Fairhaven, through the snow, a real white-knuckle drive, he admitted.

"I'm so proud of everything that he's accomplished," said Mr. Dickinson, the elder. "I wouldn't have missed this for the world."

This is just Phase 1 of the adult-use dispensary opening schedule amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. Sales are restricted to online order-ahead pickup until Phase 4, when customers can purchase at the dispensary counter. Bask is open seven days a week from 10 a.m.-6 p.m. and eventually will switch to 9 a.m.-9 p.m.

Visit www.cometobask.com, call 774-305-4749, or email info@cometobask.com



ABOVE: Front Row L-R: Albert Mui from One Southcoast chamber of commerce; Bask President Tim Keogh; Ian Abreu of One Southcoast; Bask Director JoAnne Leppanen; Bask CEO Chapman Dickerson (with scissors); Bask Board Member Melanie Dixon; and Tom Menchi of One Southcoast clap and give high fives to the sky after the official ribbon is cut to commemorate the opening of Bask's recreational marijuana dispensary in Fairhaven on 2/19/21. TOP: Bob Dickerson (LEFT) holds up the bag containing the first sale of recreational marijuana in Fairhaven, while his son Chapman "Chappy" Dickerson, CEO of Bask, stands by. Photos by Jean Perry

Fairhaven Board of Health chooses health agent

Jean Perry

Neighb News Correspondent

The Fairhaven Board of Health on February 17 voted unanimously to offer the health agent position to David Flaherty, the current part-time health agent for the Town of Marion.

"He came back well-recommended," said BOH member Geoffrey Haworth.

Board member Michael Ristuccia commented that Mr. Flaherty is "the perfect man for the job."

Pending acceptance and successful contract negotiations, the board relayed its impression that Mr. Flaherty would be available to start his new position in two weeks. The board's vote included a compensation rate of a step 17-2, which according to Fairhaven's Personnel Classification is \$35.66 hourly and \$74,172.80 annually.

The board also interviewed Nolan Bernier during its 2/3 meeting for the position but did not find that he held the required licenses or had enough experience. A third candidate, Alison Novak, did not appear for her scheduled interview.

Order in the room deteriorated after the board took up an Open Meeting Law violation complaint filed by Andrew Jones concerning the BOH's 2/3 meeting. The complaint alleged that the board violated the OML when it considered making COVID-19 related restrictions on the Huttleston Marketplace, an open-air farmer's market event hosted by the Tourism Department.

Town Counsel Thomas Crotty drafted a response to the complaint denying that the board was in violation.

BOH member Michael Ristuccia commented that Mr. Jones, who works for the Commonwealth, should be reported to the state for lodging the complaints that Mr. Ristuccia regarded as "harassment" toward the board.

"Honestly, I'm disgusted by the whole thing," said BOH member Geoff Haworth, who has faced a public backlash from residents on social media and, allegedly, from Huttleston Marketplace vendors.

"It's always a game with these

people. To be honest with you, [I'd prefer to have] town counsel send the [OML response] letter and be done with it..." said Mr. Haworth.

Resident Ann Richard asked to speak and called for BOH Chairperson Peter DeTerra to clarify the OML response process.

"No matter what town counsel says... he gives you a decision, and then what's the follow-up with the state?" she asked.

She specified that she wanted Mr. DeTerra, the chairperson, to answer. He said the board would send the letter both to Mr. Jones and the state.

"And you never think that you violate Open Meeting Law, correct? Because Mr. Crotty ... agrees with you?" asked Ms. Richard.

Mr. Haworth then started to speak, but Ms. Richard asked that Mr.

had resigned, and Mr. DeTerra said he was unaware that "Terry" Cripps had left AgCom. Ms. Richard corrected him that it was not Terry that was AgCom chair, but Kaisa. She asked if Mr. DeTerra was chair of the AgCom.

Communication broke down as BOH members and Ms. Richard talked over each other. Mr. Haworth said his greatest concern was his perception that Ms. Richard somehow had a conflict of interest discussing the Huttleston Marketplace because Tourism Director Chris Richard is her brother. Mr. DeTerra adhered to the conflict of interest theory to end the discussion.

"Oh, because everything Mr. Haworth is saying is true because my brother...?" Ms. Richard said, prompting Mr. Ristuccia to comment that she mispronounced Mr.

Haworth's last name, although she said it the same way Mr. DeTerra consistently does.

"Just do me a favor and shut up for a minute!" yelled Mr. Haworth to Ms. Richard. "You know what? I'm sick and tired of the bullshit."

He alleged bullying had taken place and again said he was "sick of the bullshit" and then quickly motioned to accept Mr. Crotty's letter. Ms. Richard was promptly muted, as she was participating remotely via Zoom.

In COVID-19 news, as of Thursday, 2/9, Fairhaven had 133 active cases for a total of 1,658 since the onset of the pandemic. The positivity rate went down slightly to 5.8%.

In other business, the board approved an animal permit* for 64 Hathaway Street to keep six hens but stipulated that no rooster be allowed under the permit. The board briefly discussed creating a policy to inform abutters of pending new animal permits before issuance and will take the matter up in a future meeting.

**In a follow-up with the Building Department, the Neighb News confirmed that the owner of 64 Hathaway Street, located in the residential zone, would require a special permit from the Zoning Board of Appeals to keep chickens before the BOH can issue the animal permit. Mr. DeTerra is also the chairperson of the ZBA*

"Just do me a favor and shut up for a minute!" yelled [Board of Health Member Geoffrey] Haworth to Ms. Richard. "You know what? I'm sick and tired of the bullshit."

DeTerra answer.

"The chairman runs the meeting, not you," said Mr. Haworth.

"Is there not any concern from his board...? You definitely violated something at the last meeting because you tried to have regulations changed that were not on the agenda," said Ms. Richard.

She asked about a letter the board sent to the Agricultural Commission asking for AgCom to review the proposed regulations for farmers markets and the ensuing process. The group then determined that AgCom is now down to just two members — Ms. Richard and Mr. DeTerra, after Chairperson Kaisa Cripps resigned some months ago.

Ms. Richard asked how that would affect the process given that the chair

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Fairhaven Council on Aging

The Fairhaven Council on Aging Senior Center remains closed to the public until further notice. The staff is available to take phone calls and to assist you in any way possible.

Transportation

The COA van will run Monday through Friday beginning at 8:00 a.m. for in town shopping and errands as well as daily trips to Market Basket. All passengers will have their temperature taken before entering the van and must wear a mask while on the van. The van will be thoroughly sanitized after each use. Volunteer Medical transportation has not yet been resumed.

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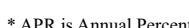
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NMLS # 422864

Acushnet News

Council on Aging/Senior Center

The Acushnet Council on Aging and Senior Community Center announces outdoor classes. With the hope and anticipation of spring and warmer weather, outdoor exercise classes will resume at the Acushnet COA in March.

The week of March 1st we will welcome back Strong Women, Strong Bones with Karen.

The week of March 8th, Zumba Gold with Pati.

Please be patient as we work with our instructors to offer additional programming as the weather gets warmer.

All COVID rules and regulations will be in place including:

- Participants shall continue to wear a clean face covering, such as a fabric mask, scarf, or bandana, over their mouth and nose in accordance with CDC guidelines. Masks must remain on the entire time you are here.
- A "No Congregation" policy will be in effect; individuals must implement social distancing by maintain-

ing a minimum distance of six feet from other individuals. Participants are asked not to arrive more than five minutes prior to the class start time and to exit the property as soon as the class is over.

- Walk-ins are not allowed. You must have a confirmed reservation to participate. Call 508-998-0280.
- Participants registering for classes will be required to provide their name, phone number and address for contact tracing purposes.

Renew Dog Licenses

It is time to renew dog licenses in Acushnet. Deadline is March 31, 2021. A \$15 late fee plus a \$50 citation per dog may be imposed after March 31.

Due to COVID-19, town hall buildings are closed to the public until further notice, however, the Town Clerk's office staff is still available to serve the public.

Please call the town clerk's office ad 508-998-0215 for assistance.

Dog licensing payments are accepted by

- Dropping them in the payment mail slot located on the Parting Ways building front door

- Mailing to Acushnet Town Clerk, 130 Main St., Acushnet, MA 02743. Be sure to include updated proof of rabies vaccination.

Fees for individual dogs: \$10 for spayed/neutered; \$15 for unaltered.

Kennel license fees: \$20 for 3-4 dogs; \$50 for 5-15 dogs; \$100 for 15+ dogs.

NOTE: State law requires a valid rabies vaccination certificate of dogs six months and prior to licensing.

Nomination Papers

Nomination papers are available for those wishing to run for office in Acushnet. The annual election is scheduled for Saturday, May 15, 2021. Polls will be open from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. on election day.

The last day to take out nomination papers is Thursday, March 25, at 5 p.m.

Candidates must submit at least 42 signatures that will be certified as registered voters who have signed in person. The last day to register to vote in Acushnet is Saturday, April 24, at 8 p.m.

For more information contact the Town Clerk's office at 508-998-0215.

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FinCom faces challenging budget process

Jean Perry

Neighb News Correspondent

"From what I can recall, this is, across the board, the most challenging budget that I've seen in my time," Fairhaven Finance Committee Chairperson Padraig Elliott said of Fiscal Year 2022 after meeting with the Fire and Police Departments during the Finance Committee's 2/18 meeting.

It will cause town departments, he said, "some level of hardship and some tightening," but concurred, "I do agree that safety has to be highest on the list in terms of priority."

The initial budgets that police and fire/EMS had submitted included an additional full-time dispatcher; however, as Finance Director/Interim Town Administrator Wendy Graves explained during the FinCom's 2/11 meeting, all departments had been instructed to cut 10% of their requested budgets, including all requests for additional staff.

Police Chief Michael Meyers presented a \$131,000 cut in his requested wages and salaries line item that included three new positions: a part-time custodian, full-time social worker, and a full-time dispatcher.

Fairhaven had two dispatchers working side by side until FY10, Chief Meyers said, when the town had to lay off several town employees to balance its budget amidst the recession.

"And we haven't replaced it back," said Chief Meyers. Since then, 911 calls have increased, "And we're going up and up and up..."

Last Sunday, he said, a firefighter was called over to dispatch to cover the phones because all officers had to respond to an influx of calls.

FinCom Member Lisa Plante wanted to know if keeping with one dispatcher could delay response time to 911 emergencies.

As Chief Meyers described it, when a major incident occurs, "[Calls] come in a lot, and fast." The dispatcher cannot hang up on one call to answer another until help is established for the first call. As people call 911 in response to a major incident, those calls are subsequently forwarded to Acushnet, said Chief Meyers. But it isn't just 911 calls that dispatchers must answer.

Acting Fire Chief Todd Correia

explained that the dispatcher answering 911 calls must also attend to the radio calls from police and fire/EMS out in the community and on the scene. When there is a fire, for example, all personnel are dispatched to the scene. Meanwhile, police and EMS may already be out responding to other calls.

"Yes, we go through it now," said Chief Meyers. He said that on average across the nation, the department's call rate would typically be handled by two dispatchers 24/7 and said, "Right now, that's too much for one person."

Acting Chief Correia said Fairhaven has so far avoided using an automated phone response to a 911 call. Still, when he is forced to keep a qualified firefighter or EMT at the station to cover dispatch, public safety is compromised.

..if two dispatchers were covering both police and fire/EMS, they could handle any overflow between departments and keep 911 working efficiently.

For fire, he said, often there is a lull in activity; however, if two dispatchers were covering both police and fire/EMS, they could handle any overflow between departments and keep 911 working efficiently. Nonetheless, both chiefs acknowledged that this year a second dispatcher appears unlikely.

The Police Department's request for a full-time licensed social worker appealed to some FinCom members but, again, conceded that it would likely have to wait for a more fruitful fiscal year.

"It's something that as soon as ... Fairhaven can afford to move forward with this program would be extremely beneficial to all of us," said Chief Meyers.

As police officers, he said, "We don't feel that we are the most qualified people to be dealing with [residents with addiction and mental health issues]," adding later that a

social worker would "greatly reduce tragedies here in Fairhaven."

Ms. Plante and FinCom member Christopher Fidalgo both agreed the added dispatcher is worth considering.

"I think the dispatcher is a need, not a want, in my opinion," said Ms. Plante. "I know things are tight, but I believe it's a need, not a want."

"Definitely, if more money comes available, public safety would be the first place that we'd be looking to restore," said Ms. Graves.

The fire/EMS and police budgets were classified as level-service for FY22, as was the Marine Resources budget, also reviewed that evening.

FinCom member Bernie Roderick asked about replenishing free cash after Town Meeting members approved \$1.2 million for turf at the high school athletic field from free surplus revenue/free cash instead of borrowing. After the article passed, there was only \$715,000 to spend on capital projects for FY22, said Ms. Graves, eliciting gasps and visible reactions of shock from some FinCom members.

Ms. Graves added that the town is currently short on money to cover three months of its Health Insurance Trust Fund. The town will also only allot \$200,000 to the OPEB (other post-employment benefits) Fund for FY22. The policy was to increase the amount by \$50,000 each year, but instead, this year, the town will deposit \$100,000 less than FY21.

In terms of curtailing spending, Mr. Elliott proposed possibly refraining from offering a COLA (cost of living allowance) increase to non-union employees, although the town has historically offered the same annual percentage increase to non-union as it had for negotiated union employees.

Just before adjourning, Mr. Fidalgo asked to discuss the town administrator hiring process, specifically with Mr. Roderick, the FinCom's appointed representative to the Town Administrator Screening Committee and subsequently that committee's chairperson.

As Mr. Roderick started to explain the logistics of the process, FinCom member Kevin Gallagher pointed out that the topic was not listed on the

FINCOM: cont'd on page 21

Palmer's Island gets spruced up

Despite wind chills in the single digits on January 30, a group of hardy souls calling themselves "River Rats" showed up to clean up Palmer's Island in New Bedford Harbor. They collected more than 25 bags of trash and lots of large debris that was all removed.

"So many dedicated and caring

people were just happy to be there, no complaints about the cold, they just wanted to get Palmers cleaner and make a difference to the environment," wrote organizer Russ Wotton on his Facebook page on 1/30/21. "I am so grateful for so many caring "River Rats" for showing up on

this cold bitter but beautiful day. Thank you very much to all 20 of you for being there.

"A little more work to go but these hard working volunteers will get the job done. Palmers Island Park is becoming a beautiful place to once again visit."



A group of hardy souls calling themselves "River Rats" brave wind chills in the single digits on 1/30/21 to pick up trash on Palmer's Island in New Bedford Harbor. ABOVE LEFT & RIGHT: Bags of trash and debris are piled up after being collected from Palmer's Island in New Bedford harbor and then moved to the mainland where it can be picked up for proper disposal on 1/30/21. BELOW LEFT & RIGHT: Volunteers pick up trash and debris on Palmer's Island. BOTTOM LEFT: A City of New Bedford worker hauls away the trash and debris that volunteers collected from Palmer's Island and moved to the mainland on 1/30/21. *Photos courtesy of Russ Wotton.*



From our readers

Neighb News Publishes Other Opinions

Well... Never let it be said that the *Fairhaven Neighborhood News* lacks sensitivity to other opinions! [Editor] Beth [David] dutifully published a letter last week from a Sean Hannity sound-alike which defies argument. Unfortunately, it also defies logic and common sense, but that has been the tone accepted by the faithful for the last four years. The letter is not debatable. There appears to be no rationale that could ever have swayed the true followers and faithful of Donald Trump (or Jim Jones) down their respective paths. If all you do is listen to what is being said but never look to see what is really true you will of course have no tolerance for the opposing views, even when based on facts.

However, the letter is worth reading, it starts on page 17 and unfortunately continues on page 22. (2/11/21 issue). People actually believe this! And it seems that no amount of truth, fact, demonstration, proof or even just common sense will alter their impenetrable belief.

It is also a clear display of how serious the problem of division is in this country. "Bi-partisan"... "reach across the aisle"... "working together"... ideals we would like to see in a functioning government are so hampered when political careers continue to depend on satisfying the ego of a narcissist.

Obviously, despite the happenings on November 8th and January 20th, there are many trumpaholics that are still suffering from the "DTs."

Ted Silva, Fairhaven

Letter writer is misinformed and misguided

I'm writing to commend the Editor

of this publication, the number one newspaper that Fairhaven turns to for FACTUAL local journalism. I stress the word factual because it takes an editor with the utmost respect for her craft to print the letter from the misinformed and misguided gentleman demanding the taking down of what he repeatedly refers to as the Congressional Wall.

After first reading that letter, I immediately took to my laptop to write a rebuttal, with the intent of expressing my anger and frustration with the blatant lies and overt racism printed. It's 72 hours later because I've been struggling to find the words to respond. I've read the letter several times, highlighting the statements I intended to prove inaccurate and when I was done the entire text was covered in yellow and red. Should I have submitted my first draft of this letter, it would have required three pages to be printed.

In the end I can only say that I vehemently object to nearly every word authored by Mr. Warters. I urge everyone to refer to at least two news outlets outside of ones that they trust in order to get a more accurate and balanced perspective of what the other side thinks. It's okay to still disagree but hateful speech and actions are not the way to convince any reasonable person that your opinion matters.

Diane Hahn, Fairhaven

Collasius is man of great integrity

I am writing this letter in support of Don Carlos Collasius, who is running for the office of tree warden for the Town of Fairhaven.

I met Don seven years ago, as a member of our church congregation.

He impresses me as a man of great personal integrity and character, with a strong work ethic.

He has a strong commitment to conservation and the town of Fairhaven. I know that he also has a personal interest in the field of tree husbandry, and has been educating himself on this topic for several years.

Given Mr. Collasius' background in Engineering and Project Management, I know he will be quite capable of identifying the issues confronting the town's Tree Department and developing workable solutions.

I am confident that he would be a hard-working and professional servant to our community.

Stephan Becker, M.D., Fairhaven

Collasius will not let you down

I am happy to endorse Don Collasius for Fairhaven's Tree Warden.

I met Don about 5 years ago when he met, fell in love with and subsequently married my dear friend Carolyn. Over the years he has shown us that he is smart, kind, and gracious, as well as a loving husband, father, stepfather, and grandfather and of course, a great friend.

Don has a strong resume. He worked for years as an engineer and project manager. He has many years of knowledge of tree husbandry. He is a constant study, doing his research to get to the bottom of issues.

Don retired recently and since then has not chosen to relax. He constantly is working on a project, whether it be renovating the beautiful home he and Carolyn purchased together or restoring cars and motorcycles.

He goes into each one whole

LETTERS: cont'd on page 21

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Public Hearings/Legal Notices

NOTE: All legal notices are available on the Neighb News website, www.NeighbNews.com, under the "Legal Notices" tab on the top of the main page. Legal ads are also available at <http://masspublicnotices.org>, search under "Fairhaven Neighborhood News"

Fairhaven Planning Board Vacancy

The Fairhaven Planning Board has a vacancy following the recent resignation of one of the eight members. The Planning Board and Select Board will hold a joint Hearing on March 8, 2021 at 7:00 pm to choose one Fairhaven resident to serve on the Planning Board until the 2021 Town Election. Letters of interest may be mailed or dropped off at Town Clerk's office in Town Hall with attention to the Planning Office, 40 Center Street, Fairhaven, MA 02719 by March 5, 2021 at 4:30 p.m. or emailed to pfoley@fairhaven-ma.gov

The Planning Board is responsible for the review of development applications for subdivisions and special permits, as well as long-range planning for the Town including Zoning Bylaw amendments, plans such as the Master Plan and recommendations on housing. The Board also sends representatives to other town committees, such as the Community Preservation Committee and the Economic Development Committee. Anyone interested in serving on the Planning Board should submit a letter of interest to the Town Clerk **by March 5, 2021.**

FNN: 2/25/21, 3/4/21

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE Fairhaven Conservation Commission

Monday, March 8, 2021 at 6:30pm
Town Hall, 40 Center Street
Fairhaven, Massachusetts

To Access Meeting Remotely:

<https://zoom.us/j/97823560817?pwd=SENSeFI4SzJazU9GcGxZaXF3Z29GUT09>
or CALL 1-929-205-6099
Meeting ID: 978 2356 0817
Passcode: 382117

The Fairhaven Conservation Commission will hold the following **Public Hearing** pursuant to the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act (M.G.L. c. 131, s. 40) and the Code of the Town of Fairhaven Chapter 192, Wetlands:

1. CON 023-205: **2 Alcobia Drive** Request for Determination of Applicability filed by John Santos for the construction of a 14' x 18' stamped concrete patio, 8' x 12' concrete pad for a grill area, and a 12' x 12' pergola over existing pavers at the property located

at 2 Alcobia Drive, Assessors Map 42, Lots 69-70. Work to take place in Land Subject to Coastal Storm Flowage and the 100-foot buffer zone to Salt Marsh.

2. CON 023-206: **2 Oxford Street** Notice of Intent filed by Robert Weeks, 2 Oxford Street, LLC, for the construction of a fixed pier, gangway, and floating docks at the property located at 2 Oxford Street, Assessors Map 13, Lot 1. Work to take place in Land Under the Ocean, Land Containing Shellfish, Land Subject to Coastal Storm Flowage, and the 100-foot buffer zone to Coastal Beach.

3. CON 023-207: **10 Nelson Avenue** Notice of Intent filed after-the-fact by Gerald Delano for the repair and reconstruction of a concrete groin and splash pad along the shoreline, including adding a cap to the top of the concrete revetment and stabilizing the disturbed lawn area by loamming and seeding at the property located at 10 Nelson Avenue, Assessors Map 43, Lot 30. Work to take place on Coastal Bank, Rocky Intertidal Shore, Coastal Beach, and Land Subject to Coastal Storm Flowage

Public participation will be via virtual means only: Pursuant to Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 Order suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law, M.G.L. c. 30A, §18, and the Governor's March 15, 2020 Order imposing strict limitation on the number of people that may gather in one place, this meeting of the Fairhaven Conservation Commission will be conducted via remote participation. The public may participate in this meeting via remote participation. Information regarding remote meeting access, listed above, will also be provided on the Conservation Agenda posted on the Town's website at least 48 hours prior to the meeting.

Copies of the applications listed in this hearing notice may be viewed electronically at: <https://www.fairhaven-ma.gov/conservation-commission/pages/current-filings>

Geoff Haworth, Chair, Fairhaven
Conservation Commission
FNN: 2/25/21

Fairhaven Zoning Board of Appeals Public Hearings

Tuesday, March 2, 2021 at 6:00 p.m.
Town Hall Banquet Room, 40 Center Street
Fairhaven, Massachusetts

Join Zoom Meeting
<https://zoom.us/j/94575834075?pwd=VnRxdEhKL0ROUTBoNGxBVzJ3L01Udz09> or call 1-929-205-6099
Meeting ID: 945 7583 4075 Passcode: 448243

1. **Administrative Appeal by Fairhaven Shipyard – re: 7 Union Street. REF#:ZBA-AA-01.** Street Seeking reversal of zoning determination by the Town of Fairhaven Building Commissioner dated February 20, 2020.(Application attached) – **Continued** from April 7, 2020, May 5, 2020, June 2, 2020, and July 7, 2020, and August 11, 2020, and September 2, 2020.) Asking for a continuation to December 1, 2020 per applicant's request. **Continued to April 6, 2021.**

2. **Administrative Appeal by A1 Crane – re: 86-88 Middle Street. REF#: ZBA-AA-02.** Administrative Appeal from a letter dated April 7, 2020 from the Building Commissioner stating that the operation on the site is in violation of the Mixed Use zoning regulations. (see attached-Exhibit 3) (continued per applicant's request to September 2, 2020 Meeting, see attached.) **Previously continued. Continued to March 2021, at applicant's request.**

3. REF#: ZBA 2021-08: 130 Shaw Road. Owner: Michael Oliveira. 198-16: Special Permit request for an in-law apartment above garage in an AG District.

4. REF #: ZBA 2021-09: 28 Oliver Street. Owner: Souza, Adam. 198-16: Variance request to extend the current non-conforming setbacks for a proposed attached addition. Variance for 6'10" from rear setback line and 4'4" from front setback line.

5. REF #: ZBA 2021-10: 10 Littleneck Road. Owner: Paul & Francesca Frederico. 1 98-16: Variance request to extend existing non-conforming west side setback of 13.1' by a maximum of 7' to align with existing north side wall for a proposed addition.

Peter DeTerra, Chairman
FNN: 2/18/21, 2/25/21

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FINCOM: cont'd from page 17

agenda and asked to table the discussion, list it as an agenda item for a future meeting, and avoid any perceived violation of the Open Meeting Law. Mr. Elliott, as a precaution, agreed.

"Can I just say something?" said Ms. Graves. "The whole thing with ... you know, certain people being writing something to all the [FinCom] members about me, and that's ok. But what they don't know is I was a finalist. And the very next week, that article* went in the paper, and then it was re-voted, and I wasn't a finalist. So, that's the whole story."

On 2/25, the FinCom will review the School Department budget and the Finance, Treasurer, and Tax Collector budgets.

*Ms. Graves was referring to a Neighb News article titled "Graves named interim TA despite recent concerns" by Jean Perry and Beth David featured in the 1/14 edition, which can be read online at www.fairhavenneighborhoodnews.com/graves-named-interim-ta-despite-recent-concerns/.

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LETTERS: cont'd from page 19

heartedly and sees them through to perfect completion. I believe he will treat his role as Tree Warden no differently.

Don has made the town of Fairhaven his home. He volunteers for the Shepherds pantry, is a member of the Unitarian Congregational Church, a town meeting member, and started a volunteer clean-up crew that chooses a spot in Fairhaven to clear of trash every week.

Fairhaven, Don Collasius will not let you down. He knows the importance of customer service and will always respond to you. He may not always be able to help, but you will be sure to know why and what your options may be. He is a good man and when you vote for him for Tree Warden on April 5, I am confident you will not regret your choice.

Stasia Powers, Fairhaven

TA: cont'd from page 6

disclosure publicly at a meeting before participating in an interview with Wendy Graves or in a vote on the appointment of a permanent town administrator."*

Earlier in the meeting, the board voted to approve an amendment to the purchase agreement with Stratford Group for the Oxford School property. As Mr. Crotty explained, the town intended to seek subdivision approval from the Planning Board to create a separate town-owned parcel for the abutting old Fire Station #3 but was overlooked along the way. The board did face some opposition from resident Ann Richard who asked to review Stratford's change in the roofline design, but after some discussion, Mr. Freitas said, "I think all these (questions) have been answered in the last discussion we had..."

*The document is available on our website at www.NeighbNews.com

Upcoming Meetings

In-person attendance is restricted during the COVID-19 crisis. The information on how to join remotely is listed on the agendas. Most meetings also run live on the government access channels, and Fairhaven meetings are livestreamed at FairhavenTV.com

Visit <https://www.fairhaven-ma.gov> for remote access information

Fairhaven

Board of Appeals

Tues., 3/2, Town Hall, 6 p.m.

Board of Assessors

Tues., 3/9, Town Hall, 6 p.m.

Board of Health

Wed., 3/3, Town Hall/Remote, 5 p.m.

Board of Public Works

Tues., 3/9, Arsene St., 6:15 p.m.

Broadband Study Comm.

Thurs., 2/25, Town Hall, 6 p.m.

Conservation Commission

Mon., 3/8, Town Hall/Remote, 6:30 p.m.

Finance Committee

Thurs., 2/25, Remote, 7 p.m.

Thurs., 3/4, Remote, 7 p.m.

School Committee

Wed., 3/10, FHS Library, 6:30 p.m.

Selectboard

Mon., 3/1, Town Hall/Remote, 6 p.m.

Mon., 3/8, Town Hall/Remote, 6:30 p.m.

Acushnet

Board of Assessors

Tues., 3/2, Town Hall, 6:30 p.m.

Housing Authority/ Proposed annual plan

Wed., 3/17, Remote, 11:30 a.m.

TIDE TABLE

US Army Corps of Engineers, Cape Cod Canal/Piney Point/Wing's Neck

	Feb. 2021	HIGH a.m.	LOW p.m.	HIGH a.m.	LOW p.m.
Thursday	25	0622	1844	----	1202*
Friday	26	0704	1927	0005*	1242*
Saturday	27	0747	2012	0054*	1326*
Sunday	28	0833	2059	0147*	1412*
	Mar. 2021	HIGH a.m.	LOW p.m.	HIGH a.m.	LOW p.m.
Monday	1	0920	2146	0237*	1455*
Tuesday	2	1008	2235	0324*	1537*
Wednesday	3	1059	2330	0408*	1620*
Thursday	4	1157	----	0458*	1708*
Friday	5	0030	1257	0603	1812*

* = Predicted minus tides from -0.1 ft. to -1.0 ft

**Predicted minus tides from -1.1 ft to -2.0 ft or more

SELECT: cont'd from page 4

accept language drafted by the City of New Bedford accepting a statement of "no objection" by the Army Corps of Engineers for a study and review of Vineyard Wind's need to send large vessels through the hurricane barrier gates. The vessels are very large to accommodate the large wind turbine components that will be offloaded at the Marine Commerce Terminal.

The city and the Fairhaven Selectboard both raised concerns that a vessel may have contact with the sides of the barrier or damage the gates. Replacement parts are not available and the gates could be inoperable for an extended period of time. In his letter, Mayor Jon Mitchell recommends that the Army Corps make sure that there are spare parts available in case of an accident.

During the discussion Mr. Freitas chided Mr. Espindola for not notifying the board of the mayor's letter. Mr. Freitas wanted to table the discussion, but Fairhaven Harbormaster Timothy Cox said it was time sensitive.

Mr. Freitas said they needed to get the mayor on the line. Mr. Espindola said the city had reached out to town counsel Thomas Crotty.

Mr. Freitas gavelled the meeting to

recess, the sound went off and the screen went blank instantly.

The matter was taken up again at the end of the meeting, when the board was joined by Mr. Crotty, NB City Attorney Blair Baley, and terminal manager Greg Dolan.

"Thank you for confirming you spoke to their counsel," said Mr. Espindola.

Mr. Crotty said it was a "policy decision" that the board needed to make and that they could probably rely on the information the city got regarding exposure to the town.

Mr. Baley said the city did a lot of research as to what could go wrong. They decided the project should go forward "given what it means to the region," such as jobs.

Karen Vilandry of Hands Across the River Coalition, asked why Vineyard Wind could not supply appropriate sized vessels for the project and not put the hurricane barrier at risk.

Mr. Baley stressed that there is room for the vessels, and some ships that size already use the gates. He said the Corps' concern was the number of ships, but the likelihood of a mishap was still "very remote."

As the board discussed and seemed to come to consensus to approve the letter,

Ms. Vilandry said she had a question.

But Mr. Freitas shut her down.

"Ms. Vilandry, we're all set with the questions," he said.

The board voted to accept the letter that Major Mitchell sent.

The board also accepted the Town Administrator report from Ms. Graves who thanked Anne Carreiro and Vicki Oliveira for assisting with the report.

Mr. Espindola said it was "impressive" to look at the accomplishments of the last year, and compare them to the goal setting session the board held at the beginning of the year. He noted that the town received 34 grants totalling more than \$1.3 million.

The board reconvened in executive session to discuss two items. Mr. Freitas first started to close the meeting, saying there was no executive session, but was corrected that there were three items on the agenda. The board met to discuss two of them: review executive session minutes; and to discuss contract negotiations regarding Town Accountant Anne Carreiro, who does not have a contract, but is on the town's wage classification plan; they specified they would not be discussing the contract for Ms. Graves, who is also on the WC plan, although it was on the agenda.

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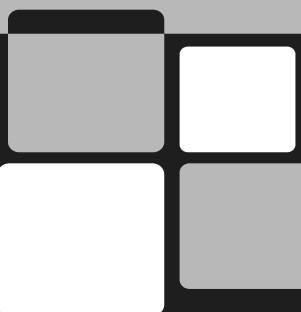
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