

## Hardwick Elementary Budget Looking At 6% Budget Raise

**By Michael Bielowski** — The FY2018 budget numbers are continuing to take shape in the elementary school budget. The latest version of the school's spending comes in under the penalty threshold set by the state for per-pupil spending, with a proposed increase of approximately 6 percent increase.

The penalty threshold is \$17,816 per equalized pupil (a weighted student count based on resources required per student). The actual spending per equalized pupil for FY17 was \$17,407, an approximately

4 percent increase over the prior year. There was an increase in property tax yield of \$9,482, but that number is expected to change as warrants are filed. One big question has been the open enrollment for healthcare and what kinds of plans teachers and staff are going to choose. Penrose said savings have been found here, there and a "cut list" that has been compiled by Penrose and principal Patrick Penrose. The top five items on the list — gas, books, cloud operations software, those things to travel, and new desks and tables — would save an additional

1.3 percent on the tax rate. There was an examination of the upgrade policy for classroom technology devices such as iPads and Chromebooks. Superintendent Joanne LeBlanc said that the professional advice she suggests a 3-to-4 year functional life as an ideal replacement policy. After that, the devices are expected to start to break down.

"You can make it go a little longer if you have to, but at some point we are going to start to notice problems," she said. See **ELEMENTARY, 10**

## Marshfield Takes Action to Control Dogs

**by Will Walters**

which now requires Davis to keep her dogs in a kennel wherever they are not on a leash or in the house. The board will purchase the kennel with funds from the pet control fund.

The board postponed purchasing a new leader until after Town Meeting to see if the voters have questions on the budget before the meeting. There will be no budget item for electronic stop signs or ads, as a speed card has been set up with Route 2.

Penrose will be required for funding on the new Lamberton Road trail race through Green State Park. The board is looking for objections to the use of the road for the race, but will require a permit

for use of the highway for an auto station.

The generator at the town garage is not working. The town is expected to build a new one for \$15,774 for a new generator that has been reserved. The town will seek a hazard mitigation grant for the generator.

Erision control projects were reviewed. The town is looking for a grant for the new Maple Hill Road, Cassidy Road and Highway 108. The town will request for reimbursement will be submitted for the grant for the new road.

Board member Jim Barlow said

that in the event of an emergency, Green Mountain officials should notify the town, but GMP has no responsibility for emergency response. The Fire Department has a plan for responding, but the plan is not in writing. Barlow offered to put the plan in writing, with assistance from the Fire Department.

The plan outlines response measures in the case of an emergency involving the dam at Molly's Falls Pond, which is owned by Green Mountain. The pond is part of the new Molly's Falls Pond State Park.



**March 25th: Vermont's Congressional Delegation Visit Hardwick**

Members of Vermont's Congressional Delegation visited Hazel Union on March 25, 2017. Left to right: Sen. Bonnie Sanders (I-VT), Sen. Patrick Leahy (D-VT), and Rep. Roger Welch (D-VT).

## Select Board Approves COPS Grant for New Police Officer

**by Michael Bielowski**

**HARDWICK** — Pending taxpayer approval on town meeting day, the Hardwick Select Board voted at last week's meeting to accept a \$123,000 grant to help pay for a new police officer.

This is just another chapter in a long-standing debate. For example, during the day shift, the patrol officer should be out on the community working to detect DUI's, working to detect excessive speeds.

Cochran has also detected how the opioid epidemic has affected the town. There was a large drug bust in 2015, during which the police confiscated 60 bags of heroin, \$4,000 in cash, and a 38-caliber revolver.

"You are seeing a huge heroin problem coming into these small towns. When you see that, you see the crime rate go up," Cochran said.

Throughout the year, the select board has been discussing the issue. Chair Eric Henick and member Corey Barbery have each expressed concerns about the cost to taxpayers.

"It's a really big cost," Remick said. "We can also look to address crime in our schools with more opportunities for kids after school, with the library, REACH (the after-school program). Board member Danny Hale has expressed his support for the initiative. The board can measure the results of the program."

To Dow's point, Cochran had said any measure of measuring the cost would likely be experimental.

The U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Community Policing Services (COPS) Program sponsors the grant. The program is open to 75 percent of the entry-level law enforcement officers.

See **COPS, 10**

## Hardwick: Taxes, Fires, Construction, and Cops

### YEAR IN REVIEW

**by Michael Bielowski**

One of the big stories to run under the new ownership concerned select board vice-chair Kathleen Hemmens' decision to step down after seven years of service. Those years translate to over 100 meetings of listening to Hardwick residents talk taxes, roads, floods, economy, and more.

"I really enjoy being on the board," she told The Gazette. "I'm interested in issues I would have never thought I would have been particularly interested in."

Hardwick in recent years has been finding space for business development. Hemmens reiterated as much, based on her experience. "It's definitely a challenge," she said. "Our downtown, which is not a very long downtown, is pretty well established. It's a real problem for Hardwick as it's squished between the river and the mountains, and a lot of what is available is in or near the floodplain. It's very hard to find space for all the entrepreneurs."

See **HARDWICK, 10**

## Hardwick Select Board Debates Public Use of Memorial Building

**by Michael Bielowski**

**HARDWICK** — The select board meeting spent a good portion of a one-hour special meeting listening to director of the Jeanne Marie School, Emily Lannaxer, outline a request for two events to be held on the third floor of the Memorial Building.

The decision the board makes on this policy could set a precedent for future use of the space by other groups, at least as far as physical activities like dance classes go.

One request is for a one-time event for the Mobilization for Polio-eradication group. The group advocates for polio-eradication. The board did not find this event controversial.

The second request stirred up a bit more debate. It was for a dance program that is part of a Buffalo Mountain Co-op learning exchange.

The board would be held twice a month.

Lannaxer stated that those activities are community benefits and should meet the criteria to warrant use of the rooms.

The primary concern is that this is an adult building. There are some paintings and fine art that appear every last time there are some gymnastics-type event up there, that did not end well.

"That's like a museum up there,"

"It just doesn't seem to pay our guys to foot wind into the hole if we want them on the road. Board member Corey Barbery agreed that some form of action is needed."

"I agree we have to do something about this issue. This is the only thing I bought firewood to get out of the house."

The board wants an expert assessment on the building. It can move make an informed decision about the building's approval, but the board also approved Jewett signing loan documents that refund and forgive the interest on current loans. The board also approved the Lannaxer Housing Partnership with the Vermont Housing and Finance Commission. The town temporarily forgave its right to require the building in the event of a bankruptcy, which Lannaxer said he consulted with attorney Bill Davies on the matter.

Jewett said that he wanted only the work before the select board meeting and said we've got to be on our guard.

See **COPS, 10**

## Craftsbury: Building for the Future

### YEAR IN REVIEW

**by June Pichel Cook**

**CRAFTSBURY** — With one glaring exception, 2017 was a quiet year on the political front, but the town made great strides in building for the future.

The many harbingers that bode well for the future include a population fiber optic network, childcare center, growing school potential.

See **CRAFTSBURY, 10**

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**hardwickingazette.com**

**THE HARDWICK GAZETTE AT RITE-AID AND CUMBERLAND FARM IN BURLINGTON, MONTPELIER & MORRISVILLE**

**HAPPY NEW YEAR!**

**Please note: The Hardwick Gazette will not publish on January 3. First edition of the New Year will be on January 10.**

**HAPPY NEW YEAR!**

**WORK IN MONTPELIER? WORK IN YOUR TOWN! THE HARDWICK GAZETTE is now available at the MEADOW MART**

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