

Country Journal

Devoted to the Needs of the Hilltowns

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HUNTINGTON

Select Board approve kitchen upgrades

STM to revisit purchase of firetruck

By Wendy Long
Correspondent

HUNTINGTON – The Huntington Select Board heard a proposal from members of the town’s Council on Aging to update the kitchen equipment in Stanton Hall at their July 29 meeting.

Helen Speckels, Nancy Kaminski and Kat Peterson explained the problems they were having with the current oven and stovetop. Speckels said that neither heats up well. It is also difficult to keep the oven at temperature, saying it can drop by up to 100 degrees for no reason.

They requested a larger oven with three racks for cooking at community events such as St. Patrick’s Day and Veterans Day. The women researched their options and recommended purchasing a Frigidaire Professional Series Electric Range they found at Manny’s for a cost with cord and delivery of \$1,703.95.

This slide in model would require a backsplash along the wall behind it, but would offer a true convection oven with a temperature probe and 6.2 cubic feet of oven capacity. It also has self-cleaning and steam cleaning options, a bridge element that connects two

burners for large pots and a bottom oven rack that glides out.

In addition to adding a backsplash, the trio said that the overhead fan in the kitchen needs to be repaired or replaced. A final item that would improve the kitchen would be to remove the steam table and replace it with a mobile heated cabinet.

This not only improves the preparation space and efficiency of the kitchen, but would also ensure maintaining cooked food at a safe temperature. The total of the stove, heated cabinet, delivery and warranties would

total about \$4,000 without the new or repaired overhead fan.

Town Administrator Jennifer Peloquin supported the upgrade and the Select Board Chairman Roger Booth, Rob Drabuik and John McVeigh voted unanimously to purchase the equipment through the Stanton Fund.

A contractor, McVeigh, offered to work with the women to determine a suitable backsplash.

Select Board Chairman Booth said they should have the old stove taken away and not try to sell it secondhand

to defray costs.

If there’s an electrical problem with the stove that causes a fire, the town could be liable. Paperwork for the purchase order will be ready for final approval at the Aug. 12 Select Board meeting.

End of year transfers

Finance Committee members Eric Jensen and Bonnie Boguszewski joined the board with member Thomas Avery Garraon on the phone to review and approve end-of-year transfers for Fiscal Year 2026.

A spreadsheet submitted

UPGRADES, page 3



Turley Publications photo by Wendy Long

Helen Speckels, from left, and Nancy Kaminski from the Huntington Council on Aging met with the Huntington Select Board to request new kitchen equipment at Stanton Hall.

MIDDLEFIELD



Submitted photo

The Middlefield Fair’s cattle show begins at 10:30 a.m. on Sunday, Aug. 16. This year’s fair runs from Aug. 14 – 16.

Middlefield Fair runs Aug. 14-16

By Wendy Long
Correspondent

With a tagline like “an old timey country fair established in 1855,” why would you miss the Middlefield Fair?

Fairgrounds are located at 7 Bell Road. This year’s dates are Friday Aug. 14 through Sunday Aug. 16. Admission is \$10 for adults, \$5 for senior citizens aged 65 and over; veterans and children under 12 are free.

Gates open and the fair officially starts with an opening ceremony on Friday at 4 p.m. Evening activities include Stompin’ Boots for line dancing lessons and dancing from 5:30-8:30 p.m. and fair bingo at 6 p.m. The Ken Boisseau Memorial Diesel Truck Pull kicks off at 7 p.m., with weigh-ins starting at 6 p.m.

Gates open on Saturday, Aug. 15 at 8 a.m.

FAIR, page 7

MIDDLEFIELD

Neal announces \$750,000 federal grant

By Mary Kronholm
Correspondent

U.S. Rep. Congressman Richard E. Neal was at the Middlefield Senior Center Wednesday, July 29 to announce a \$750,000 federal earmark for upgrades and repairs to the center.

The Congressionally Directed Spending requests were available through the Senate and House appropriations committees under the

aegis of the Rural Housing Service with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Neal included the earmark funding for this project in the 2026 spending bill.

Select Board member Curt Robie welcomed the congressman and his staff and spoke about why he sought the funding for the 1900 building. This was a two-year long process with Robie’s energy leading to the accomplishment. “We have

the money...they can’t take it back,” he said.

Robie said that the funds will include the installation of a lift to the second-floor museum, which is not Americans with Disabilities Act accessible. “Almost a whole generation of Middlefield’s nearly 400 residents have not seen it,” he said.

Other necessary ren-

GRANT, page 7



Turley Publications photo by Mary Kronholm

Congressman Richard E. Neal, is shown with Middlefield Select Board member Curt Robie and Town Administrator Evan Kenney.

HUNTINGTON



Submitted photo

Moon Hollow will perform on the Huntington town green on Thursday, Aug. 13 from 6:30-8 p.m.

Moon Hollow performs on Huntington Green

By Wendy Long
Correspondent

Moon Hollow will perform on the Huntington Town Green on Thursday, Aug. 13 from 6:30-8 p.m.

People may bring their own chairs, but keep the pets at home. This four piece string band blends folk, bluegrass and Americana music with a side of jazz.

Moon Hollow played at the Iron Horse last

December with more recent gigs at Berkshire Brewing Company, the Dream Away Lodge and Listons, to name just a few. They are described as a high energy string band, which includes violin, mandolin, upright bass and guitar plus vocals.

Their foot stomping (they also have a mel-low side) music shared the stage with Matt Heckler, Clay Pigeons, Jatoba and the Blind Owl Band, among

others.

The event is free, but bring a little cash to purchase goodies from the Huntington Lions Club. Each week, the Huntington music series has a different local non-profit organization offering food for sale at the concerts, as both a fundraiser and friend raiser.

People may support them by stopping by their

MOON HOLLOW, page 3



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HILLTOWN HIKING ADVENTURES



Any kind of digging on the saw property is difficult because it is full of granite chips.



Jim Moore from Pittsfield is one of the frequent volunteers.



A visitor from Washington D.C. is the first to read the new sign.

Hilltown Hikers install new interpretive sign

CHESTER – The Chester Granite Saw Interpretive Sign #2 is in the ground.

The Chester Cultural Council provided partial funding for this project that will serve generations to come and add to the rich cultural history of the Historic Factory Village.

This is part two of the Western Massachusetts Hilltown Hikers planned full interpretive trail in Chester where people can walk along the paths and revisit the stone cutting history in Chester and granite quarrying in Becket.

The largest granite saw in Massachusetts is at Chester Quarries. In November of 1929, the Chester Granite Quarries, Inc. enlarged its stone cutting mill with a new building and brought in a large 50 horsepower diesel Fairbanks Morse engine, which was used previously by the Chester Electric Light Company to generate electricity.

This, in addition to three electric motors was needed to power the 12-foot saw. It was very loud when the saw was running. It had a variable speed wooden

belt that could change the speed of the saw blade rotation.

The stone would travel slowly on the carriages atop timbers at a regulated speed, under the blade to be cut. It was important to always stop the saw at the end of the day mid-cut as it was much easier to start it up again this way.

The saw cut a block of granite five to six feet in depth at a rate of three inches per minute using the shot method. Steel shot pellets mixed with water was used to cut the stone while the inch and ¾ thick blade served as direction and depth.

The shot mixture would grind and wear away at the rock creating a slit 1 1/4” inches wide in the stone to cut it. They used 100 pounds of shot per day; it was used until worn out.

The shot and water mixture would be caught in the grooves of the teeth of the saw, rolling against the stone to rapidly wear away at the grain. As the shot was discharged by the teeth, it would fall into the trough below into a spiral conveyor to a cross conveyor and then travel up the shot elevator in

scoops on a belt taking it to a higher level to be reused again.

A rubber curtain was used to try to contain the shot mixture from spraying out in all directions.

The saw blade is made of manganese steel, built in Montpelier, Vermont. The teeth are of a soft steel that protects it from rapid wear of the shot.

Lester Williams invented the changeable blades and the lubrication process. If you look closely, at the saw you can see one of those blades is currently missing.

There are a few brand-new teeth on display laying near the saw that were found. The teeth would wear down from cutting and then have to be replaced.

The last man to replace a blade was Leonard Alexander. This equipment here in 1929 far exceeded any other stone cutting operation, the only mill with a saw, and was above and beyond what was needed.

People may view all events, maps, blog and photos by visiting www.hilltownhikers.com. Donations are appreciated. They are a 501c3 non-profit. People may donate by visiting <https://westernmasshilltownhikers.com/donate/> or via Venmo @hilltownhikers. They may also become a member of Western Massachusetts Hilltown Hikers and take part in their adventures every weekend.



Interpretive panel number two is finished.

Submitted photos



Karen, from left, and Liz sweat through the installation on a hot day.

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Send Us Your Community Autumn Events

Turley Publications will print your Summer event **FREE OF CHARGE** in our **Autumn Fest Supplement** which will be published September 9, 2026.
Total circulation of 85,000 which reaches over 200,000 readers in the Pioneer Valley.
Event Should Be Non-Profit & Open to the Public

Deadline for Calendar submissions is August 19.

FREE Calendar Listings Reaching over 200,000 Readers in the Pioneer Valley!!

MAIL YOUR LISTING INFORMATION TO: Turley Publications, Attn: Jamie Joslyn, 24 Water Street, Palmer, MA 01069 or email* them to: jamie@turley.com *Be sure to indicate "Summer Event" in the subject line of your email.

Event Name _____

Date/Time _____

Location _____

Description _____

Cost _____

Contact name & phone number for more information _____

Please specify if you would like your name and number printed in the paper.