

The REPORTER

Brandon • Pittsford • Proctor • West Rutland
Lake Dunmore, Leicester, Whiting, Sudbury

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Town Meeting previews

Budgets near level funding

Guiles, Blais face-off in Brandon race

BRANDON — Brandon residents on Town Meeting Day will be voting on one contested race on the selectboard — the three-year position currently held by Tim Guiles. He will be challenged by Marielle Blais.

Uncontested for one-year seats on the selectboard are incumbents Seth Hopkins and Michael Markowski. Other un-

contested townwide elections feature Courtney Satz for three years as Trustee of Public Funds, David Roberts for two years on the Brandon Free Public Library board, and Bill Moore for one year as Town Moderator.

Voters will also be asked to approve \$3,230,130 for the FY 2023 budget year, of which \$2,712,274 is to be raised by

property taxes. That represents a decline of around 0.1% from the previous year's spending and a decline of just over 1% in amount raised by taxes.

In addition to the \$3.2 million in overall town spending, voters will be asked to approve raising taxes to fund:

- \$7,000, Brandon Indepen-

(See Brandon Town Meeting, Page 2)

Proctor faces contested races, marijuana vote

PROCTOR — Residents of Proctor will meet virtually for an informational meeting on Monday, Feb. 28 at 7 p.m. to learn about and discuss the town budgets and articles, all of which will be voted on via Australian ballot on Tuesday, March 1 at the Proctor Junior/Senior High School Gymnasium at 4 Park Street. Polls will be open from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Residents will vote on the fol-

(See Proctor Town Meeting, Page 2)

Pittsford eyes 3% budget hikes, marijuana vote

PITTSFORD — Like most area residents, Pittsford citizens are encouraged to meet virtually next Monday, Feb. 28 at 6:30 p.m. to learn about the town issues and discuss town matters ahead of Town Meeting Day. Voting by Australian ballot will occur on Tuesday, March 1 between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. at the town fire station.

At Monday's informational meeting, residents will hear and discuss the reports of town of-

(See Pittsford Town Meeting, Page 2)

West Rutland sees no contested races, modest budget hike

WEST RUTLAND — At Town Meeting this year, voters in West Rutland have a full slate of candidates to fill several town and school posts, but no contested races and a town budget with a modest 3.2% increase. Voters will meet virtually on Monday, Feb. 28 at 6 p.m. for a virtual informational hearing and to act on Articles 1, 2 and 3, which act on the reports of town officers, and discuss the town's general and

(See W. Rutland, Page 6)



Monolith

LAST WEEK'S FULL moon was captured perfectly atop the smoke stack at Proctor's Marble Building at 52 Main Street by Proctor photographer Dale Christie.

Pittsford dedicates town report to Barb Willis and Recreation Department

BY ARIADNE WILL

The Town of Pittsford dedicated their annual town report to Pittsford resident Barb Willis and the Pittsford Recreation Department.

Willis — whose community efforts range from work the Pittsford Historical Society to the Pittsford Santa Fund — credited her parents with her commitment to volunteerism.

"My mother and father, Peter and Mary Fox, always instilled in (me), 'Always be helpful to others and your rewards will be many,'" Willis said at the dedication last Wednesday.

Daughter Liz Willis said that her mother has lived up to that ideal:

"A word that comes to mind when I think of her is 'selfless.' She has always cared for others in the community before herself," she said.

Also recognized Wednesday was



BARB WILLIS

the Pittsford Recreation Department.

Jennifer Popp, the current recreation director, was recognized, as well as the Recreation Committee, former Recreation Director Randy Adams — who served in the position for 20 years and who has helped Popp assume the role — the Pittsford Trails Committee and Groundskeeper Joe Pomykala.

"Together, the Recreation Director, Groundskeeper, Recreation Committee, and the Trails Committee do a tremendous job providing programming and lovely areas in which to enjoy the great outdoors here in Pittsford," said Town Man-

(See Dedication, Page 7)

Tax rates stay low

OVUUSD eyes 7.8% budget increase

By ANGELO LYNN

Voters of the Otter Valley Unified Union School District — representing the towns of Brandon, Goshen, Leicester, Pittsford, Sudbury and Whiting — will hold their annual meeting this Wednesday, Feb. 23 at 6:30 p.m. at the Otter Valley Union High School auditorium.

The informational meeting, which will be held in-person with masks required, will allow

voters to hear school directors and officials explain the proposed budget, to elect school district officers, and to conduct other district business prior to voting on the budget via Australian ballot on Town Meeting Day, March 1.

During voting on Town

(See OVUUSD meeting, Page 16)



OVUUSD meeting

(Continued from Page 1)

Meeting Day at the respective town polling locations, voters will elect representatives for the following positions: school directors for three-year terms for Brandon, Pittsford, Sudbury and an at-large seat; one-year remaining of a three-year term representing Leicester and a year remaining of a three-year term. Running for re-election to their seats are Derek Larsen for his Brandon seat; Laurie Bertrand, for her seat in Sudbury; Barbara Ebling for her at-large seat — all are for three-year terms. Other seats were unfilled as of the filing deadline.

Under Article 8, voters will be asked to approve the sale of about 1.98 acres of land and related easements and rights-of-way to the state of Vermont in connection with a Route 7 widening project on the eastern boundary of the Otter Valley Union High School property in exchange for \$6,750. Most of the construction of that project will be south of the OVUHS entrances.

The main order of business at the meeting is to approve the school district's proposed budget of \$22,710,955. That sum

represents spending \$17,048 per equalized pupil, which is 9.72% higher than spending for the current year.

Facts of the budget include the following as presented in the district's annual report:

- Neshobe School includes 11 new PreK tuitioned students; 5 new lottery students and six currently enrolled students;

- Neshobe increases two part-time K para-educators to full-time positions to meet students' needs;

- OCA (Otter Creek Academy, which is Leicester, Whiting and Sudbury elementary schools), reallocates cleaning contracts to an employee custodial position, and increases two part-time para-educator positions to pull-time to meet students' needs;

- OVUHS reallocates SRO contract to middle school health teacher; adds 1.0 vocational educator teacher to support student job placements, adds 1.0 para-educator position to meet students' needs, and eliminates 1 position due to district placement based on student needs.

- No other programmatic changes were needed, the report said, "as we have already right-

sized the district."

The \$22,710,955 budget represents an increase of \$1,657,320, or 7.87% from the current year budget of \$21,053,634. Net educational spending, or the district's taxable budget, is up about 8.16%, but estimated equalized pupils are down by 18.41 students or 1.43%, which is subject to change. The result is that education spending per equalized student is up \$1,511 or 9.72%. However, that is still below the statewide average of \$18,023.

TAX IMPACTS

While spending is up, because the State Tax Yield increased \$1,620, or 14.4%, per student, the anticipated Homestead Tax before applying Common Level of Appraisal (CLA) is \$1,318, or down \$0.55 (55 cents) or 4.02%. What that means is that tax rates will be down compared to the previous year in several district towns, while kept significantly lower than the budget increases in all towns.

The estimated homestead tax rates per district town, and how they compare to last year's rates, are:

- Brandon, current rate is \$1.393 compared to proposed rate of \$1.416, or an increase of 1.69%;

- Goshen, current rate of \$1.470 compared to proposed rate of

\$1.424, or a decrease of 3.12%;

- Leicester, current rate of \$1.417 compared to proposed rate of \$1.413, or a decrease of 0.30%;

- Pittsford, current rate of \$1.450, compared to proposed rate of \$1.438, or a decrease of 0.83%;

- Sudbury, current rate of \$1.255, compared to a proposed rate of \$1.273, or an increase of 1.42%;

- Whiting, current rate of \$1.304, compared to a proposed rate of \$1.389, or an increase of 6.54%.

After the CLA is factored in, the school district noted the fol-

lowing impact of the school budget on district taxes based on a \$100,000 home site:

- Brandon will see an increase of about \$20 per \$100,000 home site;

- Goshen, \$50 increase per \$100,000 home value;

- Leicester, \$0 increase, or no change.

- Pittsford, a decrease of \$10 per 100,000 home value;

- Sudbury, a decrease of \$20 per \$100,000 home value;

- Whiting, an increase of \$90 per \$100,000 home value.



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