

# Country Journal

Devoted to the Needs of the Hilltowns

Becket, Blandford, Chester, Chesterfield, Cummington, Goshen, Huntington, Middlefield, Montgomery, Otis, Plainfield, Russell, Sandisfield, Westhampton, Williamsburg, Worthington

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## BLANDFORD

# Knox celebration had plenty of planning

By Mary Kronholm  
Correspondent

Jane Rohman and husband John Bianco moved to Blandford 28 years ago.

Rohman was a former advertising executive with Saatchi and Saatchi in Manhattan and a published author. Bianco was a producer/director for National Broadcasting Company News.

Rohman launched Jane Rohman & Associates, a public relations agency shortly thereafter on her own. A few years later Bianco left NBC and joined Jane Rohman & Associates. The firm thrived in the country setting.

Now retired herself, she has plunged head first into discovering whatever there is to know about Blandford, its people and its history. First and foremost, she considers herself a producer, but extend that to mean a producer of an image. That is what she has accomplished with the phrase, Blandford: a little town with a big history.

"If Blandford Historical Society continues to position, package and promote its incredible history,



Turley Publications photo by Mary Kronholm

Jane Rohman and John Bianco are shown at the Cannon Salute and Bonfire Celebration honoring General Henry Knox on Sunday, Jan 11 at the Blandford Fairgrounds.

like we have with our first Ghost Walk back in October and now with our Knox 250 event, we will become a powerhouse not only attracting the hearts and minds of people of all ages in our community, but across the region," said Rohman. It all started

just before Thanksgiving.

She, and other volunteers, Melissa Hamm, Mary Hull, Terri Garfield and Randy Garfield have all had a hand in researching the town's history with Rohman and how locals were involved, not just in the

American Revolution, but in playing other parts in the nation's history. For instance, George Ashmun, born in Blandford in 1804 was chairman of the Republican Convention in Chicago that

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## HUNTINGTON

# Select board face lengthy agenda

By Wendy Long  
Correspondent

The Jan. 14 meeting of the Huntington Select Board had an incredibly lengthy agenda, as the board has not met since Dec. 17.

As such, Chairman Roger Booth opened with a motion that public input and questions would not be allowed except for a public hearing item, unless agreed to during the meeting. This was unanimous with both Bill Hathaway and John McVeigh agreeing.

A series of appointments took up the three hour meeting with left topics pushed out to a special meeting scheduled for Jan. 21. Appointments included Town Clerk Michelle Fieldstad-Booth on opting out of early voting for the May 9 Municipal Election and dog license late fees, Jay Barry and Melissa Matarazzo on a study to regionalize Smith Vocational

School, the Water and Sewer Commission with the Board of Health on the issue of how to pre-pay \$700,000 in PFAS work as required on their cost-reimbursement grant, the Finance Committee on the FY '27 budget, and Highway Superintendent Brad Curry on the department's organizational structure and related policy.

The meeting opened with a public hearing on the town's proposal to opt out of no-excuse early voting by mail for the Saturday, May 9 Municipal Election. In reading the notice of the hearing, which said that state law allows cities and towns to opt out of no-excuse early voting as long as they vote to do so 45 days before an election. Town Clerk Michelle Fieldstad-Booth said the Board of Registrars met on Jan. 7 and decided to recommend opting out

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## HILLTOWNS



Submitted photo

Community members assembled at the Huntington Public Library on Saturday, Jan. 10 to continue work on their food resource mapping project. When finished, this will be posted on the Hilltowns Care webpage.

# Hilltowns Care food resources mapping project is underway

By Wendy Long  
Correspondent

Hilltowns Care convened a community work day at the Huntington Public Library on Saturday, Jan. 10 from 10:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. to continue working on a food resources mapping project for the region.

Their post on Meta

said, "Where is there food in the hilltowns? All the food, free food, hot food, food for animals, sit down food, to go food, convenience items, gas station snacks, groceries and the little farm stand you or your neighbor put out at the end of the driveway. We want to know it all."

According to Erica Wells, Hilltowns Care has

been working on a food mapping project since their first meeting, held over a year ago. Saturday's meeting was focused on sorting some of the collected data about food sources in the area, expanding on some of the work done by the Hilltown Food Processing Center and Community

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## HILLTOWNS

# Knox event honors eight towns

By Wendy Long  
Correspondent

Eight towns were honored at a Massachusetts 250 event held in Great Barrington on Saturday, Jan. 10.

Ultimately, the event honored the hand-off of the present day series of Knox commemorations from New York to Massachusetts and specified the historic rolls that the towns of Alford, Great Barrington, Monterey, Egremont, Sandisfield,

Otis, Blandford and Russell played when the noble train of artillery passed through in January 1776.

The day opened with a reenactment of the arrival of Colonel Henry Knox with oxen, horses and teamsters bringing 60 tons of cannons and armaments from Fort Ticonderoga across the state line into Alford, Massachusetts. Dignitaries from both states met up at the state line with reenactors using horse-drawn sleds and demonstrating

the use of the artillery in an open field.

At 1 p.m., a procession that included costumed reenactors, a fife and drum corps, and horses pulling sleds with cannon barrels left the Great Barrington Historical Society and marched to the Mahaiwe Theatre for an afternoon program marking Knox's arrival in Massachusetts and hardships endured while crossing the hilltowns of Western Massachusetts.

Two teams of Clydesdales traveled from HKS stables in Duxbury-Pembroke to replace a team of oxen that had originally been planned. Casey Pease from Senator Paul Mark's office said that the horses were more predictable and better-behaved than the oxen. The same Clydesdales will also be on hand at future Knox 250 events.

The event at the Mahaiwe opened with welcoming remarks from Jonathan Lane, Executive Director of Revolution 250 and Stephen Bannon, Chair of the Great Barrington Select Board. State Representative Lee Davis announced that a new exhibit in the archives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts will open on Evacuation Day March 17 and run through the rest of the year; the state will

EVENT, page 2



Photo courtesy of Stephanie Brown

Inspecting the horses drawing sleds loaded with cannon barrels, at the Jan. 10 reenactment of crossing the state line into Massachusetts.



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# HILLTOWNS

## EVENT

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provide free bussing to any Massachusetts school that wishes to attend.

A trifecta of state senators spoke: New York Senator Michelle Hinchey, Massachusetts Senator Nick Collins (Dorchester Heights) and Massachusetts Senator Paul Mark of Western Massachusetts. In his comments, Mark described Massachusetts as a colony with its own culture that clashed with a National Government that wanted to get “a bit too powerful. When people tell us what to do, we don’t love it,” Mark said. He added that people were originally not looking for war nor self government, just the right to live as they wanted. “We are willing to fight for those same ideals today,” he said to a round of applause from the packed theater.

Senator Nick Collins of South Boston added context on the man who would become Brigadier General of the Artillery. “Knox was not only there at the beginning, he served Washington right up to the Surrender of Yorktown.”

Taking the stage next was Robert Allison, a Professor of History, Language and Global Culture from Suffolk University, who described the events of the day in the 1776 American Colonies. While General George Washington was making plans to relieve the British siege on the city of Boston, Thomas Paine was delivering his anonymous pamphlet, Common Sense, which said, “The sun never shone on a cause of greater worth.”

He spoke of the battle of Breed’s Hill, where the red coats suffered more casualties than in any other event in the war. Allison also spoke of Benjamin Franklin’s quote about the new “Republic, if you can keep it,” which was also met with great applause.

Allison said that Massachusetts would send more men to fight with the Continental Army than any other state in the union. He said that George Washington, borrowing from Isaiah, envisioned, “A place where every man can sit under his own vine and fig tree, and none can make him afraid.”

Knox had been com-

missioned as a Colonel of Artillery and sent to Fort Ticonderoga to bring back cannons and artillery after the fort had been captured from British General Burgoyne by Ethan Allen and Benedict Arnold. In a letter to Washington, Knox wrote of “the noble train of artillery” that consisted of 80 teams to move the 60 tons of equipment 300 miles to Boston.

Upon arriving in Springfield, the New York militia and teamsters turned back and were replaced by Massachusetts men and animals. Repairs to the equipment were also made there and the train continued east, but on a much easier path. Upon reaching Framingham, the cannons were mounted onto their carriages and rolled into place on Dorchester Heights. Within two weeks, Washington would retake Boston and on March 17 the British and loyalists would depart on 100 ships bound for Nova Scotia. The British would never retake Boston nor Massachusetts.

At this point in the program, Kate Fox invited up historians from each of the towns, who spoke for a few minutes and received a commemorative plaque. The significance of this portion of Knox’s journey cannot be overstated. The land was steep and treacherous, and at times lacked the snow required to easily move the sleds. Going downhill-as with Russell’s “Devil’s Staircase” was even harder to manage than climbing uphill.

Robert Hoogs said that Knox reached the town of Monterey 250 years ago on



Photo courtesy of Liz Massa

“Colonel Knox” observes reenactors demonstrating musket fire after the noble train of artillery crossed into Alford, Massachusetts from New York State.

this date. Knox wrote in his journal on Jan. 10, 1776 that they had reached the town, “after have climbed mountains from which we might almost have seen all the kingdoms of the earth.”

Ronald Bernard of Sandisfield reported that his town had sent 240 men to the Continental Army. Sandisfield has a section of the Knox Trail that has remained undeveloped and looks as it was 250 years ago. He showed the upcoming book, “Ye Trodden Path” about the trek through the hilltowns, which will be out in a few weeks.

No stranger to programs about the Knox Trail, Tom Ragusa of Otis has gone back to the 1764 survey from the Massachusetts archives. The trail through Otis, Sandisfield and Monterey is featured in “Ye

Trodden Path” and describes their years of research to find the actual route and “the amazing moments of finding the landmarks (from Knox’s journal and other documents) undisturbed.” He confirmed that they have mapped a definite seven-mile section of Knox’s journey.

Chips Norcross of Blandford said that two of his town’s residents did the full 18 day reenactment trek in 1975, on the 200 year anniversary. In 1776, the town of Blandford put on a chicken dinner and square dance when the team arrived. He put on his Western Mass Hilltown Hikers hat and credited them for their work

in promoting known sections and working with historians to fill in the gaps.

Russell’s Sue Maxwell took up Norcross’s message about the gaps in the known trail, especially in her town. “We have tried to find the devil’s staircase,” Maxwell said. “We’ll find it pretty soon.”

Concluding the event were Mary Tedesco (Massachusetts) and Lisa O’Brian (New York), State Regents of the Daughters of the American Revolution. “These events give an opportunity to reflect and remember our ancestors,” Tedesco said. “Not merely an act of patriotism but a way to honor their sacrifices.”

## Western Mass. snowmobile trails open

Effective immediately, the Department of Conservation and Recreation opened snowmobile trails in Western Massachusetts including: Monroe State Forest, Savoy Mountain State Forest, Mohawk Trail State Forest, Windsor State Forest, Daughters of the American Revolution State Forest, Dubuque State Forest, Beartown State Forest, Sandisfield State Forest, Pittsfield State Forest, October Mountain State Forest, Tolland State Forest and Chester-Blandford State Forest.

Snowmobiling will only be accessible as conditions allow in compliance with DCR regulations. People may check their website for updates or email mass.parks@mass.gov with any questions. Effective immediately until further notice.



Turley photos by Wendy Long

Senator Paul Mark, flanked by Dorchester Heights Senator Nick Collins and New York Senator Michelle Hinchey, delivers remarks to the audience at the Mahaiwe Performing Arts Center.



Turley photos by Wendy Long

Sue Maxwell of Russell, Massachusetts Senator Paul Mark, Chips Norcross of Blandford and Tom Ragusa of Otis stand for photos after the Knox presentation at the Mahaiwe Performing Arts Center in Great Barrington.

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## FOOD

from page 1

Development Corporation years ago, with more updated and vetted information. “We hope to be able to share our list of resources at the end of the day, although we will continue to add and refine the data,” Wells reported. According to Wells, their end goal is to have both a digital and print version of this resource map to share with the public.

Saturday’s event had about eight to ten people working together to refine their resource document and verify information. “When the data is uploaded from our work day, we will have a public facing document to share, as well as a feedback form to add more information,” Wells added.

Included will be area food pantries, farm stands, and the food reclamation projects at “It Takes a Village” and Middlefield’s Blossom Center. These projects pick up food that is at or just passed its sell-by date and bring them to these sites. Instead of ending up on landfills as stores and restaurants are prohibited from selling after those dates the food can be distributed to people in the community at no cost.

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# HUNTINGTON

## SELECT BOARD

from page 1

due to the cost of mailing (an estimated \$1,000) the postcard announcements to all residents, and the ballots and return envelopes to those who request them. Elizabeth Kennedy of Goss Hill Road asked if absentee voting will still be readily accessible for voters. Fieldstad-Booth answered that residents can stop by the Town Clerk's Office for an absentee ballot during office hours. Hathaway noted that the Clerk's office is open every Wednesday evening. The board voted unanimously to opt out and the hearing closed at 5:07 p.m.

The second appointment also dealt with Fieldstad-Booth and late fees for dog licenses. Discussion opened with two disclosures: the first that Fieldstad-Booth is a "non-elected municipal employee of financial interest in the collection of late fees on dog licenses, and the second that her husband is on the select board. As her husband, Roger Booth recused himself from voting, Hathaway and McVeigh approved the disclosures. Fieldstad-Booth still has 10-15 dogs whose vets have sent in rabies certificates but the dogs have not been licensed. Ultimately, it was decided that she will send out a second letter to these owners giving them 30 days to comply before an increasing set of fines-starting with \$50 on the 31st day and increasing daily-would be enacted. "We have a legal obligation to have residents license their dogs," said Roger Booth. "If something happens with that dog, we're on the hook because we knew that this dog was in town and unlicensed."

Jay Barry, from the Massachusetts Association of Regional Schools, was joined by Gateway Superintendent Melissa Matarazzo on a Smith Vocational Regionalization



Turley Publications photo by Wendy Long

It was a packed house of Board of Health and Water and Sewer representatives at the Jan. 14 select board meeting, looking at how to front the \$700,000 in potential costs for PFAS remediation, as required by the cost-reimbursement grant. Joining the meeting were, from left, George Peterson, Board of Health; H. Daniel Oliveira, Sue Fopiano and Karon Hathaway, Water and Sewer and John Bergeron, Board of Health.

Study. Smith Voke is not a traditional school district. They are funded by a bequest from Oliver Smith and tuition from sending towns. They receive only minimal state aid from Northampton and do not qualify for building renovation funding through Massachusetts School Building Authority. They currently have a building that Barry said is in "deplorable condition." They are looking to ten towns to study becoming a regional vocational district. Matarazzo pointed out that Huntington was the only town of its size to be invited, due to its comparatively large number of students (26) attending. They will need an answer in the next week or two.

The most urgent business of the meeting concerned issues over the cost reimbursement grant the town secured for work on the PFAS issue in the household wells on Basket Street. The first \$204,000 that the town paid and submitted for reimbursement was denied, as that work occurred prior

to the award date of the grant. The town had to begin the work immediately due to the emergency nature of the issue and had been assured that it would be covered. The town will incur a cash flow issue if it pays the remaining \$385,575.41 in bills thus far. It is also not clear when the funds will be replenished. Booth said that there is enough money in stabilization to cover the need, but it will require two thirds of voters at a special town meeting to approve it. Booth asked Board of Health Secretary John Bergeron to see if the town could push out the \$31,000 plume study. McVeigh thought there might be a Per and Poly Fluoroalkyl Substances revolving fund from the state that could help and Pelouquin was asked to pursue that option. The plan currently is to take \$525,000 from stabilization, and the remaining \$175,000 through a short term, low interest loan. Due to the uncertainty about when the grant will reimburse the town, the town will be unlikely to approve

any capital requests in the upcoming budget.

The select board brought the Finance Committee up to date on the PFAS fiscal issues, discussed a plan to purchase Vadar Software (cloud based) for the town, and agreed to a plan to have the Finance Committee take the lead in developing the coming year's budget through budget meetings with each town department. Eric Jensen also brought up a letter from Jason Fogue (writing as a citizen not Chair of the School Committee) asking each town to contribute to purchasing the stage, sound, chairs and required storage so that graduating classes do not have to raise funds each year to hold graduation on Booster Field. The purchase could be made if each town gave \$2,000. A motion was made to not take any action unless an official request comes from the superintendent or school committee.

dent or school committee.

The final appointment was with Highway Superintendent Brad Curry, as a follow up to an incident that occurred in December. While details of the event were not fully discussed, the outcome is a clarification of the organizational structure. Highway employees are to report to and take direction from the Superintendent, who reports to and takes direction from the Town Administrator. The Town Administrator reports to and takes direction from the Select Board. Employees with a complaint about their supervisor are to bring those complaints to the Town Administrator. These changes will be made in the town's organizational chart for all departments.

In the waning minutes of the meeting, the board got through their approval agenda, including a one day liquor license for Gateway Little League, five invoices related to Community Development Block Grant, a regional DLT application to set up a domestic violence recovery fund, and a 2026 Class II Motor Vehicle Dealer License for Hilltown Motors contingent upon an active permit from the Zoning Board.

In other business, a public hearing will be held at the Thursday, Jan. 28 select board meeting to spend out \$200,000 remaining in the FY'24 Community Development Block Grant, and Robert Hebert was unanimously appointed to the Planning Board.

A special board meeting has been scheduled for Jan. 21 to take up 18 other agenda items that they could not get to. The meeting adjourned at 8:11 p.m.

## Recreation Committee and COA sponsor movie

HUNTINGTON - The Recreation Committee and Council on Aging will show the remake of "How to Train Your Dragon" on Friday, Jan. 30 at 6 p.m. in Stanton Hall, 26 Russel Road.

The 2025 live action remake of "How to Train Your Dragon" follows Hiccup, a young Viking, as he befriends a feared dragon named Toothless, challenging the long-standing animosity between Vikings and dragons. Participants may bring their sleeping bags, blankets, pillows, folding chairs etc. to be comfortable on the floor. Chairs are available at the hall. They may bring their dinner, snacks and drinks.

Admission is free. All are welcome.



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## OPINION

## GUEST COLUMN



## I'm divorced; can I get benefits from my ex-husband?

Dear Rusty:

After 16 years of marriage, we were divorced. I have never remarried, but he has. When he starts collecting Social Security (he is 64 now and still working), is it true that I can claim ex-spousal benefits or does that go to the current wife? How would I find this info?

**Signed:**  
A Divorced Spouse

Dear Divorced Spouse:

The fact that your ex-husband has remarried has no influence on your ability to collect benefits based on his record. If you are eligible for ex-spouse benefits (because you did not remarry), you can get those benefits regardless of whether his current wife collects benefits on his record. In other words, both you and his current wife can both collect spousal benefits from your ex-husband's earnings record.

Your eligibility for an ex-spouse benefit is determined by comparing your own SS retirement benefit amount at full retirement age (FRA) to his – if your own SS benefit at your FRA is less than 50% of your ex's FRA benefit entitlement, and you were married to your ex for more than 10 years, are not currently married and are at least 62 years old, then you can get a "spousal boost" (an amount added to your own Social Security retirement amount). In fact, if you have been divorced for over two years, you can get an ex-spouse benefit even though he is not yet receiving his own SS retirement benefit.

Be aware, however, if you claim any Social Security benefit (both your own SS retirement amount and your ex-spouse "spousal boost") before you reach your full retirement age, the monthly amount you get will be reduced according to how much before your full retirement age you claim. Spouse and ex-spouse benefits

reach maximum at your full retirement age but are reduced if claimed earlier than your full retirement age. Claiming your benefits as an ex-spouse will also result in you receiving your own SS retirement benefit (reduced if you haven't yet reached FRA).

I suggest you contact Social Security at 1-800-772-1213 to make a telephone appointment to evaluate whether you are entitled to benefits as an ex-spouse. If your own SS retirement benefit at your FRA is less than half of your ex's FRA entitlement, you will be. To apply for those benefits you will need a copy of your divorce decree (and perhaps your marriage certificate), and your ex-husband's Social Security number (if you do not have his SSN, you can provide his date and place of birth and his parents' names, and SSA will likely be able to locate your ex's SS record).

SSA will be able to tell you what your total monthly benefit as an ex-spouse will be when you meet with them, at which point you can decide whether to claim your benefits early or wait until your FRA to achieve your maximum amount as an ex-spouse.

*The Association Mature Citizens Foundation and its staff are not affiliated with or endorsed by the Social Security Administration or any other governmental entity. This article is intended for information purposes and does not represent legal or financial guidance. It presents the opinions and interpretations of the Association Mature Citizens Foundation's staff, trained and accredited by the National Social Security Association. To submit a question, visit [amacfoundation.org/programs/social-security-advisory](http://amacfoundation.org/programs/social-security-advisory) or email us at [ssadvisory@amacfoundation.org](mailto:ssadvisory@amacfoundation.org). Russell Gloor is a Social Security advisor for AMAC.*

CHECK OUT ALL THE

**Turley** Publications

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## Corrections policy

If you notice a factual error in our pages, please let us know, so that we can set the record straight. Email information to [countryjournal@turley.com](mailto:countryjournal@turley.com), or call us at 413-283-8393.

Corrections will be printed in the same section where the error originally occurred.



DAVE GRANLUND © [www.davegranlund.com](http://www.davegranlund.com)

## GUEST COLUMN

## Winter sowing is a fun experiment

“Winter sowing” always comes up as a hot topic on social media this time of year.

The basic premise of winter sowing is to plant your seeds in mini greenhouses (gallon jugs), place the jugs outside and simply let nature take over. The advantage being that no heat mats or lights are needed. No window sills full of seedlings, either.

While I don't think it is as simple as it sounds, I do think trying it would be a fun experiment.

Read on this week and next to consider some of the pros and possible cons of this seed starting technique.

Years ago I read a blog where a master gardener was encouraging folks to start native perennials in milk jugs outside. The seeds of many of these plants require a period of cold and moist stratification to break seed dormancy.

In simple terms, they need to go through winter in order to sprout. Think of it as nature's safety mechanism; seeds germinate at the right time to survive and thrive!

You may ask, then, why not just sow the seeds outdoors in the garden? In theory it sounds good, but in reality “the wild” is not the best seed bed.

From hungry birds and rodents, to wind and drenching rains, success is hit or miss. Safely inside the milk jug, but at the same time outside in the elements to freeze and thaw, freeze and thaw, tricky seeds are coaxed into germinating. Success at your fingertips!

Here are the nuts and bolts! Start with clean gallon containers, the see-through kind that water or milk come in. About four inches up, just below the handle, safely cut around the jug, leaving an inch or so on either side of the handle as a “hinge.”

You should be able to bend the top back and forth. Make a number of drainage holes in the bottom; three or four per quadrant.

There is a lot of advice out there on how to do that, from drilling holes, to twisting an exacto knife around and around and even using a hot tool to melt a hole in the

plastic (really!). I generally like to make holes in reused plastic containers by banging a large nail through the bottom into a piece of scrap lumber placed underneath.

Once the drainage holes are made, fill the bottom of the jug with moist seed starting mix. With the soil in place, sow your seeds.

If the seeds are tiny or even relatively tiny, don't cover them with soil, simply space them out evenly on top and press into the surface.

You may wonder how to deal with tiny seed. I place it in a folded index card and gently tap the card so that the seeds fly out. If you can handle the seed easily, do cover with only a small amount soil, say an eighth of an inch or so and firm down.

How many seeds to sow is a tricky question. If you want to keep the plants in the jug until they go in the garden, then hope for four plants, maybe six per jug at the most, figuring how big they will be at transplant stage.

For tricky germinators, perhaps double or triple the amount of seed you sow versus how many you desire. If germination is great, you can always transplant some out.

Close the container and seal it with duct tape. Be sure to label the jug with the plant name via a paint pen, really the only writing utensil that won't smear, fade or wash away when exposed to the elements.

Place the jugs in full exposure outdoors and with the cap off, so that heat can escape and small amounts of moisture can penetrate. When the temperature outdoors heats up past 60 degrees, be sure to take the duct tape off and vent your seedlings. Check often and water as needed.

The pros recommend to cover with a blanket if frost threatens or even move heat lovers inside on cold nights so that the seedlings won't

freeze. To prevent tip-over by four-legged friends or playful kids, pros also suggest putting the jugs in trays or bins.

As you can see, this method is not maintenance-free, but certainly worthy of a try especially for gardeners who are short on indoor space or in the mood to get their hands dirty earlier in the season than normal! January and February is the perfect time to start seeds that need a cold treatment.

Look for key terms on the seed packet, such as “stratification needed,” “sow in the fall,” etc. You can also use this technique to sow cold hardy annuals in March—think chard, spinach, kale, snapdragons, bachelor button and the like.

*Roberta McQuaid graduated from the Stockbridge School of Agriculture at the University of Massachusetts. For 33 years she has held the position of staff horticulturist at Old Sturbridge Village. She enjoys growing food as well as flowers. Have a question for her? Email it to [pouimette@turley.com](mailto:pouimette@turley.com) with “Gardening Question” in the subject line.*



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## EDITORIAL POLICY

Letters to the editor should be 500 words or less in length. We require letter writers to include his or her name, town of residence and home telephone number. We must authenticate authorship prior to publication. We reserve the right to edit or withhold any submissions deemed to be libelous or contain unsubstantiated allegations, personal attacks, defamation of character and offensive language. All unknown or alleged facts and quotations offered by the author need to cite credible, unbiased sources.

Mail letter to Country Journal, 24 Water Street, Palmer, MA 01069 or mail your letter to: [countryjournal@turley.com](mailto:countryjournal@turley.com).

## Country Journal OBITUARY POLICY

Turley Publications offers two types of obituaries. One is a free, brief **Death Notice** listing the name of deceased, date of death and funeral date and place. The other is a **Paid Obituary**, costing \$275, which allows families to publish extended death notice information of their own choice (with a word limit of up to 500 words) and may include a photograph.

**Death Notices & Paid Obituaries** should be submitted through a funeral home to: [obits@turley.com](mailto:obits@turley.com).

Exceptions will be made only when the family provides a death certificate and must be pre-paid.

## Country Journal welcomes Election letters to the editor

The Country Journal welcomes readers to participate in this year's election campaigns by writing letters to the editor for publication on these pages. Letters of up to 250 words from local residents endorsing candidates on the ballot or discussing campaign issues should be sent to The Country Journal, care of Turley Publications, 24 Water St., Palmer, MA 01069, faxed to 413-289-1977 or emailed to [countryjournal@turley.com](mailto:countryjournal@turley.com).

Please include a daytime telephone number for verification purposes (it will not be printed). Letters must be received by **noon Friday** to be considered for the following Thursday's newspaper. No attack letters will be printed. No letters written by candidates supporting their own candidacy will be printed. If the volume of letters received is larger than the space available in the newspaper, or if the letters become repetitive, the

newspaper reserves the right to print a representative sample. No endorsement letters will be printed in the last edition before the election. For more information, call 413-283-8393.

### Campaign news

As part of its election coverage, the newspaper plans to print stories about contested races for Congress, state Senate, state House, district attorney and Governor's

Council during the weeks leading up to the election, as well as a question-and-answer voters guide. In order to ensure fairness to all candidates, no political press releases will be printed, nor will reporters cover political rallies or fundraisers.

Candidates who wish to further publicize their candidacy, beliefs and events may contact advertising, 413-283-8393 about paid advertising in The Country Journal.

# OPINION

## HILLTOWN HISTORY

### Pullman dining train car had quite a journey, ends up in Chester Depot

By Deborah Daniels  
Correspondent

Did you see that 1946 Pullman Coach dining train car get delivered to its new home at the Chester depot?

That was huge and exciting. What a treat for the Pullman, a ride on rubber wheels. That Pullman car used to work hard on the New York Central Railroad, traveling from New York City to Boston and on to Chicago and St. Louis. It lived at NYC Grand Central Station. It was a boss train as trains go.

It got to assume a stationary life in Chicopee, 749 James St. in 1981 to be exact. It arrived then by rail spur and its final ride was on a flat bed truck to this location to become a diner. It nourished Chicopee residents near Westover Air Base for 42 years. It was a landmark eatery. That made its transition to a diner a bit easier to handle. Now it will enjoy a third life at the Chester Rail yard.

Remember diners, a little chrome decor with your bottomless cup of coffee? Who doesn't love a waitress who calls you "Hon?"

Americans enjoyed eating at diners from 1910s to the 1960s. It was road food for Americans, who

had discovered the open road and wheels, automobile wheels. Add in a jukebox and comfort food like macaroni and cheese, eggs and bacon, liver and onions and a slice of pie and what's not to like? Most dishes in the early days cost less than a dollar, had little meat, which was scarce after WWII and plenty of satisfying grease.

Walter Scott, a part time newspaper man is credited with having the first horse drawn night lunch wagon or food truck in 1872. This was considered to be the forerunner to the diner. It served hungry night workers when all the shops and cafes were closed. It wasn't until 1913 that Jerry O'Mahony (1890-1969) manufactured a chrome train like looking diner car in Elizabeth, New Jersey.

There were some 2,000 diners in operation from 1917 - 1952. Many of these were retired trolley and train cars. However the Worcester Lunch Car and Carriage Manufacturing Company, owned by Phil Duprey and Grenville Stoddard began making chrome diners in 1906. They shipped these prefabricated diners all over America. Signs bloomed everywhere advertising hamburgers, frankfurts,



This is a photo of Bernie's Diner in Chicopee. The dining car now resides in Chester.



This photo shows the inside of a railroad dining car.

butter milk and pop for five cents each. At last a decent, affordable meal on the road.

It is hard to believe but Buffalo and Atlantic City banned diners from locating there because the late

hours attracted disreputable clients. But Americans were on the move and filling food, cooked on a greasy flat top grill with Bunn-O-Matic coffee were too hard to resist. Who doesn't



This photo shows the inside of Bernie's Diner. Submitted photos



This is a photo of the early horse drawn night lunch wagons.

have a memory watching Aunt Lill and Uncle Bill try to squeeze into a tight diner booth with a formica table top and black and white tiled floor like Miss Florence's Diner in

Florence. And get a load of those garish poster advertisements in the bathroom.

Bon Appetite and be sure and patronize a local diner 'cause they are a disappearing.

## BECKET

### Becket Athenaeum lists events

BECKET – The Becket Athenaeum, 3367, Main St., on Saturday, Jan. 31 from 2:30-4 p.m. will host a program entitled "Indoor Plants and Tropicals" with Ed Sourdiffe, a master gardener.

Space is limited and registration by Wednesday, Jan. 28 is required by visiting [bwlbrary.org/plants](http://bwlbrary.org/plants). Movie night for adults will take place on Tuesday, Jan. 27 from 6:30-9:30 p.m. The

movie stats at 7 p.m. at the Becket Athenaeum. Popcorn, candy and non-alcoholic beverages are provided. People may bring beverages of choice including alcohol. Older children 13 plus may come with an adult at the discretion of their guardian.

The book club meets on Tuesday, Feb. 3 at 1:30 p.m. either inside the library or on Zoom. Digital copies of the book "Powerless" by

Lauren Roberts are available on Libby. People may email [info@bwlbrary.org](mailto:info@bwlbrary.org) to request a physical book or for details regarding the separate virtual meeting.

Ongoing events include baby and toddler playground on Tuesdays from 10-11 a.m., story time and craft Saturdays from 10:30-11:30 p.m. and stay and play on Saturdays from 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

## CUMMINGTON

### Friday Night Cafe announces performer

CUMMINGTON – On Friday, Jan. 23 from 7-9 p.m. the Friday Night Cafe features singer/songwriter Martha Bourne Four in the vestry of the Village Church located in the Cummington Cultural District.

She is joined by her long-time sideman/collaborator from Boston, Mike Castellana on pedal steel guitar and guitar, Dave Christopolis on bass and

Jason Smith on drums. Bourne teaches in the film scoring department at Berklee College of Music. The event is free, donations are appreciated. Snacks will be provided. People should bring their own beverage.

Once again the cafe is sponsored by the friendly folks at the Village Church, who believe music can be a powerful force for building community.

Friday Night Cafe receives promotional support from the Cummington Cultural District and is supported in part by grants from the Chesterfield, Cummington, Goshen, Hinsdale-Peru, Plainfield, Williamsburg, Windsor, and Worthington Cultural Councils, local agencies which are supported by the Mass Cultural Council, a state agency.

## MIDDLEFIELD

### COA offers lunch and public health nurse

MIDDLEFIELD – The Middlefield Council on Aging offers take out or dine in lunch on Wednesday, Jan. 28 at noon in the Middlefield Senior Center, 169 Skyline Drive.

Coffee is available at 11 a.m. Menu choice is egg salad or ham salad, two

slices rye bread, Coleslaw, potato salad, fresh fruit. To reserve a lunch, people should call 413-623-9990 by Monday at 1 p.m.

The Public Health Nurse comes in the first Wednesday of the month; next visit is Wednesday, Feb. 4. The nurse is able to pro-

vide flu and Covid vaccines. People may get their blood pressure taken and learn the newest information concerning breast cancer. People may call 413-623-9990 by Monday at 1 p.m. to request a vaccine. Vaccines are available to anyone over six months old.

### News, photo publication policy

As a community newspaper our focus has always been local news. While we try very hard to run upcoming events as a public service whenever space allows, space does not allow us to run an upcoming event repeatedly. Our policy is to limit publication of upcoming events to one article in advance of the event and, space permitting, a second brief reminder article the week prior to an event, and to run those articles in only one section of the paper, and not in multiple sections simultaneously.

All such public service announcements and photos are subject to space limitations and deadlines, therefore publication cannot be guaranteed. Whenever copy for the week exceeds allotted space, news copy will take priority, and public service copy is the first area to be cut. We also reserve the right to edit for style and space, and are under no obligation to print lists of sponsorships, or articles that arrive after deadline, unless time and space allows.

**Deadline is Friday at NOON.**



**First Congregational Church of Blandford**  
Pastor Ciprian Droma  
91 Main St., Blandford, MA 01008  
413-848-2052  
Sunday service 10 a.m.

**First Congregational Church of Chester**  
334 Skyline Trail, Chester, MA 01011  
Pastor Susan Borsella  
Service with Live Music: 10 a.m. - Sunday  
Coffee and Sweets Social:  
10:45 a.m. - 11:45 a.m.

**First Congregational Church of Williamsburg**  
Rev. Jack Kraaz  
4 North Main St., Williamsburg, MA 01096  
413-268-7557  
[burgychurch@gmail.com](mailto:burgychurch@gmail.com) • [burgychurch.org](http://burgychurch.org)  
Facebook:  
First Congregational Church of Williamsburg  
YouTube Channel: [www.youtube.com/channel/UCdyH1EA-fduamqHYeekxw5w](http://www.youtube.com/channel/UCdyH1EA-fduamqHYeekxw5w)  
Office Hours: Tues. - Fri. 9 a.m. - 12 noon  
Days and Hours of Services: Sun. at 10 a.m.

**Hilltown Community Church**  
Rev. Dr. Robert Perreault  
55 Main St., Russell, MA 01071  
413-275-3232  
Office: 413-862-3341  
[hilltownchurch3341@gmail.com](mailto:hilltownchurch3341@gmail.com)  
Sunday Mornings 10 a.m.

**Holy Family Parish**  
Rev. Ronald F. Sadlowski, known as Fr. Ron  
5 Main St., Russell, MA 01071  
413-862-4418  
Office Hours: No set times.  
Please call, leave a voice message or email: [holyfamilyrussell.org](mailto:holyfamilyrussell.org)  
[parish@holyfamilyrussell.org](mailto:parish@holyfamilyrussell.org)  
Saturday Vigil: 5 p.m.  
Sunday Masses: 8:15 a.m. & 11 a.m.

**CHURCH DIRECTORY**

**Your Community Church**

**New Boston Congregational Church**  
4 Sandisfield Rd., PO Box 81  
Sandisfield, MA 01255  
Services held twice monthly, check website: [www.newbostoncongregationalchurch.org](http://www.newbostoncongregationalchurch.org)

**Pioneer Valley Assembly of God**  
Pastor Javier Melendez  
63 Old Chester Rd., Huntington MA 01050  
413-667-3196  
[pvagliffe@gmail.com](mailto:pvagliffe@gmail.com)  
[www.pioneervalleyag.org](http://www.pioneervalleyag.org)  
Facebook: Pioneer Valley Assembly of God  
Sunday service: 10:30 a.m.

**Pioneer Valley Mennonite Fellowship**  
Deacon Jerald Reinford  
400 Huntington Rd., Russell, MA 01071  
(413) 297-6037  
Sunday worship at 10 a.m.  
Visitors appreciated.



## BLANDFORD

## Town clerk announces street list forms to be mailed

By Mary Kronholm  
Correspondent

BLANDFORD – Town Clerk Doris Jemiolo announced that the annual Street List forms will be mailed to every residence in town soon.

It is important to complete the form, including every member of the household especially children, and return it to the office in the envelope provided. Completing the annual street list form is an important civic responsibility, according to Jemiolo. The forms are mailed every

year. They are sometimes referred to as “annual census” to confirm who lives at every address.

When residents fill it out and return it promptly, they help maintain an accurate record of population, households, and voters. This information is the foundation for many municipal functions, from planning local services to ensuring fair representation.

One of the most significant reasons to complete the street list is to protect your voter registration status. In Massachusetts, failure to respond can lead to a

voter being marked “inactive.” Inactive voters can still vote, but the process is longer and requires additional steps at the polling place and prolonged inactivity can ultimately result in removal from the voting rolls.

By simply returning the street list each year, residents help keep their voter information current such as name, address and party enrollment and ensure that they remain in active status, making voting smoother and more secure. Party enrollment cannot be altered or changed on the Street List. A separate form

from the Town Clerk must be used for that.

Accurate street list data also helps the town plan and deliver essential services. Population counts by age and address guide decisions about school staffing and capacity, senior services, emergency response planning and public health initiatives. For example, knowing how many school-age children, older adults, helps allocate resources where they are needed most. This can affect everything from bus routes for Gateway Regional School District students and classroom sizes to

senior center programming and public safety strategies.

Additionally, the street list plays a role in compliance with state laws and eligibility for certain programs. Many departments use the information to verify residency when residents apply for local permits, licenses, and benefits. Reliable population figures can also influence state funding formulas.

“Returning the form is not just a legal requirement; it is a practical way for residents to support the town’s health, representation and financial stability.”

The form states that a telephone number is optional, but it can be listed and checked off as unlisted. This means that the telephone number is never revealed and only the Town Clerk has access. This is important with so many residents now having cell phones and eliminating landlines. If there are questions about the responses on the form it is most helpful for the Town Clerk to be able to contact a resident. Jemiolo added, “It will be most helpful to the town for everyone to return the form as soon as possible.”

## KNOX

nominated Abraham Lincoln for president.

The countless hours of volunteer effort that turned out the Cannon Salute and Bonfire Celebration Sunday, Jan. 11 at the Blandford Fairgrounds produced a portrayal of the town and its people involved in the historic Noble Train of Artillery. Historian Dennis Picard pointed the way to Crane’s Continental Army for the cannons. Having the cannons on site was not easy. One needed a cannon permit, which could only be applied for 15 days prior to the event; with both the town and the fire department.

Then a location on site for the cannon to fire, which required 100 feet of open space on either side and 50 feet behind.

Mary Hull found the oxen at Belchertown’s Hickory Hollow Working Steers and Terri Garfield the horse from Guy and Kathy Jediny of Russell. An insurance rider had to be obtained for the Historical Society’s use of the Fairgrounds. Rohman managed the process and handled logistics, casting and getting performers. Mandy and Aaron LaBrecque committed while Rohman was at the annual Craft Fair at the Historical

Society.

She, along with others, wrote the scripts, which were constantly tweaked. Her work named and “packaged the event” writing marketing copy, poster, social media campaign along with press releases and event program. Wendy Berman of Iron Blender Studios did the design work for the material.

Terri Garfield and Melissa Hamm took on the costume task with more hours of stitching, sizing and trying-on.

Bianco took on the technology and audio aspect and “handled what we needed and attended all the rehears-

als.”

Peter Langmore, prior to the event, assisted with insurance among other things and helped get the word out while Hull handled “traditional PR outreach to outlets.”

Gary Hart and Wendy Berman, along with the rest of the team put the word out on social media and local calendars.

On the big day, Rohman and Bianco, with Matt Ripley, Greg Girard (Fair President and Vice President) and Ray Hultay helped set up the grounds. Jen Girard handled food with Mandy LaBrecque.

Hultay was responsible for the bonfire; two were planned, but the number reduced to only one because of the wind. “It’s always windy at the Fairgrounds,” said Hultay.

Hart, Langmore and Patrick Stearns handled parking, which turned out to be a major task with all the people coming to the event. Hull and Jocelyn Jones, a Jethro Jones descendant, filmed the event for posterity.

Rohman said, “I think these events are really bringing people from all walks together. Honestly, I just set out to give people what I wanted, having lived here for

28 years, but been too busy working.”

She realized that the Historical Society was sitting on a goldmine of stories “for a town this size.”

She added that it was just a matter of digging out the stories and making them come alive.

“It turns out,” she said, “a lot of people wanted the same.”

She said the Historical Society is already working on Ghost Walk 2026. Society President Chips Norcross is on board. Get ready, Blandford, as the little town with the big history continues to make itself known.

from page 1

## NORTHAMPTON

## Forbes Library lists events

NORTHAMPTON – Forbes Library, 20 West St., will host a juggling workshop led by instructor Joseph Goldin on Monday, Jan. 26 and Wednesday, Jan. 28 from 5:30-6:30 p.m.

Participants will learn the fundamentals of juggling in a relaxed, supportive environment. This beginner-friendly series covers basic patterns, hand-eye coordination techniques and fun skill-building exercises. Everyone is encouraged to be both a teacher and a student; this is a space to build community through play, learning and collaboration.

Hands-on ecology workshops start on Thursday, Jan. 29 from 6-7 p.m. This is a

series of three workshops on hands-on ecology: practical lessons in restoration horticulture, led by horticulturist and educator Erik Vegeto. The first session’s topic is restoring life to landscapes - the art and science of restoration horticulture.

On Tuesday, Jan. 27 from 4-5 p.m. a monthly family game time with Northampton Public School’s Early Childhood Center. They may drop in to play games and meet other families. They will enjoy collaborative games like Snug as a Bug and Busy Town, as well as turn-taking games like Spot It, Hiss and Zingo. This monthly family game time is aimed at families

with children ages 3-8 years old and hosted by the NPS’s Early Childhood Center.

Toddler story time will take place on Friday, Jan. 23 from 10:30-11 a.m. This is best suited for 1.5-3-year-olds and their caregivers.

Forbes Library seeks 2026-2027 artists, who would like to exhibit proposals for the Hosmer Gallery. Applications close on Saturday, Feb. 28 at 6 p.m. and the schedule will be finalized in April. They may visit <https://forbeslibrary.org/blog/2026/01/14/hosmer-gallery-seeks-artist-applications-for-2026-2027/> to learn more about the process and submit their application.

## HAYDENVILLE

## HCC hosts estate planning workshop

HAYDENVILLE – The Haydenville Congregational Church, 143 Main St., is hosting a free, planned giving workshop on Saturday, Jan. 31, from 11 a.m.-1 p.m. in the church dining hall.

Attorney Valerie

Vignaux of Florence will speak about her specialty, estate planning. She will focus on charitable giving both during life and after death and the methods by which one can support organizations close to the heart. She will discuss gifting

strategies, the use of estate planning documents and the benefits of beneficiary designations.

There will be a light lunch served after the presentation and a time for questions. The workshop is open to the community.

## FLORENCE

## Florence Bank promotes Ryan Hess

FLORENCE

– The Florence Bank announces that vice president / commercial team leader Ryan Hess of East Longmeadow has been promoted to lead the bank’s commercial lending efforts as senior vice president / chief commercial banking officer.

Hess replaces senior vice president / senior commercial lender Mike Lynch, who will retire in June 2026 after 21 years at Florence Bank.

“Ryan has done an outstanding job as a leader as part of our Commercial Team and is a trusted associate and advisor to clients in Western Massachusetts. His promotion is well deserved and I look forward to his continuing that success,” said Matt Garrity, President and CEO.

Hess joined Florence Bank in 2023 and has 14 years of banking experience as well as a strong affinity for commercial lending and solutions.



Ryan Hess

He holds a Bachelor’s Degree in business administration from Stonehill College in Easton and believes his skill in collaboration and leadership will continue to inform

his work for Florence Bank as he manages the commercial team.

“We have a talented group of business banking professionals here at Florence Bank. My experiences have helped prepare me for this role to lead that team,” he said.

Active in the community, Hess sits on the board for United Way of Franklin and Hampshire County and serves as a committee member for Ronald McDonald House and Make-A-Wish of Massachusetts.

After 42 years in banking, Lynch looks forward to playing golf, traveling and spending time with his family and believes Hess is well-suited for his new

role. “I wish Ryan the best and look forward to the success of the Bank under his leadership,” he said.

Garrity lauded Lynch’s accomplishments during his tenure as senior commercial lender. “Mike has always represented Florence Bank with distinction, integrity and professionalism. We’ll miss his numerous contributions and wish him well as he embarks on his next journey.”

Florence Bank is a mutual savings bank chartered in 1873. Currently, the bank serves the Pioneer Valley through 12 full-service branch locations in Florence, Northampton, Easthampton, Williamsburg, Amherst, Hadley, Belchertown, Granby, Chicopee, West Springfield and Springfield. A Holyoke branch will open in the spring of 2026. Additionally,

Florence Bank offers 23 ATMs and a wide range of financial services, including investment management through Florence Financial Group to consumers and businesses.

## SCHOOLS &amp; YOUTH

## DESE to conduct English Learner Education review at Hampshire Regional

WESTHAMPTON – During the week of April 13, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education’s Office of Language Acquisition will conduct a Tiered Focused Monitoring Review of Hampshire Regional Schools.

The Office of Language Acquisition reviews each district’s and charter school’s English Learner Education program every six years to monitor compliance with federal and state English Learner Education laws and regula-

tions. Areas of review will include English learners’ student assessments, identification of English learners; what programs English learners are placed in, parent and community involvement, curriculum and instruction, student support services, licensure requirements for faculty, staff and administration, program plans and evaluation and record keeping.

In addition to the onsite visit, parent outreach is an important part of the review process. The district will send a survey

to the parents of students whose records the review team examines. The survey focuses on key areas of their child’s ELE program. Survey results will be reviewed by OLA and they will contribute to the monitoring report.

Parents and other individuals may call Samantha Kodak, Office of Language Acquisition Review Chairperson, at 781-338-3561 to request a telephone interview. If an individual requires an accommodation, such as translation, to participate in an interview,

DESE will make the necessary arrangements.

Within approximately 60 business days of the onsite visit, the review chairperson will provide the district or charter school with a report with information about areas in which the district or charter school meets or exceeds regulatory requirements and areas in which the district or charter school requires assistance to correct or improve practices. The report will be available to the public at <https://www.doe.mass.edu/ele/cpr/>.

## Colleges and universities announce President, Provost and Dean’s lists

## PRESIDENT’S LIST

## University of New York

## Potsdam, New York

Samir Ghalayini of Westfield, music performance major

## PROVOST’S LIST

## Hofstra University

## Hempstead, New York

Reese Gibson of Westfield, criminology major perfect 4.0 Grade Point Average

## DISTINCTION LIST

## Mount Wachusett

## Community College

## Gardner

Robert Smith of Pittsfield

## EXCELLENCE LIST

## Mount Wachusett

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Cecilia Prince of Montgomery

## DEAN’S LIST

## Assumption University

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Hannah Keeney of Westfield, Isabella Lebaron of Chester and Erin Reed of Westfield

## Nazareth University

## Rochester, New York

William O’Neill of Cummington

# PUBLIC NOTICES



**COMMONWEALTH OF  
MASSACHUSETTS  
ENERGY FACILITIES  
SITING BOARD  
NOTICE OF ADJUDICATION  
AND PUBLIC COMMENT HEARING**



<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/blandford-substation-project>

**EFSB 25-09 NSTAR Electric Company d/b/a Eversource Energy (Blandford Substation Expansion)**

NSTAR Electric Company d/b/a Eversource Energy ("Eversource" or "Company") has asked the Energy Facilities Siting Board ("Siting Board" or "EFSB") to grant individual and comprehensive zoning exemptions from the Town of Blandford's Zoning Bylaws for the expansion of the Company's existing Blandford Substation located at 79 North Blandford Road in Blandford, Massachusetts (the "Project"). To accommodate this expansion, the Company proposes to increase the Substation yard from 0.65 acres to 1.13 acres and will remove 4,000 square feet of trees. A Project description of the Project site is provided below.

**The Siting Board will conduct a public comment hearing with both in-person and remote participation options on:**

**Tuesday, February 3, 2026 at 6:30 P.M.**

**Snow Date: Wednesday, February 11, 2026, at 6:30 P.M.**

**In-person hearing location:**

**Blandford Town Hall  
1 Russell Stage Rd. Blandford, MA 01008**

**Remote attendees: join by clicking (or entering) this link: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82900586470>** from a computer, tablet, or smart device. For audio-only participation, attendees can dial-in at (646) 558-8656 (not a toll-free number) and then enter the **Webinar ID: 829-0058-6470**.

To provide oral comments during the public comment hearing (in person or on Zoom), please send an email to [Yonathan.Mengsha@mass.gov](mailto:Yonathan.Mengsha@mass.gov) with the subject line "EFSB 25-09 SPEAKER SIGN UP", and your name, email address, and mailing address in the body of your email by **noon, February 2, 2026 (or for Snow date by February 10, 2026)**. To sign up by telephone, please leave a voicemail message referencing "EFSB 25-09" at (617) 305-3544 with your name, telephone number, and mailing address by noon, February 2, 2026 (or for Snow date by February 10, 2026). Pre-registered commenters will speak first, and other commenters afterward.

**The Siting Board also invites written comments on the Project.** Written comments will be most useful to the Siting Board if submitted by **5:00 p.m., Wednesday, February 18, 2026 (or for Snow date by 5:00 p.m., February 26, 2026)**. Persons or groups who wish to be involved in the Siting Board proceeding (beyond providing comments at the public comment hearing or in writing) may seek to intervene as a party or to participate as a limited participant. Any petition to intervene or participate must likewise be filed no later than **5:00 p.m., February 18, 2026 (or for Snow date by 5:00 p.m., February 26, 2026)** and must follow the instructions below.

**Severe Weather Notification and Snow Date**

In the event of severe weather, the Siting Board may postpone the public comment hearing. Any postponement will be announced on the Siting Board's Project website (accessible via the URL link or QR code at the top of this notice's first page). If the hearing is postponed, it will be rescheduled for the snow date of Wednesday, February 11, 2026, at the original location. The deadlines for submitting public comments and filing for intervention or limited participant status will be extended until Thursday, February 26, 2026.

**Important Dates:**

**Public Comment Hearing**

**Planned: February 3, 2026**

**Snow Date: February 11, 2026**

**Deadline to file written comments**

**Planned: February 18, 2026**

**Alternate: February 26, 2026**

**Deadline to file for intervention/limited participant status**

**Planned: February 18, 2026**

**Alternative: February 26, 2026**

**LEGAL NOTICE  
TOWN OF HUNTINGTON  
ZONING BOARD OF  
APPEALS  
PUBLIC HEARING**

The Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) of the Town of Huntington will hold a public hearing on **February 9, 2026 beginning at 6:00 pm** in Stanton Hall.

In the event of inclement weather, the snow date is February 10, 2026, same time, same place.

The Public Hearing is scheduled for 6:00 pm for the Special Permit Application of Paul and Sandra (Tischler) Saner of 462 Chestnut Hill Avenue, Brookline, MA to demolish and replace a 4 bedroom L-shaped single story cottage with failing foundation piers with a new rectangular 2 story home with a fully accessible first floor at property they own at 125 Norwich Lake (AKA 125 Searle Road), Huntington, Parcel# L-4-16-0. They also will be replacing the septic system with a new one located farther from the lake on Parcel # L-4-17-0, which they also own, with a shared system servicing both 125 Norwich Lake and 126 Norwich Lake (Parcel # L-4-17-0), Huntington.

The Special Permit Application will be available to view by **appointment** in the office of the Selectboard during regular business hours, as well as at the Public Hearing.

**ZONING  
BOARD OF APPEALS  
TOWN OF HUNTINGTON  
01/22, 01/29/2026**

**Town of Huntington RFQ  
Blandford Hill Road  
Improvement Project  
Engineering Design**

The Town of Huntington has been awarded funds from the FY 2025 Massachusetts Execu-

tive Office of Housing and Livable Communities, Community Development Block Grant Program. The Town wishes to receive responses for professional engineering design services for water main replacement, sewer system replacement, road reconstruction, storm drainage, and sidewalk reconstruction needed for the infrastructure improvement project on Blandford Hill Road. The project area includes Blandford Hill Road, from the intersection with Russell Road State Route 20 to #26 Blandford Hill Road, approximately 1,100 feet in length. This is a two-phase project. The Phase 1 engineering services sought through this Request for Qualifications (RFQ) will include right of way and utility research, site survey and base plan development, identification of all required easements, preparation of preliminary design plans, final design plans and specifications, preparation of bid documents, and preparation of an opinion of construction costs. Phase 2 is contingent upon funding and will include bidding services, construction administration services, resident engineering services, and construction close-out services.

The fee for services sought for phase 1 will be negotiated and shall not exceed \$102,000. In the event project construction funding is procured in the future, the engineer shall provide Phase 2 services to be negotiated according to Chapter 7C of the Massachusetts General Laws. A more detailed RFQ is available at the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, 60 Congress Street, Springfield, MA 01104, (413) 781-6045, between 9:00 AM and 5:00 PM. To request an electronic copy of the RFQ, please contact Sue Ortiz at [ortiz@pvpc.org](mailto:ortiz@pvpc.org). The RFQ will be

available from January 21, 2026, until the due date specified below. The Town of Huntington reserves the right to reject any and all responses if it is deemed in the best interests of the Town to do so. The Huntington Selectboard will be the awarding and contracting authority.

**Completed proposals are to be submitted no later than 2:00 PM, Wednesday, February 11, 2026, at the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, 60 Congress Street, 1st Floor, Springfield, MA 01104.**  
01/22, 01/29/2026

**LEGAL NOTICE  
TOWN OF MIDDLEFIELD  
REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL  
"On-Call" Architectural  
Design Services**

The Town of Middlefield is seeking proposals for "On-Call" General Architectural Design and Services for several miscellaneous town capital improvement projects. **Services will be effective from date of award through June 30, 2027 with two options to renew for two additional years ending on June 30, 2031.**

The Town acting through its Town Select Board, is seeking qualified architectural firms to provide on-call "house Doctor and Consulting Services for the Town of Middlefield. The Town of Middlefield will award contracts as needed by the Town.

The scope of work will generally involve repair, rehabilitation, or renovation to municipal buildings/structures. Projects may include re-roofing, window repair and replacement, building insulation, building structural repair, elevator installation, exterior envelop repairs, mechanical, electrical and structural repairs or replacement, renovations for accessibility, design and con-

struction oversight of small municipal buildings and additions and minor interior renovations to building elements and offices as necessary.

Applicants must have experience in and be fully licensed or registered for the work mentioned in this RFP by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and must list the names of the licensed consultants that will be used as part of the RFP response. The selected firms shall have demonstrated previous experience in providing specified services to Massachusetts municipal governments. A complete RFP may be obtained, without charge, by contacting the Middlefield Administrative Assistant at, 413-623-2079 Ext.2 or at [middlefield.assistant@gmail.com](mailto:middlefield.assistant@gmail.com). **Documents will be available beginning on January 16, 2026 in the Town of Middlefield Select Board Office, Town Hall 188 Skyline Trail Middlefield MA 01243 on Mondays from 9:00 A.M. to 3:00 P.M. or Wednesday's from 4:00 P.M. to 6:00 P.M. and Friday's from 9 A.M. to 11 A.M. They can also be obtained by contacting the Town Administrative Assistant at [middlefield.assistant@gmail.com](mailto:middlefield.assistant@gmail.com) or by calling 413-623-2079 Ext.2.** It is recommended that respondents to this request familiarize themselves with the detailed RFP.

It is the intent of the Awarding Authority to award contracts within thirty (30) business days after receiving the proposals.

**The deadline for submitting Proposals to the Town of Middlefield Select Board Office 187 Skyline Trail Middlefield, MA 01243 is Wednesday February 4, 2026 by 2:00 P.M. Proposals can either be dropped off at the Select Board Office located at 187 Skyline Trail in Mid-**

counsel for the Company, Catherine J. Keuthen, Esq., and Cheryl A. Blaine, Esq., Keegan Werlin LLP, 1 Cranberry Hill, Suite 304, Lexington, MA 02421, [ckeuthen@keeganwerlin.com](mailto:ckeuthen@keeganwerlin.com) and [cblaine@keeganwerlin.com](mailto:cblaine@keeganwerlin.com).

**Accommodation Requests**

Reasonable accommodations for people with disabilities (e.g., Braille, large print, electronic files, audio format) are available upon request. To submit a request for an accommodation, please email Melixza Esenyie - Non-Discrimination Coordinator and Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs at, [eadiversity@mass.gov](mailto:eadiversity@mass.gov), or call 617-626-1282. In your communication, please include a description of the request in as much detail as possible and a way we can contact you if we need more information. Please allow at least one week (7 days) advance notice. Last-minute requests will be accepted but we may be unable to fulfill the request.

Language interpretation services are available upon request. Include in your request the language required and a way to contact you if we need more information. Requests may be made at least one week in advance. It may not be possible to accommodate last-minute requests. Contact the Presiding Officer for more information (contact information below).

**Non-discrimination Notice**

The Siting Board does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, disability, age, sex, income, ethnicity, class, disability, religious creed or belief, gender identity, sexual orientation, genetic information, English language proficiency, or ancestry in administration of its programs or activities. See the Siting Board's Non-Discrimination Notice at: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/efsb-non-discrimination-notice-and-grievance-procedure>.

If you believe that you have been discriminated against with respect to a Siting Board program or activity, you may contact Melixza Esenyie (identified above) to learn how and where to file a complaint of discrimination.

**Contact**

For further information about the proceeding, please contact the Presiding Officer at the address or telephone number below:

Connor Tarr, Presiding Officer  
Energy Facilities Siting Board  
One South Station  
Boston, MA 02110  
[Connor.C.Tarr@mass.gov](mailto:Connor.C.Tarr@mass.gov)  
(617)305-3596

**Project Description**

The Company proposes to expand its existing Blandford Substation located on approximately 2.8 acres of Company owned land at 79 North Blandford Road in Blandford. To accommodate the new and upgraded substation equipment, the fenced yard would be expanded from approximately 0.65 acres to 1.13 acres. Additionally, the Company would remove 4,000 square feet of trees.

The proposed expansion at Blandford Substation includes replacing a 30 megavolt-ampere ("MVA") transformer and a 25 MVA transformer with two 62.5 MVA transformers; installing new foundations, trenching and conduits, a new 23 kilovolt ("kV") switchgear enclosure, two new 115 kV circuit breakers in series, and a new galvanized chain link mesh fence of similar height to the existing fence; and constructing a new access driveway off of North Blandford Road. The Company states that the expansion would be conducted in phases to allow the Blandford Substation to remain in service during construction, and it anticipates that construction would last about 18 months.

According to the Company, the Project, at an estimated cost of \$64.5 million, is needed for the timely and cost-effective development and interconnection of distributed generation, and to maintain a reliable electric power system. The Project is a component of the Company's Capital Investment Project proposal, which the Department of Public Utilities approved, with certain modifications. See **NSTAR Electric Company d/b/a Eversource Energy, D.P.U. 22-52 (2024)**.  
01/22, 01/29/2026

**01243 Massachusetts 01243 or can be sent by mail to the Middlefield Town Administrative Assistant, Mark Doane at P.O. Box 238 Middlefield, MA 01243. Proposals should be clearly marked as such on the exterior of the envelope.**

**RFPs will be opened in the Select Board Office located in the Middlefield Town Hall 188 Skyline Trail Middlefield, MA 01243 on Wednesday February 4, 2026, at 2:00 P. M. A completed Non-Collusive Affidavit, Certificate of State Tax Compliance, completed Reference List, and a completed Commonwealth of Massachusetts Standard Designer Application Form for Municipalities and Public Agencies not within DSB Jurisdiction that is attached are required with the RFP Proposal. Questions should be directed to the Town Administrative Assistant at: [middlefield.assistant@gmail.com](mailto:middlefield.assistant@gmail.com) or by phone: 413-623-2079 Ext. 2. The deadline for questions on the documents is 11:00 A.M. on Monday January 26, 2026.**  
01/15, 01/22/2026

**HUNTINGTON  
Public Hearing  
Wednesday, January 28, 2026,  
at 5:00 PM**

**FY 2024 CDBG Progress  
Hearing, Re-Programming  
Funds Hearing and  
FY 2026 CDBG  
Application Forum**

The Town of Huntington, in association with the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, will conduct a performance hearing regarding the town's ongoing FY24 Community Development Block Grant Programs, Re-programming of remaining funds hearing in the FY24 grant, and a public forum regarding the

FY2026 CDBG application. The hearing will take place at **5:00 PM on Wednesday, January 28, 2026**, in person at the Town Hall, 24 Russell Road, Huntington, MA 01050.

The hearing will review the project funded through the town's FY24 Community Development Block Grant Program including Stanton Avenue infrastructure improvements and how the Town will re-program remaining funds in the grant post completion of construction. This activity received funding through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities, Massachusetts CDBG program.

This hearing will also serve as the first public forum to solicit community input on potential activities to be included in a potential Huntington FY26 Community Development Block Grant application. All community members and stakeholders are invited to share thoughts on potential CDBG-eligible activities to be included.

All persons with questions or comments regarding the performance hearing will have an opportunity to submit comments up until and through the public hearing. Please submit comments to Sarah Maroney at the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission @ [smaroney@pvpc.org](mailto:smaroney@pvpc.org) or 413-781-6045. Persons who require special accommodation should contact the Town prior to the hearing date at 413-667-3500.  
01/15, 01/22/2026

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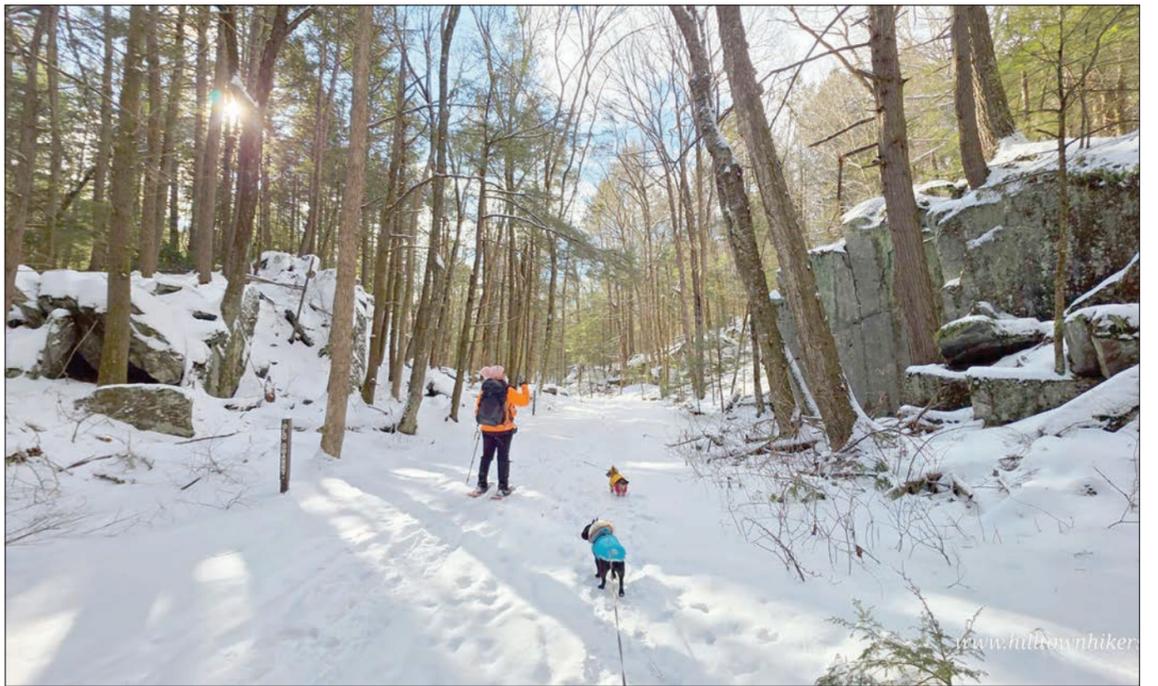
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# HILLTOWN HIKING ADVENTURES



This shows the size of the mill.



This is the old quarry site. Metal and a drill are still stuck in the rock.

Submitted photos

## Hilltown Hikers explore East Branch of the Westfield River

The East Branch of the Westfield River in winter is a unique sight with ice blocks lining the edge.

Western Massachusetts Hilltown Hikers saw animal tracks in the snow and experienced the beauty of the woods in winter. Built in 1848 by Lemuel Baker, a saw mill was erected here at mile marker three on the East Branch Trail in Chesterfield.

The mill used an under-

shot waterwheel to produce its power. A dam was located here but it no longer exists due to raging flood waters on the East Branch of the Westfield River. However metal pins can still be seen on the rocks at the water's edge. After 21 years of use both the dam and mill were destroyed by flood waters in 1869 and were never rebuilt.

The Hilltown Hikers snowshoed and skied along the wild and scenic East

Branch trail along the river with rolling terrain into the Gilbert Bliss State Forest, passing an old quarry site. The trail here in winter is exceptional for cross country skiing and snowshoeing. The group went six miles in and back to the old mill.

A total of eight miles will take hikers into Huntington and the Knightville Dam where in winter it usually floods the trail here. It is shared by snowmobiles and

they packs the snow down to make skiing so great.

The gorge itself is a sight to see with ice everywhere. This trail is a true gem in Chesterfield and is relatively flat. The Hilltown Hikers have hiked the trail in the summer going the entire length to the dam and back. Be aware that the parking lot is not plowed. However next door the snowmobile club has a plowed lot, be sure to leave them a donation for parking there.



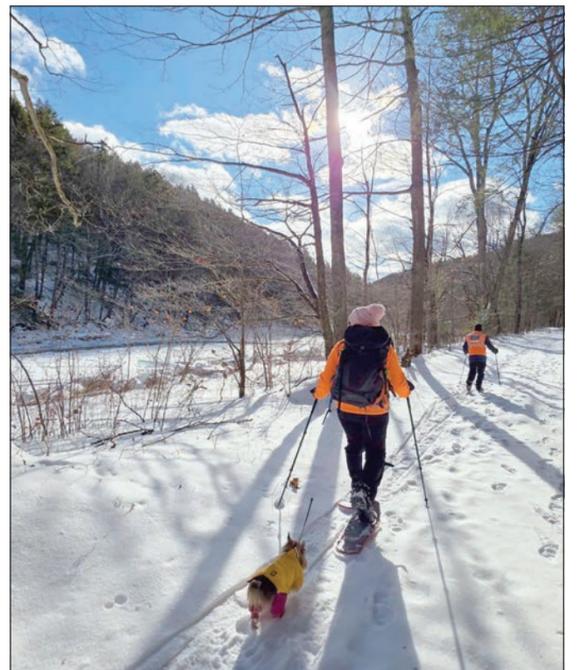
This is where the water passed under to power the mill.



Mushrooms grow on this tree.



Frankie the Frenchie walks along the edge of the gorge. There are cable ropes. But don't let dogs get too close.



Stephanie and Cybil enjoy some sun along the river. It was 16 degrees.

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You must be a self-starter with excellent communication and organizational skills.

Basic computer skills are required.

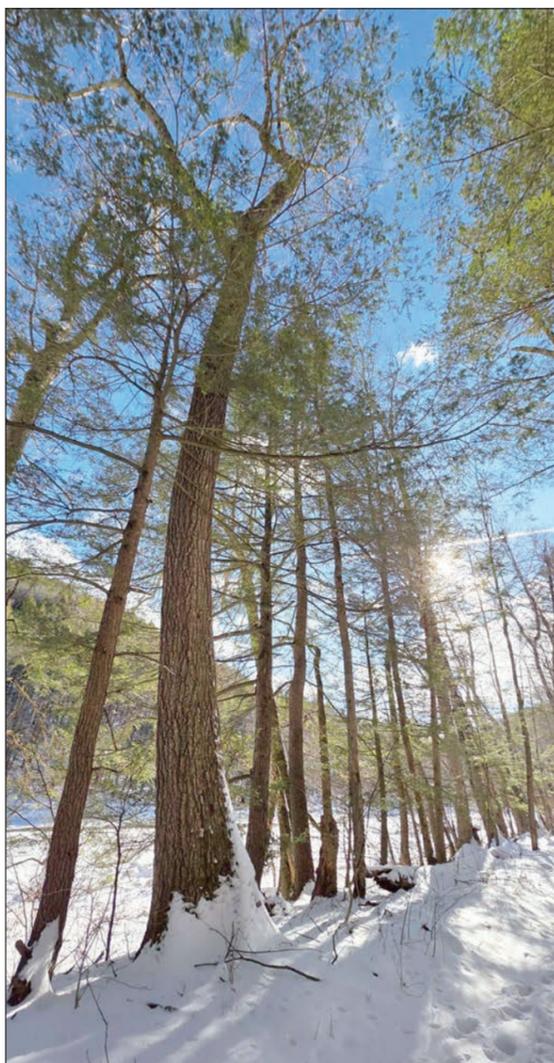
Previous print sales experience is preferred but we will train the right candidate.

Turley Publications, a locally owned family business, offers a competitive commission structure, 401k, and health plan.

Send resume & cover letter to:



Jamie Joslyn  
24 Water Street  
Palmer, MA 01069  
Email:jamie@turley.com



This section of the trail contain some giant old trees.