

THE CABOT CHRONICLE

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FREE

Serving Cabot
& Surrounding
Communities

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U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
EDDM Retail

Local
Postal Customer

Vol. 18, No. 2 ~ P.O. Box 245, Cabot, Vermont 05647 ~ February 2025

Cabot Post Office Re-Opens



by Jeanne Johnson

Residents saw the door open and the lights on at the Cabot Post Office Saturday morning, January 18. Still pretty bare inside, signs of an ongoing move-in were evident. Dennis Towle clearly has a lot of work ahead of him before he'll be settled in. There were boxes still to unpack and equipment yet to be set up.

Cabot residents deeply appreciate having their post office open again, and are grateful to Lisa Coache at the Marshfield Post Office and Diane Jejer during her last months before retirement from her Cabot position for helping us through these difficult months sharing space at the Marshfield Post Office facility. And thank you to Dennis Towle for bringing us back home. We look forward to settling back in.

Hours will be the same as before the closure:

POB and Lobby Access: Monday-Friday: 24 hours;

Saturday: 24 hours; Sunday 24 hours

Window Retail Service:

Monday-Friday: 7:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m. and 12:00-2:00 p.m.

Saturday: 8-11 a.m.; Sunday closed

Local Bald Eagle



After 250 years, the bald eagle has been declared the national bird of the United States. Rollin Tebbetts photo.

2025 Joe's Pond Ice Out

For the 38th year in a row, the Joe's Pond Association (JPA) is sponsoring the Ice Out Contest. The contest was officially started in 1988 when fewer than 1,000 tickets were sold. The Ice Out has grown significantly in the years since. This past year, over 12,000 tickets were sold. Last year's winner was a gentleman from Danville who received a check for \$6,600 for his guess of 4/14/24 at 4:09 AM. The official time of the Ice Out was 4/14/24 at 4:02 AM. The prize money goes to the person whose guess is closest to the actual time. If more than one person guesses closest, the money is divided among those closest.

The use of the monies collected has remained constant. After expenses are taken out of the total collected, the pot is divided in half, with half going to the winner(s) and half to the Joe's Pond Association. The JPA uses their half for Pond activities such as maintenance of clean waters and the July 4th fireworks.

Tickets are already available for the 2025 contest. Tickets can be purchased online at the Joe's Pond Association website, at Hasting's Store in West Danville or Marty's First Stop in Danville. During the month of February, the Ice Out Committee will make tickets available at local vendors in Cabot, St. Johnsbury, Danville, Marshfield, Barre, and Montpelier. The ticket cost will remain at \$1 per guess.

The device that records the time of the Ice Out will be placed on the ice later this winter.

Michelle Walker

Update on the West Hill Dam

by Karen Larsen, Selectboard Member

The West Hill Pond and the 1820 dam that created that body of water has a rich history of uses ranging from power creation for timber and milling operations, to ice harvesting, to water flow control for a downstream dam in Lower Cabot. As most Cabot residents and many visitors know, the West Hill Pond is also a place of great beauty: fifty-one acres of water, ten to fifteen feet deep, are held back by a historic granite dam reinforced by concrete and a 140-foot earthen embankment. The Pond is fed by drainage from 2.3 square miles of mixed-use land and supports robust aquatic, avian, and mammalian populations. It is a favorite spot for locals and visitors alike and most summer evenings see the presence of kayakers, canoeists, and fishermen. The State of Vermont maintains a public boat launch on the Cabot Road just past the four-corners and the fire departments of both Cabot and Woodbury have had occasion to draw from the dry hydrant on the Coits Pond Road. With the exception of the State boat

launch, the shoreline is privately owned by eleven property owners, the majority of whom are seasonal residents with deep roots in Cabot and a great love for the Pond.

The Dam and earthen embankment has always been privately owned and managed and has never been operated, maintained, repaired, or modified by the Town of Cabot. That tradition of private stewardship continues today, with the West Hill Pond Association taking a leading role in monitoring the dam. A new challenge has, however, emerged in the last two years.

The extreme rainfall of July 2023 and July 2024 brought the full attention of the State of Vermont's Dam Safety Program (DSP) to Cabot. The DSP is a State Agency tasked with monitoring and regulating every non-Federal and non-power dam in the State. Their authority over private dams like the West Hill Pond Dam was confirmed by the Legislature in 2018 and 2020 and protocols that define ownership, assessment, and maintenance standards were defined at that time in State Statute 10 VSA, Chapter 43.

It is important to note, however, that the State's interest in Cabot, and in the West Hill Pond Dam, is not new. The State of Vermont is home to hundreds of historic dams that fall under a variety of ownership structures and maintenance protocols and the State has a role in monitoring dams of all descriptions for public safety reasons. In 2001, the West Hill Pond Dam first attracted the State's attention and was -at that time- rated to be in 'poor' condition. That rating has not changed but in the last two years that 'poor' evaluation was modified with a descriptor: 'high hazard'.

Cabot, as we all know, sustained catastrophic damage in the flooding of '23 and '24. Every major piece of infrastructure (roads, bridges, wastewater systems, public safety infrastructure, municipal and public spaces, etc.) sustained damage. There is now deep and continuing concern on the part of the State's DSP that the West Hill Pond Dam has also sustained damage and that the stresses on the embankment and dam wall -if not addressed- may result in failure and dangerous (see 'West Hill Dam', page 3)

CRITICAL DATES FOR TOWN MEETING DECISIONS

MEET THE CANDIDATES

Thursday, February 6

Meet the Candidates for school board and selectboard 6:00 p.m., Willey Building.

EARLY VOTING BEGINS

Wednesday, February 12

Begins, 9:00 a.m. Town Clerk's Office or call 802-563-2279 to have ballot mailed. Annual Report available - pick up or mailing.

SELECTBOARD INFO. MTG.

Thursday, February 20

Info mtg. on Australian Ballot items. 6:00 p.m. Willey Building Annual Report available on Website: Cabotvt.us.

Q&A FROM CANDIDATES

Saturday, March 1

March edition of the Cabot Chronicle arrives with Q&A from Candidates for Election.

SCHOOL DISTRICT MTG.

Monday, March 3

Annual School District Meeting. 6:00 p.m., Cabot School Performing Arts Center.

IN-PERSON TOWN MTG.

Tuesday, March 4

10:00 a.m. Willey Building Audit. Australian Ballot Voting 7 a.m.- 7 p.m. Town Clerk's office.

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LEGISLATIVE REPORT: Hello Neighbors

Two weeks into the legislative session I can report that six hours of meetings a day is much different than farming. I also have been wearing a suit and tie for the first time since my wedding. But thankfully, I have been appointed to the Agriculture, Forestry, and Food Resiliency Committee where I know all those days that I didn't wear a suit or sit in meetings will pay off.

We have had many introductory meetings with key individuals from various agencies, departments, and political groups with ties to our working lands. In the coming days, we will hear from the Governor with regard to his initiatives on education, housing, affordability, and public safety. I am eager to get to work with my fellow representatives in planning, building consensus, and eventually implementing meaningful legislation that will make a difference for our towns and our state.

"No work is insignificant. All labor that uplifts humanity has dignity and importance and should be undertaken



with painstaking excellence." - Martin Luther King Jr.

Yours, Greg Burt
State Representative for
Peacham, Cabot, Danville

The Cabot Conservation Committee is seeking at least one new committee member this year. The Committee's focus is on informing and educating our community on natural resources and promoting stewardship of those resources, be it healthy forests, fish and wildlife, water quality, or flood and climate resiliency. Our work includes:

- Advising the Planning Commission and Select Board on environmental and natural resource issues of concern to our community.
- Assisting with drafting the natural resources section of the Town Plan.
- Conducting special studies like the ongoing natural resource inventory to catalogue our unique and special natural communities and habitats.
- Sponsoring presentations on conservation topics and field trips such as bird and wildflower walks and visits to special natural communities.

The Conservation Committee meets monthly, the second Monday of the month. Terms are for three years and appointed by the Select Board. If you are interested in becoming a member, please send a letter of interest by **February 21** to gary.gulka@gmail.com.



Conservation Corner

Property Owners May See Listers on the Move

The Town of Cabot Listers will be doing drive-bys of properties in Cabot for the next several months. They will be working to confirm the accuracy of our Grand List records. We will not take any actual measurements on your property without your permission.

However, if you have an active permit and have completed the work, we re-

quest permission to take photos and measurements of the new work to update your property record. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact us at 802-563-3139. If you have new work and are ok with us closing out your permit by measuring any exterior work, please confirm by leaving us a telephone message or email.



ADVICE FROM THE TREE WARDEN

by Roland Payne, Jr.
Cabot Tree Warden

As we welcome the new year, we make resolutions with the hope of positive change. Sadly, most resolutions fizzle out by the end of January. However, climate change continues to escalate, making it imperative to commit to lasting actions to improve the health of our forestlands. As we look forward to 2025, we also understand the possibility of more strong storms is quite high. I am presenting easy projects this month we can all do on our properties to improve the health of the forest ecosystem and make our forests a little more resilient to climate change. Good examples of forestry practices to improve ecosystem health include the following.

- *Removing invasive plants*
- *Forming water bars and correcting erosion*
- *Creating brush piles*
- *Leaving tree stems to decay*

Pulling invasive plants, though not very glamorous, is an activity that benefits the surrounding native plants by reducing competition for space to grow. Native plants provide a more suitable habitat for wildlife. Forming water bars where erosion has become visible and fixing erosion before it becomes a significant problem are both particularly important given the magnitude of the rainstorms of the past two summers and the probability of more in the future. Water

bars also redirect the runoff from heavy rains preventing washed-out gullies and allowing the runoff time to soak into the soil. One project that can be extremely beneficial for wildlife is creating brush piles. Though not our image of a neat, uncluttered world, brush piles provide much-needed cover for small animals. As the brush pile decays the nutrients will slowly release into the surrounding soil. Another practice beneficial to forest health is leaving large sections of tree stems on the ground to slowly decay. Eventually, these tree stems will become a suitable habitat for rodents, insects, invertebrates, and other organisms until fully decomposed. Leaving woody debris on the forest floor to rot slowly improves the soil quality as it decays, full decomposition of the woody debris will require ten years or more. Each of the forest improvement project examples given are work items which most people can undertake with only simple hand tools.

Whether you have a small yard or a larger forested area, committing to these forestry projects is a meaningful resolution for the new year. By making steady progress, you can see visible results and contribute significantly to the health of our forest ecosystems. Visit these organizations' websites for more information and to participate in workshops, to enhance your forestry knowledge in 2025: vtcoverts.org, northbranchnaturecenter.org, northernwoodlands.org, and vermontwoodlands.org.

How to Love a Forest

by Dawn Andrews

Vermont forester and author Ethan Tapper will be speaking at the Willey Building on February 25 at 6:30 pm about his book *How to Love a Forest*. The book describes the evolution of his relationship to his own forest from discouragement and doubt that it could ever recover from decades of extraction and mismanagement to the realization that he can and is helping it become a healthy, resilient forest once again. (Learn more at EthanTapper.com)

Ethan is an engaging speaker and his book is an enjoyable and thought-provoking read. In addition to Ethan's talk, which you can enjoy without having read the book, there will be two discussions of the book at the library, one on Wednesday the 19th at 6:00 pm and another on the 20th at 2:00 pm. Copies of the book are available at the Library.

These programs are sponsored by the Cabot Public Library and the Cabot Conservation Committee. Ethan's talk will also be live-streamed thanks to Seth's Computers. Watch for details on Front Porch Forum.

We appreciate your cooperation in keeping the Grand List correct, which we hope will allow us to delay the expense of an expensive future townwide reappraisal. The more out of sync our Grand List data is with what is actually on the ground, the sooner a full reappraisal will be ordered by the State.

Cabot Board of Listers
Jeanne Johnson, Jacqueline Lumbr
and Brittany Butler
802-563-3139 ~ Listers@Cabotvt.us

TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE CLOSED February 19, 2025

PRESIDENTS
DAY



THE CABOT CHRONICLE

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Cabot Chronicle Mission Statement: The Cabot Chronicle is a home-delivered newspaper devoted to telling the story of the Cabot community.



Planning Commission Opening

by Betty Ritter, Town Clerk

The Cabot Planning Commission has two openings. The Planning Commission oversees the Town Plan, Zoning Regulations, reviews municipal grants, and prepares the Capital Budget. They meet on the first Monday evening of

every month. If you are interested in joining the Planning Commission, please submit a letter of interest to Betty Ritter, Cabot Town Clerk either by mail (P. O. Box 36, Cabot, VT 05647), email (tc@cabotvt.us), or dropping off a letter of interest by February 17, 2025.

Community Contra Dance on Feb. 14

by Karen Mueller-Harder

On Friday, February 14, come celebrate Valentine's Day at the Cabot Community Contra Dance, featuring the delightful calling of Erin Smith! The dance takes place in the lovely third floor space in the Willey Building (Cabot Town Hall, 3084 Main Street), from 7-9:30 pm. Live music is provided by a great group of local musicians--feel free to just come and listen if you prefer!

Bring someone you love, or come alone, to enjoy the sense of community that this evening has each month! All ages and abilities are welcome, and we all dance with each other. We use genderless terminology and all dances are taught, and easy to learn, but if you've never been to a contra, you are

encouraged to arrive right at 7:00, as we will start with the simplest dances, and then we'll build upon what you learn throughout the evening.

Admission is on a sliding scale, \$5-10 suggested, but nobody is turned away for lack of funds! Water is provided, or bring your own water bottle. Masks are welcomed but not required, and we ask that you bring some clean, dry shoes to change into for dancing.



Numbers R Us Tax Services

**Let me handle the numbers
so you can focus on what matters most.**
Monthly Budgeting, Bill Management & Checkbook Balancing
Personal Income Tax Returns • Full-Service Accounting
Valerie Sargent
802-745-9026 • St. Johnsbury, VT
valsarg_NumbersRUs@outlook.com

West Hill Dam

(continued from page 1)

downstream flooding if we continue to experience extreme rainfall events. The DSP has visited Cabot several times in the last two years, the most recent inspection was in August of 2024, and we expect to see the dam safety engineers return to Cabot with the Spring thaw to offer an assessment and potentially launch a process of mitigation to ensure the safety of downstream residents and property owners. That mitigation may involve, as a first step, lowering the level of the water of the West Hill Pond by approximately two feet to take pressure off the dam wall and offer a better opportunity for assessment and potential repair.

This is a complicated moment for people who know and love the West Hill Pond. The current dam owners, as understood by the State of Vermont under the DSP Statutes, are disputing both their ownership and responsibilities for dam maintenance with the help of a legal counsel. The Town of Cabot has reserved \$20,000 in public funds -drawn from State resiliency funding- to help jump start necessary repairs once a 'way forward' is established, but has no power to intervene or direct work, as the West Hill Pond Dam and embankment is privately owned and not under the control

of the Town. The Selectboard's liaison (Karen Larsen) to the DSP, the West Hill Pond Association, and the owners of the Dam is also working with members of the Cabot Fire Department, the Cabot Ambulance, our Emergency Management Director Jenn Miner, and Incident Commander Bob Burke, to finalize an Emergency Action Plan (EAP) which details the emergency response of the Town should there be a significant failure at the West Hill Pond Dam. Although we have **no expectations of imminent failure**, an EAP is a requirement of the DSP for dams that are listed as 'high hazard'. Residents and property owners downstream of the West Hill Pond can expect informational letters about emergency notification planning and recommendations for emergency response in the coming weeks as a final 'piece' in the development of Cabot's EAP.

The West Hill Pond is a treasure, and much beloved, but we find ourselves in a moment of challenge and difficult choices regarding the future of the Dam and the water behind it. At this moment, that future can only be directed and decided by the private owners that surround the Pond, but the Town stands ready to help with designated resources to support those who steward the Pond and Dam once they determine their direction.

PLAINFIELD ARTS PRESENTS

SPENCER LEWIS & PAPPY BIONDO

CELEBRATING THE RELEASE OF LEWIS' LATEST ALBUM, *OF SPIRIT & FRIENDS*, A COLLECTION OF BALLADS COMMEMORATING THOSE CLOSE TO HIM WHO HAVE PASSED AND BACKWOODS ANTHEMS OF LIFE CLOSE TO THE LAND.

PLAINFIELD OPERA HOUSE

\$20 SUGGESTED DONATION
TICKETS AVAILABLE ONLINE AND AT THE DOOR

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 16
DOORS AT 3:30 | CONCERT AT 4:00 PM

Spencer Lewis' introspective, old-time, grass-tinged songs are driven by his inimitable cross-flat-picking guitar style and Biondo's epic banjo riffs, which weave and climb in a swirl of melodic tonal modality.

PLAINFIELDARTSVT.ORG

Plainfield Arts is supported in part by a generous grant from Vermont Arts Council

PAUL COPPING

is turning 90!

You may remember him from E. Montpelier, E. Barre, delivering oil, sealing your driveway, driving the school bus or working at the Spaulding Career Center.

Family & Friends
Join us for an open house to celebrate his big day!

March 1, 2025
Canadian Club
Rte 14 - Barre, VT
1:00-5:00 pm

If you have any photos to share (they will be returned), please send them to
Tammy Cookson
PO Box 72
Cabot, VT 05647



OBITUARIES

Rhett J. Fitzgerald



Rhett James Fitzgerald, 36, of Hyde Park passed away unexpectedly on Friday, January 3, 2025. Rhett was born on August 31, 1988, to Rhett Kellogg Fitzgerald and Shelley Ann Corliss.

He was a graduate of Cabot High School and will be remembered for his love of sports and snow machines.

Rhett is survived by his mother, Shelley Corliss, his grandparents Sharon and David Davis of Hyde Park, Marion Morrison of Cabot, Anthony and Alicia Fitzgerald of Hyde Park, aunts and uncles Wendy Davis of Hyde Park, Tammy Christman and Scott St. John of Cabot,

Mindy Fitzgerald, Danielle Fitzgerald, April Fitzgerald, Monica Fitzgerald and Tony Fitzgerald all of Hyde Park, and Randy Fitzgerald of Morrisville, his sister-in-law Chelsea Roberts and nephew Jesse Ray Fitzgerald. He also leaves behind cousins Marissa, Vanessa, Audrey, Kenneth Christman of Barre, John Christman of South Burlington, Ashley Hill of Eden, and many other cousins as well as good friends John and Darlene McFarlane. He was predeceased by his father Rhett Kellogg Fitzgerald, his brother Jesse Shane Fitzgerald, and grandfather Keith Morrison.

A graveside service will be held in the spring at Plains Cemetery in Hyde Park with a date and time to be announced. Please check back at dgfunerals.com for updated information.

Larry Gochey



Larry Fred Gochey born to Virginia (Chandler) and Fred Gochey on August 9, 1947, passed away at home with family on January 15, 2025, after a decline in health.

Larry attended school in Cabot, later graduating from the St Johnsbury Trade School in 1966. Larry was all about cars – fast cars in his early years – including drag racing at Milton Speedway. He attended Barrett Jackson car auctions in Arizona several times with his son Timothy, his grandson Shane and his good buddies. His life revolved around auto mechanics. His first job was as an apprentice at Vinton Motors, later opening his own business, Larry & Son, in 1976. He later moved his business to Marshfield, running the Exxon Mobile station, and retiring in 2011. During that time, he loved operating his wrecker and enjoyed rescuing cars and their drivers.

He loved to meet new people and visit, which led to the purchase of Larry & Son Campground in Marshfield, which he and Cherry ran from 1993 through 2000. After his retirement, he and Cherry wintered in Florida from 2011 – 2016, keeping his interest fueled with meeting new people.

He loved Cabot and served it well as a selectman and serving on other commit-

tees. He was very proud of the appearance of the village and worked to keep things looking good. He was an active member of the Cabot Historical Society, always working to raise money for their projects.

He is survived by his wife of 58 years, Cherry, his son Timothy and Jennifer Gochey, his granddaughter Kelly (Sid) Griggs – great grandchildren Sidney, Caroline and Oliver Griggs, his grandson Shane (Brooklyn) Gochey – great grandchildren Kinsley, Charlie and Baby Gochey to arrive any day, his sister Rosemarie Lamore and her family, two aunts, many cousins and an abundance of friends.

He is predeceased by his parents, Virginia (Chandler) and Fred Gochey, his uncle Clarence Gochey, brother in law Morris Lamore and his good buddies – Raymond, Keith, John, Albert, Craig, Phil, Paul and George.

Arrangements are in the care of the desGroseilliers Funeral Home in Hardwick. Calling hours and the funeral service will be scheduled for some time in February; those details will be forthcoming once scheduled. Please check back at dgfunerals.com for updated information.

Memorial contributions may be made in memory of Larry to Streeter-Trafton Scholarship Fund Attn: Alan Langmaid, 286 Rabbit Plain, St Johnsbury, VT 05819, or Cabot Historical Society, PO Box 275, Cabot, VT 05647.

Vene W. Harding

Vene Warren Harding, 91, passed away on November 26 in Zephyrhills, FL.

Vene was born on August 9, 1933, in Brattleboro, VT. He graduated from Lyndon State Teachers College, where he met and married his wife, Ann Harding. Ann and Vene were married for 67 years, and were seasonal residents of Cabot for many years.

Vene worked in the Tolland, CT, public school system for over 40 years. He

started as a teacher and became the Principal of the Middle School in Tolland.

Upon retiring, Vene moved to Colorado, where he skied into his 80s. Vene then moved to Zephyrhills, FL, where he spent the remainder of his years with his wife Ann.

Vene is survived by his brother Howard Harding, son Joel Harding, daughter Jill Loucks and grandson Samuel Harding. No services are planned at this time.

How to say “I love you” or “Beware my revenge” in flowers

by Susan Socks, of Garden Goddess Consulting and Gardening

Many of us associate flowers with meanings: for example, red roses for passion, or poinsettia for Christmas. But a couple hundred years ago, the Victorian flower language, known as floriography, took things to a really extreme level. Flowers and plants were arranged and sent to others, not necessarily to look pretty, but to convey specific messages. And it wasn't always nice messages, either.

As an example, a suitor might send a bouquet of red roses (passion), snowdrops (hopeful), and cabbage leaves (profit), which could be interpreted to mean “I have a great passion for you, and I hope you will accept me. I'll make you a wealthy woman.” In return, the recipient might send an arrangement of daffodils (narcissism) and striped carnations (no thanks). I don't think I need to translate that any further for you.

Literature and art of the period picked up on floriography as well. Authors would place floral descriptions in their narratives, assuming that their audience would understand that they weren't just talking about flowers but about their meaning as well. When Charlotte Bronte writes of Jane Eyre observing snowdrops and crocuses, it's likely that she was both painting a bucolic scene for her readers while also conveying the floriographic meanings of hope (snowdrops) and cheerfulness

(crocus).

Floriography was most fervently practiced by very wealthy aristocrats, who had plenty of time and resources. It took huge gardens or even glassed-in conservatories (complete with staff), to have the flowers on hand to convey complex messages. You would need a deep botanical education to be able to correctly identify hundreds of plants. Additionally, you would need a floral dictionary (or several) to assemble messages, and to decode incoming arrangements. And most likely, you'd want to keep a messenger around, to deliver your bouquets.

In the aftermath of World War I, floriography fell out of favor. People put their time, efforts, and wealth to other pursuits. As fads go, floriography had a pretty good run of about 200 years. Better than pet rocks, for sure. By the way, are you wondering how to say “beware my revenge?” That would be oleander and bird's foot trefoil. But let's be good to each other, and stick to things like a bouquet of lupins, hollyhocks, and white heather: “I find you witty and clever, and I wish you all the best in your endeavors.” Happy gardening!

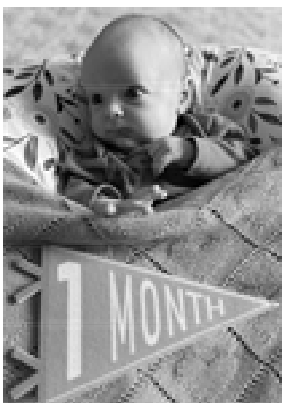
This garden article is brought to you by Susan Socks, aka the Garden Goddess. Stay tuned for upcoming articles on green lawn care, pruning, garden tools, edible landscapes, and more. For gardening help, visit the Garden Goddess page at www.SocksFamilyFarm.weebly.com, email gardengoddess802@gmail.com, or



BIRTH ANNOUNCEMENT

Elsie Rose Dunster

Born December 27, 2024,
10:52. a.m.
5 pounds 15 ounces
18"



WEDDING, ENGAGEMENT & BIRTH ANNOUNCEMENTS ARE FREE IN THE

THE CABOT
CHRONICLE

Wedding, engagement and birth announcements and photos should be received within two months of the event by digital submission no later than the 15th of the month emailed to Inbox@CabotVermont.org.

Through The Cabot Chronicle, the CCA promotes their mission to enhance the quality of community life for those residing, doing business, and visiting Cabot, VT. One aspect of that mission is to empower Cabot residents to participate in the governance and management of our town.

The Chronicle is dedicating a staff writer to cover selectboard and other meetings, for the purpose of keeping community members informed about issues discussed at meetings they might not be able to attend. Most meetings are available via Zoom for those who would like to listen in person. Instructions for joining meetings virtually through Zoom are posted regularly on Front Porch Forum, or you can call the Town Clerk's office for details at 563-2279. Digital Recordings of selectboard meetings are available on the Town website, CabotVT.US by clicking on "Selectboard Meetings."



SELECTBOARD UPDATES

Town Budget Discussion

by Frank Kampf, Staff Writer

The Selectboard held their last budget specific board meeting on December 19. At this meeting they reviewed the entire budget again in an attempt to identify line items they could cut to reduce the budget.

The discussions started with the \$3000 request from Cabot Arts, with Mike Hogan noting that the board agreed to take it out of the Cabot specific appropriations. R.D. Eno asked if they also agreed to keep the Fairbanks Museum request in the special appropriations. Mike said he thought it was easier to keep it in there and take it out later. R.D. noted that it wasn't a separate item, and the museum can petition to have people vote on it separately. He said he was comfortable taking it out. Karen Larsen agreed.

Amy Monahan, the Town Treasurer, told the board that a few more appropriation requests came in and without the Fairbanks Museum request, the total was \$21,385. R.D. pointed out that the Cabot appropriations would go down to \$63,250 without Cabot Art's request, and asked how many additional non-Cabot appropriation requests were received. Amy said there were a couple small ones and the Twin Valley Senior Center request increased from \$3,500 to \$5,000.

Mike reminded the board that it was still a draft budget. He then said they should put in a line item for a grants manager, at the bottom of the sheet and include \$5,000 as a placeholder. He mentioned that Plainfield was also talking about the need for a grant writer at their last meeting.

The board then discussed the constable and pound keeper line items. R.D. pointed out that they haven't spent the \$500 for each line item, but Fred Ducharme noted that it depended upon the year. R.D. said that it was a lean year and he wanted to reduce the budget overall, and should only budget for the money they actually need. Fred said there is a difference between being frugal and realistic.

The board then discussed the emergency management position, but the discussion quickly changed to the West Hill Pond Dam. Karen told the board that Bob Burke has volunteered to be the emergency response manager for the dam. She said he is going to need a radio, but noted the fire department is tapped for radios. She added that Bob's role, should the dam fail, would be to execute the action plan and be the central liaison.

Will Ameden told the board that a radio would cost a couple thousand dollars. Mike asked the board what they thought, and Fred responded that he thought the town should pay for a radio.

Mike suggested they asterisk the line item and move on.

The next line item discussed was emergency transport. Mike said that there was talk of dropping it to \$40,000. Fred wasn't comfortable with that and noted that everyone knows costs have gone up. He added that they gave Cabot Ambulance \$40,000 last year and \$45,000 this year is realistic. Karen said she was struggling with that because they were not able to present a budget.

Fred reiterated that the board is trying to get the Fire Department and Cabot Ambulance to work together, and the board asked the Fire Department if it's enough when they made their request. He said that he didn't think \$45,000 was a lot, and if they were to go with someone else it would be a lot more. Karen pointed out that the Fire Department gave the board a budget. Fred responded that when they become part of the town, then they can provide a budget.

Mike told the board that they can put \$45,000 in the budget contingent on receiving a budget. R.D. said he was comfortable putting in \$40,000 and making them produce a budget for the extra \$5,000.

Mike then moved on to the Fire Department and told the board that their budget was tweaked the other day. He reminded the board that the budget includes the FAST squad. Dean Deasy told the board that he was concerned because the funding for the Fire Department did not include a sinking fund. Dean added that if the board felt the proposed amount was appropriate, then they will have to make ends meet. He then reviewed some anticipated expenses and possible grant funding sources.

Mike reminded Dean that they were not finalizing anything that night. Dean told the board that their hot topic is radios and said they were down to four from the original nine. Mike asked Dean to get back to the board after Christmas with a number. Fred said they should be including the money for radios in the budget since it was a safety issue for firefighters. He asked Dean how many they should have?

Dean responded that a minimum was eight, but that ten would be better. Kris Schmitt also said that the FAST squad needs radios. Mike asked Dean if they changed the amount back to \$122,900 if there would be enough for radios. Dean answered that it would cover four additional radios.

The board moved on to other line items, zeroing out the health officer line item. Then they came to the library line item. Mike said the Library Trustees proposes \$121,000 and R.D. suggested they trim it back to level funding at \$117,000. Kurt Steinart, a Library Trustee, said to the board that the budget is

level funded except for salary increases.

Fred reminded the board that if they level fund it, the trustees will petition for an article which the town always passes. R.D. declared that his responsibility as a Selectboard member is to present the least expensive budget to the voters. He added that if the voters want to add the additional money on top of that, then they can do that. R.D. reiterated that it is a very lean year and he wasn't prepared to ask the voters for more than they need.

Fred said that he has a different view, and said he believed they are supposed to listen to the community. He noted that they represent the community, and the voters always support the library, so why fight the library?

R.D. reminded Fred that they no longer have a town meeting where people can change the budget. He noted that this is the downside to Australian ballot. Karen said that she thought it was illustrated when the youth librarian was added. It was originally grant funded, but since then the town has voted twice to keep the service. She expressed that is why they want voters to come to the informational meeting.

Kurt told the board that level funding is a cut. Mike responded that it was the trustees budget and they can move money around. Karen added that they are just setting a figure and if the figure is too low the trustees can take it to the voters.

Maria Acchione Goodrich asked the board if the majority of people at the meeting on the 23rd support the library, will the Selectboard change its mind? R.D. reiterated that the trustees are free to submit a petition. Maria pointed out that a petition is due on the 16th, and the meeting is on the 23rd, so it becomes a moot point.

R.D. respond by saying the board has to haggle over stipends for grant writers that put in 20 hours a week. Maria asked if the Fire Department budget was at rock bottom, too.

The board moved on to the recreation committee and noted that the board had previously dropped their request from

\$12,000 to \$10,000. He also noted that the line item for the Ash Borer was being dropped from \$13,000 to \$10,000.

Mike then went on to the Willey Building budget. Fred said they need to replace the entrance roof and need to replace the circulation pump. Mike noted that with those additional expenses the total was \$87,400. R.D. wondered what the other major expenses were because that represented a \$33,000 increase.

Amy explained that the previous budgets did not account for payroll and cleaning. Karen asked if there was an increase in cleaning services. Betty said that the building is being used a lot more, and people do not know how to clean it for the next person. She added that Shirley is doing a little more cleaning to make it right.

Fred pointed out that the building was the centerpiece of the town and needs to be maintained so it is welcoming. He noted that is why they blacktopped the parking lot.

After a little more discussion about the Willey Building, Mike asked Amy to plug in the new numbers. Amy recounted, leave the library at \$177,000, decrease ambulance to \$40,000 and increase the Fire Department to \$122,900. R.D. added the increase to special appropriations (non-Cabot appropriations) and the \$5,000 for grants manager.

Amy then said the total was \$939,567. Mike noted that was a 13.8% tax increase. R.D. said they started with a budget that was an 18% increase. Amy said that she lives in Marshfield and the Selectboard there had a goal to keep the increase under 10%. She said they ended up with an 8.5% tax increase.

She then listed the highway fund as \$1,918,279, and adding in the anticipated income she calculated the total tax rate would be \$0.5676. Mike said his taxes would go up \$171.

Mike told the board they could reduce the rate further by using part of the fund balance, noting it was \$184,865 through to the end of fiscal year 2024. He added that they need to figure out what is needed for the Fire Department.

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SCHOOLBOARD UPDATES

School Budget Discussions

by Frank Kampf, Staff Writer

The school board continued discussing the school budget at the December 17 meeting after a discussion of the technical center budget and tuition. Matt Foster, superintendent, told the board that while they were preparing the slides they were receiving updates from the state. He stated that the proposed budget was just a snapshot of the current point in time. He noted Mike Concessi was saddened that he couldn't be present to share the good news.

Matt explained that Mike had to make a couple updates to the budget for two items, totalling a \$41,000 increase. Matt added that the state had revised the Long Term Average Daily Membership (LTADM) downward to 313 from 318. He pointed out that the per LTADM cost of the proposed budget was \$14,285 and the excess threshold was \$15,927. The other factors set by the state were the CLA, which was 96%, resulting in a proposed tax rate of \$1.25. The tax rate last year was \$1.34, and the proposed budget would result in a 7.5% decrease.

Chris Tormey asked what happened to cause a decrease in the LTADM? Mat explained that the state said they were scrubbing the numbers, and that was all he knew. Matt added that the proposed budget still included the \$500,000 loan which is proposed to be reallocated for facility repairs. Matt also relayed a proposal from Mike to include the \$500,000 into the budget instead of taking out a loan.

Matt said that would result in a tax rate of 1.39. Chris noted that would be a \$0.05 increase. Chris said he did not advocate for that proposal since the town accepted such a "heavy lift" from the tax increase last year. Chris added that it would be good to know how much interest they would be paying on a loan.

The slides presented to the board also showed the income sensitivity tax rate would reduce from 2.76% to 2.33%, and that approximately two-thirds of the households in Cabot pay that rate. The slides also showed that the non-residential rate would increase from \$1.32 to \$1.34.

Since the numbers from the state were still going to change, the board decided to postpone approving the budget until January, and met again on January 15. This time Mike was present to provide more detail on the changes and possible options for the board to consider.

Mike started the discussion by explaining they had received some unfavorable changes to the LTADM from the state. He noted that he had brought the change to the attention of the Agency of Education (AOE), and requested the data be fixed. He said it appeared like a student had vanished into thin air.

He reviewed the changes in the LTADM he has received from the state. On December 2, the LTADM was 323,

then it was reduced to 313.88 on December 16. He said the latest number he received on January 13 was 311.94. Mike went on to explain that every \$45,000 to \$50,000 moves the "needle" and each student represents about \$30,000. He explained the latest change increased the tax rate from \$1.26 to \$1.27.

Mike told the board he believed the state would change the number back to 313.88, but he was presenting the most conservative numbers on his slides. Mike also explained the two budget increases presented to the board at the last meeting.

He said the first was interest on a loan for an obsolete piece of equipment. Mike told the board he added \$20,000 to the budget to retire the wood chip plan loan early. He also told the board that interest rates have been changing and caused his earlier calculation on the cost of the \$500,000 loan to be off by \$10,000. Both of these changes made up the bulk of the increase to the budget proposal.

Mike pointed out to the board they are looking at a \$0.07 decrease in the tax rate. He then talked to the board about alternative options to taking a \$500,000 loan. He said they could just add the \$500,000 to the budget for the repairs, or even add that amount and also take the loan. Both options would keep the tax rate relatively flat.

Ellen said she wanted to share some thoughts. She explained that she felt the board had floated the idea of a union high school, but the sustainability committee said they were not interested in the idea. Ellen said that after listening to Governor Scott's inauguration speech, she thinks there are some big changes coming. Ellen said she was hesitant to spend a lot of money on buildings that might not be used in the future due to changes driven by the state.

The board then discussed with Jennifer Blake the cost estimates she had for doing some of the necessary repairs. Jennifer relayed that the cost for the satellite building roofing was estimated at \$74,000. And repairs to the metal edging on the main building roofing was estimated at \$19,000. She also talked about fixing the front of the building, as well as the side towards the church and around to the ramp, which was estimated at \$39,000.

Chris asked if there was an estimate on improving the insulation in the roof of the main building, and Jennifer said they had not looked at that. Mike pointed out that they could spend millions on the campus, but these three items total about \$160,000. He suggested another budget option was to include that amount in the budget and not take out a loan.

Ellen said that she liked the idea of not paying interest, and thought that would be fiscally responsible. Alicia Heber said that they should be thinking of the future and put their best foot forward. She said that she agreed with

Ellen that changes are on the horizon.

Chris said the board should be frugal given the size of the tax increase last year. He advocated the board make the impact on the taxpayers as small as possible, and take out the loan. He felt that they had asked the voters to accept a large tax increase last year, and the board should be telling them the tax impact will be lessened this year. Chris then proposed that they could take out a smaller loan.

Ellen restated the options, taking out a \$250,000 loan and keeping a tax decrease of about 7%, or adding \$250,000 into the budget. Mike changed the numbers in his spreadsheet and the

addition of \$250,000 showed a tax reduction of \$0.01. He said if the LTADM returned to the previous number, it would be a \$0.02 reduction.

Mike added that if the board didn't spend all of the \$250,000 they could carry it forward, or restock the capital fund. Chris reiterated his position and Ellen said that they didn't have to decide tonight.

Matt said that the change in state law regarding the wording of the warning requires the LTADM, and they can't finalize the warning anyway. He suggested that next Thursday would be fine to meet again.

Technical Center Tuition

by Frank Kampf, Staff Writer

The school board continued discussing the school budget at their last meeting of the calendar year on December 17. The first topic related to the budget, though indirectly, was a presentation by Jody Emerson, Director and Superintendent of the Central Vermont Career Center School District (CVCCSD), commonly referred to as the technical center.

Jody explained that the CVCCSD board decided to fund a level services budget. She noted that it might change on the 13th of January if some programs have too low of enrollment, adding that service will only go down, not up.

She then went on to explain that the CVCCSD board came up with three goals. The first being long term planning to serve all eligible students. Jody reminded the Cabot board that the current facilities prevent this goal from being realized. She noted that they are seeing more applicants every year, and added they are looking at several sites for relocating and building a new facility.

Jody explained that the second goal was to improve education quality. She noted that they are measured by federal law, and all the programs have been improved to facilitate students achieving credentials or credits.

She then talked about the third goal which was community engagement. Jody explained that is why their board meetings are now being held in each of the sending towns, and noted that more people are attending.

Ellen Cairns asked about which grades the technical center serves. Jody responded that it is typically 11th and 12th grades, but there is an exploratory program for 9th and 10th graders. Jody was also asked about how many Cabot

students are attending and how that factors into the tuition rates. She explained that they use a six semester average.

Jody went on to explain that the base education rate they are receiving went down 3%, which impacts the amount of money they receive from the education fund. She noted that they receive a tuition reduction grant which has also been reduced. Jody concluded her explanation by saying the tuition rate they have to charge sending schools will increase 9.7%, to \$20,738.

She then relayed that the CVCCSD board decided on a 10.8% increase in the budget to be able to provide the same level of services. The board and Jody discussed some of the changes in the budget and how everything factors into the tuition rate. Then Ellen asked what tuition Cabot pays. Jody answered that it was based upon the six semester average, not the current number of students attending.

Chris Tormey asked what portion of the student cost is paid for by the tuition charged to the sending school. Jody replied that it was about 50%. She said all the calculations are set by the legislature.

The subject turned from the tuition rate to the search for a new location and the prospects of building a new center. Jody explained she could share a little bit of information, and described that they had been looking at land and found a potential site. She said the overall project will cost between \$150 million and \$200 million, and the cost of the land is less than a million dollars. She added that they would not pay for the land without a bond vote, which all 18 sending towns would vote upon.

Budget, Cabot Commons, CCIF and Town Meeting

by Jeanne Johnson

About 45 community members gathered on January 23 in person and another 13 on Zoom to review four Articles from the Warning to be voted on at Town Meeting on March 4, asking questions, voicing opinions, and taking advantage of the last opportunities to request changes in the budget. The gathering was organized by a group of residents working to make Town Meetings productive and responsive to the community.

- Cabot Commons Senior Housing board members explained their request for forgiveness of the remainder of a UDAG loan, which is supported by the CCIF (former UDAG) Board.
- The selectboard presented a proposal to revise the CCIF Plan to enable selectboard direction of economic development funds, which the CCIF Board felt was unnecessary and did not support.

(see *Budget & Town Meeting*, page 11)

This is the proposed revised Plan to be voted on at Town Meeting 2025, Australian Ballot Article 11. The CCIF Plan this would replace if approved can be found at www.Cabotvt.us/Boards & Meetings/Cabot Community Investment Fund/CCIF Plan—Revised March 2019.

CABOT COMMUNITY INVESTMENT PLAN 2025

INTRODUCTION

The Cabot Community Investment Fund (formerly Urban Development Action Grant, or UDAG) has been in existence since 1991. It consists of funds granted to the Town of Cabot in 1986 by the U.S. Government in the amount of \$2 million, on condition the funds be lent by the Town to the Cabot Farmers' Co-Operative Creamery at a discounted rate of 4% to help finance its expansion. The Creamery would repay that loan over a period of ten years. The final payment was received in 1996.

In 1992, Town Meeting voters approved the first UDAG Plan, to be overseen and administered by a committee of five. Under this Plan and successive revisions, two separate investment account were established, a CCIF (UDAG) Fund to make grants and loans for large public projects (among them Cabot Commons, Willey Building restoration, Cabot School Performing Arts Center, Cabot Municipal Wastewater System) and also for small businesses, local organizations and non-profits. A separate Scholarship Fund made small grants for continuing education to qualifying Cabot adults and Cabot School seniors.

Over the last decade, it seems that the two funds, CCIF and Scholarship, have been underutilized and, from time to time, uncertainly managed. In the aftermath of our catastrophic floods, the need has become clear for more focused investment in housing, commerce and municipal infrastructure. About \$1 million remains in two funds, but the value of that asset diminishes with inflation. In order to support a more active municipal investment strategy, a new CCIF Plan is hereby proposed.

THE PROPOSED CCIF PLAN OF 2025

All previous plans are hereby revoked.

THE TWO FUNDS SHALL BE COMBINED INTO ONE

All CCIF assets shall be merged into a single brokerage account, which shall be managed according to this plan. Henceforth, the CCIF shall consist of single fund, to be deployed in furtherance of the **CCIF INVESTMENT PROGRAM (CIP)** as described in this plan.

THE CABOT COMMUNITY INVESTMENT PROGRAM (CIP)

The objective of the CIP is to promote economic development in the Town of Cabot. "Economic development", as used in this plan, shall be understood to mean any one or combination of the following:

- Creation of new commercial enterprise;
- Expansion of existing commercial enterprise;
- Job creation;
- Development of property for commercial use;
- Development of multi-family housing;
- Enhancement of municipal infrastructure to support the above.

SUPPORT FOR CAPITAL PROJECTS ONLY

The CIP will support only capital expenditures and projects and only within the Town of Cabot, subject to the approval at Town Meeting. All CCIF funds are hereby allocated and appropriated for the CIP, and, with the exception of such monies as are necessary to pay administrative expenses and to meet outstanding obligations, no use may be made of these funds other than to carry out the CIP in accordance with the terms of this plan.

The CIP shall consist of grants or loans for capital projects that promote economic development in the Town of Cabot. "Capital Project", as used in this plan, shall be understood to mean:

- Any project, by a private or public entity, involving the purchase, construction, improvement, renovation or expansion of a commercial premise or facility, that promotes economic development as defined above;
- Repurposing, by a private or public entity, of existing infrastructure for commercial enterprise that promotes economic development;
- Purchase, construction, improvement, renovation or expansion of a municipal premise or facility to support or sustain commercial activity therein or thereby.

Only Capital Projects within the Town of Cabot shall be eligible for funding from the CIP. Such funding may take the form of grants, loans or ownership investments, and such funding may provide matches towards grants obtained from other sources.

THE ROLE OF THE SELECTBOARD

The Selectboard shall carry out the CIP by choosing from time to time appropriate opportunities and projects for disbursement, lending or investment of CCIF funds within the Town of Cabot, in accordance with the criteria in this plan. Any proposal for such disbursement or investment, beyond CCIF administrative expenses or payment of outstanding CCIF obligations, must be approved by an Australian Ballot vote at a regular or special Town Meeting. Any project proposed for CIP funding must be presented and discussed at two public hearings at least 30 days apart, the second of which must take place no less than two weeks before the vote. CIP hearings may be concurrent with Selectboard meetings.

A description of any project to be brought before Town Meeting for a vote must be made public in writing, posted in three public locations, published on the Town of Cabot website, posted to Front Porch Forum and Cabot Connects or comparable and moderated social media, made available at the Town Office, and published in whole or summary in the Cabot Chronicle or other print media in general circulation in the Town of Cabot no later than two weeks before the first public hearing.

The project description must include the following:

- All relevant municipal permits, including such maps and images as are required for such permits under Town of Cabot codes and ordinances or state or federal law, though permit applications do not need to be obtained before a project is approved;
- Estimated costs, including grant writing and application fees, projected legal fees, interest payments, and any other foreseeable expenses;
- Estimated construction time and completion date;
- Funding design, including all potential grants and loans other than CCIF loans and grants, though such other grants or loans do not need to be applied for or obligated before a project is approved;
- Any maintenance or other costs going forward for which the Town may be obligated, but such obligations may not incur expenditures of CCIF funds;
- Consistency with the Town Plan;
- Consistency with the CCIF goal of "economic development" as described in this plan;
- Consistency with definition of "capitol project" as described in this plan.

The Selectboard shall have final authority over the management of CCIF funds, notwithstanding the role of the CCIF Committee (see below), and, once a CIP project is approved by voters, over its execution.

Any warned Town Meeting article to approve a CIP proposal must be worded to "authorize the Selectboard to spend up to" a specified amount of CCIF funds on the project in question; and to "spend such grant funds as may be applied for and received" in support of the project in question and; to "authorize the Selectboard to borrow up to" a specified amount from lending institutions, should such borrowing be part of the funding design in the project description.

THE CCIF COMMITTEE

The Selectboard shall appoint a CCIF Committee to consist of four members, one of whom shall be the Town Treasurer ex officio. The Committee:

- Shall establish any brokerage and bank accounts, including checking accounts, it deems necessary to fulfill the purposes of this plan;
- Shall have responsibility for managing the CCIF investment portfolio and ensuring that the portfolio has a cash component for paying current obligations, administrative costs and disbursements for CIP projects or is linked to a cash or bank account for such purposes;
- Shall have the authority to instruct the CCIF account manager to buy or sell holdings in the CCIF investment portfolio;
- Shall have the authority to make payments from the CCIF cash account on outstanding obligations and for administrative costs;
- Shall arrange for the disbursement of funds to carry out CIP projects upon and according to instructions from the Selectboard;
- Shall report to the Selectboard quarterly, in person or in writing, on the status of the fund, any changes made in the investment account, and any recommendations for action by the Selectboard.

CCIF Committee members need not be residents of the Town of Cabot. They shall serve at their own pleasure and at the pleasure of the Selectboard. The CCIF Committee shall organize itself according to its best judgement and shall meet at its own pleasure.

The Town Treasurer, as a member of the CCIF Committee, and the chair of the Selectboard shall have signing authority for any checks issued against CCIF funds.

RULES FOR EXECUTING THE CCIF PLAN

The Selectboard, in consultation with the Planning Commission, the Listers and the Zoning Administrator, shall devise the rules and procedures for carrying out this plan and any CIP projects approved at the Town Meeting. These rules and procedures shall be printed out and made available at the Town Office and posted on the municipal website, as shall any changes to the rules and procedures. Such rules and procedures may be submitted to the Town attorney for review and advice. At the discretion of the Selectboard; and upon advice of counsel the Selectboard shall have the authority to make changes in the rules and procedures without further consultation; but such changes shall be made public as per the above.

CABOT ARTS SHOW AND TELL

*Cabot Visual Arts' Show and Tell folks gather
in the Willey Building on*

February 16, 2025 ~ 2:00-4:00 p.m.

2025 – WARNING TOWN OF CABOT – 2025

The Legal Voters of the Town of Cabot are hereby warned and notified to meet at the Town of Cabot Willey Building, 3084 Main Street, Cabot, Vermont, on **Tuesday, March 4, 2025, at ten o'clock** in the forenoon (10:00 A.M.) to transact the following business from the floor. [The polls will be open from 7:00 A.M. until 7:00 P.M. at the Willey Building, 3084 Main Street, Cabot, VT.]

Art. 1. To elect a Moderator for the ensuing year.

Art. 2. Shall the voters of the Town of Cabot vote to accept the Town Report as printed for FY24?

Art. 3. Shall the voters of the Town of Cabot authorize payment of real and personal property taxes on August 31, 2025, and November 20, 2025, by delivery to Cabot Town Hall postmarked on or before that date; and, Establish that overdue taxes will bear interest at a rate of one percent per month or fraction thereof for the first three months and thereafter one and one-half percent per month or fraction thereof from the due date of such tax pursuant to 32 V.S.A. § 5136; and, Establish the amount of the penalty charged by the collector of delinquent taxes for payments made after the due date for payment to 8 percent of the tax collected pursuant to 32 V.S.A. § 1674(3)(A)?

Art. 4. Shall the voters of the Town of Cabot elect all Town Officers required by law, according to law?

The following Articles will be voted on by Australian Ballot and may be discussed on the floor except for Articles 5 through 8.

Art. 5. To elect a Selectperson for a term of two years. [Australian Ballot]

Art. 6. To elect a Selectperson for a term of three years. [Australian Ballot]

Art. 7. Shall the voters of the Town of Cabot appropriate the sum of \$946,044 to defray the General Expenses of the Town, with an estimated \$113,089 to come from income and \$694,647 from local taxes? [Australian Ballot]

Art. 8. Shall the voters of the Town of Cabot appropriate the sum of \$978,712 to repair and maintain the Highways of the Town including summer, winter, and special treatment, of which an estimated \$160,000 is to come from income and \$818,712 from local taxes? [Australian Ballot]

Art. 9. Shall the voters of the Town of Cabot appropriate the sum of \$5,234.35 to the Cabot Public Library to support the full budget request put forward by the Cabot Library Board of Trustees for the coming year? The Cabot Selectboard has made the decision to cut the library budget, significantly reducing the modest budget request put forward by the Library Trustees (a 4.8% increase, exclusively to cover the cost of inflation, increased health insurance, and small cost-of-living increases for staff). This additional allocation would cost taxpayers an estimated \$2.00/\$100,000 household worth. A vote against the measure will result in the need to cut programs for children and adults and dramatically reduce the purchase of new books and other materials. The total budget amount (\$122,234.35) has been approved and put forward by the Library Trustees, as required by Vermont Law. [Australian Ballot]

Art. 10. Shall the voters of the Town of Cabot exempt the land and building previously owned by the Town and known as The Masonic Hall, now owned by Neighbors in Action (501 (c)(3)), a non-profit organization, from real property taxes for a period of five (5) years, pursuant to 32 V.S.A. §3840? [Australian Ballot]

Art. 11. Shall the voters adopt the new CCIF (Cabot Community Investment Fund) Plan as printed in this Town Report, which calls for the consolidation of the UDAG and Scholarship Funds in a single CCIF Fund, and appropriate the consolidated CCIF Fund for the purposes of the plan?

Art. 12. Shall the voters of the Town of Cabot approve the revised 2025 Cabot Town Plan as approved by the Cabot selectboard on January 7, 2025. [Australian Ballot]

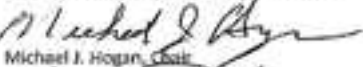
Art. 13. Shall the voters of the Town of Cabot approve an appropriation in the amount of \$2,132 for the support of Fairbanks Museum to provide services to residents of the Town of Cabot? [Australian Ballot]

Art. 14. Shall the voters of the Town of Cabot forgive the outstanding balance (approximately \$25,721) of a UDAG Loan of \$50,000 made to Cabot Commons, Inc.? [Australian Ballot]

Art. 15. To transact any other non-binding business that may come before said meeting.

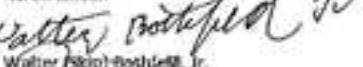
Art. 16. To adjourn this meeting.

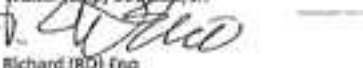
Dated this 28th day of January A.D. 2025

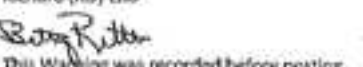

Michael J. Hogan, Chair


Fred Ducharme, Vice Chair


Karen Larsen


Walter (Bob) Bostick, Jr.


Richard (RD) Eno


Betty Ritter

This Warning was recorded before posting.

Attest: Betty Ritter, Cabot Town Clerk

REGISTER TO VOTE:

There is no deadline to register to vote. You will be able to vote on the day of election. You can register to vote prior to voting by visiting the Cabot Town Clerk's Office or going online to civ.sec.state.vt.us. Registration will be available at the Town Clerk's office on any day prior to the election between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., Monday through Thursday. Registration will be available on Election Day during the hours the polls are open from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. at the Willey Building, 3084 Main Street, Cabot, VT.

EARLY or ABSENTEE BALLOTS: The latest you can request ballots is the close of business in the Town Clerk's office on March 3, 2025, at 5:00 p.m. The voter or family member may request an early or absentee ballot in person, in writing or by telephone. Other persons may request an Absentee Ballot for another registered Cabot voter (in person or in writing), and the Town Clerk's Office will mail that Absentee Ballot to the registered voter.

Following are the ways for early voting or absentee voting: (1) vote in the Town Clerk's office before the deadline; (2) a voter may take their ballots out of the Town Clerk's office for himself/herself and return in the same manner as if the ballots were received by mail; (3) have a ballot mailed to you, and mail or return it to the Town Clerk's office before election day or to the polling place before 7:00 p.m. on election day; or (4) if you are sick or disabled, request the Town Clerk, who must be accompanied by a Justice of the Peace, to bring a ballot to you at your home no later than 5:00 p.m. on Monday, March 3, 2025.

CABOT SCHOOL DISTRICT
WARNING FOR ANNUAL MEETING

The legal voters of the Cabot School District, Cabot, Vermont, are hereby notified and warned to meet at the Cabot School Performing Arts Center, Cabot, Vermont on Monday, March 3, 2025 at 6:30 pm in the evening to transact the following business not involving Australian Ballot. Australian Ballot voting will be held on Tuesday, March 4, 2025 with the polls open from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. at the Willey Building, 3084 Main St, Cabot, VT 05647.

Article 1. To elect a School District Moderator for a term of one (1) year.

Article 2. To elect two School Directors, one for a three year term, and one for a two year term. (To be voted on by Australian Ballot)

Article 3. Shall the voters of the Town School District approve the minutes of the March 4, 2024 Annual School District Meeting?

Article 4. To hear a report of the School Directors.

Article 5. Shall the voters of the Cabot School District approve the school board to expend \$4,516,239, which is the amount the school board has determined to be necessary for the ensuing fiscal year? The Cabot School District estimates that this proposed budget, if approved, will result in per pupil education spending of \$14,324, which is 2.8% higher than per pupil education spending for the current year. (To be voted on by Australian Ballot)

Article 6. Shall the voters of Cabot authorize the school board to borrow \$250,000 over five (5) years to make necessary building repairs instead of the \$500,000 over ten (10) years approved last year to change the campus configuration? (To be voted on by Australian Ballot)

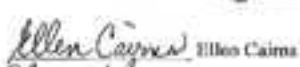
Article 7. Shall the voters of the Cabot School District authorize the Board of School Directors to borrow money to pay its lawful debts and expenses for the fiscal year which ends June 30, 2026 in an amount not to exceed 90% of the anticipated collection of taxes and receipts of other funds to be used for those purposes? (To be voted on by Australian Ballot)

Article 8. Shall the voters of the Cabot School District authorize the Cabot School Board to hold any audited fund balance as of June 30, 2025 in a reserve fund to be expended under the control and direction of the Board of School Directors for the purpose of operating the school? (To be voted on by Australian Ballot)

Article 9. To transact any additional business that may legally come before this meeting.

Article 10. To Adjourn.

Dated at Cabot, Vermont Jan. 27, 2025

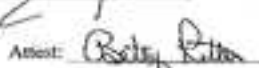

Ellen Cairns


Alicia Heber


Erica Fucello


Chris Torrey


Jason Monahan

Attest:  Betty Ritter, Town Clerk
Date: Jan 28, 2025

HAZEL M. GREAVES INCOME TAX & BOOKKEEPING SERVICE



802-563-2332
27 DOW DRIVE
EAST HARDWICK VT 05836

hazelgreavestaxservice@gmail.com



COMMUNITY COMMENTARY

The views, opinions and information expressed in the Community Commentary (LTE), are solely those of the writer and not necessarily those of this newspaper or its affiliates.

Good Government is Essential Even in Cabot

In Governor Scott's opening address he mentioned he wanted to "restore faith and trust in government with transparency of records and easy access, with no charge for records if they are inspected and released in accordance with The State Records Law in a timely manner, , "

A request for public records was made last year for emails from Selectboard and Chief of Fire; after many excuses of not having time, and that it needed to be seen by a lawyer, the townspeople was charged \$1200.00 in order to receive the public records. Hmhmhm.

"Let's be bold and be an honest voice in your community," he continued, "we are not here to worry about egos, but to do what Vermonters need. Spend within taxpayers' means! Constituents trust them to do the right thing."

Yet here in Cabot there are three select board members who have a clear conflict of interest making decisions for all of us concerning the fire dept. They have been

asked to recuse themselves by numerous folks on record and the responses so harsh an apology was requested. Other response was flat out no. These actions are concerning, especially as we approach massive spending on things the town voted no on already.

I agree with Essex-Caledonia Rep. Terry Lynn Williams, who was quoted in the Governor's speech. "I am sick, afraid, defeated, angry and sad!" I would add fed up after attending numerous Select Board meetings, appeased by their listening but never getting results. No wonder folks give up and don't attend.

All this to say I know they work tirelessly and are good people, it's not personal, just reality.

I'm too old to run, so please, please bring a new voice, a clear head and great new ideas... We don't just want to survive here in Cabot, we want to THRIVE, each and every one!!!!

Rev. Sandy Pond LMT, Artist
Sandy Pond Studios
PO Box 124, Cabot VT 05647

Running for Selectboard

I am Peggy Miller and I will be running for the two-year seat on the Cabot Selectboard. I moved to Cabot in 1993. My son attended Cabot School, graduating in 2001. My husband and I worked with the Cabot Community Association, organizing and running a teen center in the gym every other Saturday night for ten years. I worked on the grant applications to get funding for multiple projects with the youth of Cabot. I served on the school board for a two-year term after my son graduated. I bring over 25 years of experience writing grants and reports, serving on committees at the county and state level.

My education includes a BA from OSU in communications and public relations, a MS in criminal justice and public admini-

stration from VCU. I was also a licensed social worker and a licensed mediator when I lived in Ohio.

My work history includes 36 years working for child serving agencies in Ohio, VA and VT. I was a social worker, visitation mediator, group home director, probation officer and state and federal grant and contract manager. I retired in 2016.

I have great respect for the community of Cabot, the Cabot School and the emergency services that serve our town. I would hope to be able to foster a level of cooperation with other programs in Cabot by listening to the needs of community members and working to resolve issues presented to the board by the community.

If you're looking for a new voice on the board, please consider voting for me.

Dear Neighbors

Neighbors in Action has been addressing food insecurity and social isolation in our community for decades. We are currently providing over 1,000 boxes of food every month to families in need through our two locations in downtown Cabot and Lyndonville, as well as countless other social activities and community meals to bring people together.

As many of you know, last spring we were able to purchase our building at 3339 Main Street in Cabot with the support of a USDA Rural Development Grant, donations from our neighbors, and cooperation from the seller, the Town of Cabot.

As a non-profit organization, *Faith in Action/Neighbors in Action* was subsequently approved for exemption from town property taxes on our building in the future. However, we closed on the building just one week too late to submit the paperwork in time for the current tax year. Therefore, we have a question on this year's Town Meeting ballot asking the voters of the Town of Cabot to forgive us of this year's tax bill (\$6,847.16), as it would be a hardship to our small organi-

zation and would impact our ability to continue meeting the increasing needs of our neighbors. Since most of our funding comes from individuals and private foundations, and most of the work we do is with volunteer labor, those funds could be much better spent meeting the growing need for food we are seeing at every Foodshare. We welcome any questions you may have about our request.

We are also on the ballot with a request for town appropriations again this year. The funding we receive annually from the Town of Cabot supports our Foodshare program (\$2,000) and our Senior Adventures group (\$500). In 2024 we served over 450 Cabot residents through our Foodshare program and more than a dozen Cabot residents through our Senior Adventures program.

We are grateful for all the support we receive from the Town of Cabot and our neighbors! Give us a call if you have any questions, would like to join our team, or are interested in attending one of our programs: 802-563-3322.

Sincerely,
Amy Hornblas
Executive Director, *Neighbors in Action*
NeighborsInActionVT.org

Updates on Cabot Town Plan for Town Meeting Vote

By Brittany Butler for Cabot Planning Commission

The Cabot Planning Commission has been working to update the Cabot Town Plan for the past two years. The draft is a partial re-write of the 2017-2025 Town Plan. The flood of July 10, 2023, heavily impacted Cabot, so many of the updates refer to the changes caused by that event. Data and information related to the town, its residents, housing, and economy have been updated. The Tables reflect current data from the 2020 U.S. Census, or other sources.

Updates were included in response to new statutory requirements, including the Natural Resources section being updated to address Act 171, the incorporation of the goals of Act 174 and the State's Commitment to be 90% renewable by 2050, such that the Energy chapter is now intended to serve as the Town's Enhanced Energy Plan. The revised designated Village Center has also been included.

The Town Plan is consistent with the goals established in 24 V.S.A. §4302, and the revisions do not alter the designation of any land area. The proposed Cabot Town Plan includes all the required elements set forth in the Act [§4382], including the following specific chapters that have been updated:

Chapter 2: Natural Heritage

This chapter was updated to address Act 171. The chapter includes new mapping of Critical Forest Blocks, connectivity and fragmentation as well as wildlife habitat and habitat crossings. Ongoing inventory of the natural resources focused on natural communities that is being conducted by the Cabot Conservation Committee. The creation of Molly's Falls State Park, a new section in ground-water, and an updated and expanded section on Invasive Species.

Chapter 4: Housing

This chapter has been updated with the most current data about housing in the Town of Cabot. Corrections were made as well as deletions of incorrect data. Tables and graphs were updated, and data sources cited. Updates were also made to Goals, Policies and Tasks. Minor revisions were made to ensure consistency with Act 174.

Chapter 6: Energy

Much of the prior chapter has been deleted and the chapter is now intended

to serve as the Town of Cabot's Enhanced Energy Plan. This energy plan reflects efforts by the Planning Commission to incorporate the goals of Act 174, and the State Commitment to be 90% renewable by 2050. These changes are being made to further State Planning Goals and the Vermont Comprehensive Energy Plan. Updates were also made to Goals, Policies and Tasks.

Chapter 5: Land Use

The updates made here take into consideration the changes made to Act 250 in 2024. Updates were also made to Goals, Policies and Tasks.

Chapter 7: Economic Development

This section was updated to speak to implementation of the Village Revitalization Plan and the new Designated Village Center, Changes to Cabot Creamery, The Cabot Community Investment fund and enhanced creative economy attractions.

Chapter 8: Transportation

This was updated to address changes to infrastructure required, and hoped for, to mitigate losses from flooding. A last section is added to address flood resiliency specifically. Also noted here and in other chapters is the need for a parking study to improve accommodation at larger village events.

Chapter 11: Community Facilities, Utilities, and Services

Updated to reflect changes since 2017, including both the temporary and planned fire station, the new childcare facility and the recreational trails system.

Chapter 10: Climate and Resilience

An entirely new section added to meet the state requirement for an element addressing flood resilience, but expanded to address other issues Cabot faces with increasingly severe weather events.

Updates were made to the implementation tables at the end of each section to tasks anticipated over the next 8 years.

Copies of the full text of the proposed Cabot Town Plan and accompanying maps are available for examination at the Cabot Town Office during regular office hours or can be viewed online at: www.cabotvt.us. You may also send comments and suggestions to the Planning Commission, via email at zon-ing@cabotvt.us or by mail to Planning Commission PO box 36 Cabot, Vermont 05647.

Dear Voters

If you are happy with selectboard actions, vote selectboard members back.

But if you are not happy, maybe you should look at new candidates.

Fred Ducharme, selectboard member

MEET THE CANDIDATES FORUM

Thursday, February 6, 6:00 - 8:00 p.m.

Wiley Building

Share a meal. Informal Meet & Greet Moderated Forum

Come meet and hear the candidates
for Cabot School Board and Selectboard

Moderated by Jeanne Johnson, Cabot Town Meeting Moderator
Sponsored by *The Cabot Chronicle* and Cabot Community Association

New CCIF Plan on Town Meeting Warning

By R.D. Eno

I've been involved with the UDAG (now Cabot Community Investment Fund, or CCIF) program since 1989, and I've written a few of the UDAG Plans that the Town adopted. Two years ago, at my urging, the Town voted to place a two-year moratorium on the CCIF to give the funds a chance to recover value after some heavy losses.

This year at Town Meeting, voters will be asked whether they will approve a new CCIF plan. If adopted, it would consolidate the two Union Bank CCIF investment portfolios (UDAG Trust Fund and Scholarship) to create a single CCIF Fund with assets of over \$955,000, to be used exclusively to invest in, to finance or to help finance capital projects that promote economic development, commerce and employment. But, under the new plan as under the old, voters have the final say: no project could go forward without the approval of Town Meeting.

I wrote the proposed plan, and my colleagues on the Selectboard agreed to place it on the warning. I'm writing now as a private citizen, not as a Selectperson, to give some background and explanation.

The UDAG (Urban Development Block Grant), awarded to the Town by the federal government in 1986, originally amounted to \$2,000,000. The Town lent that granted money to the Cabot Creamery for its expansion, and Creamery repaid the Town at an annual rate of 4% for ten years. In 1991, Town Meeting adopted the first UDAG Plan to make grants and loans within the community, and over the years, some of the funded projects did much to improve the community – the new Town garage, renovation of the Willey Building, construction of the CSPAC – but they did little to grow the Town's economy.

The proposed new plan would create a Community Investment Program (CIP) to design and evaluate project proposals with clearly defined development goals, including the expansion of commercial space, job creation, housing and infrastructure improvement. Any CIP proposal would have to be approved by voters, and a new CCIF committee, including the Town Treasurer ex officio, would be appointed by the Selectboard to manage the CCIF investment portfolio and report quarterly.

Cabot Commons Loan Forgiveness Request to Town Vote

At Town Meeting, Cabot Commons Senior Housing is requesting forgiveness of a \$25,721 balance on a \$50,000 UDAG (now CCIF) loan awarded in 2004. This request was presented to the Cabot Community Investment Fund, the Committee that manages these funds, at their meeting on Thursday, January 9, and the CCIF Committee voted to support the request.

Since drafting and petitioning the article for the Town Meeting ballot, Cabot Commons, Inc., has been able to

The new plan differs from all previous plans in exclusively targeting capital projects – new construction or renovation of existing structures or municipal infrastructure improvement that supports commercial activity. CCIF money can be granted to, loaned to or even invested in a CIP project only if it can be shown to create jobs or housing or propel commercial activity. Capital projects not only stimulate enterprise, they also contribute to the tax base or become municipal assets.

The new plan places responsibility on the Selectboard to seek out and evaluate appropriate capital projects – generated within municipal government or brought forward by other private or public parties – and present them for voter approval. No previous plan charged any municipal body with that responsibility, so the previous plans were largely reactive, offering loan subsidies or outright grants to whomever wanted to take advantage of them. With two outstanding exceptions – Cabot Commons Senior Housing and the Municipal Wastewater System – few UDAG projects contributed to economic development or created new jobs for Cabot residents. Under the new plan, the Selectboard is charged to actively pursue CCIF investment opportunities that promise growth of our local economy.

But the new plan would preserve the most important feature of all: The authority of the voters at Town Meeting to approve any use of CCIF funds. And it would require the Selectboard to subject each CCIF proposal to a checklist of criteria in order to satisfy the voters (or not) that a CIP proposal meets the standards of economic development described in the plan. Additionally, the Selectboard would be required to consult with the Planning Commission, the Listers, the Zoning Administrator and the Town attorney before designing or making changes to the rules for carrying out the proposed plan.

As flood recovery and mitigation funds come into Town, we have an opportunity to amplify their impact with controlled and targeted investments. I believe we need to put our CCIF money to work to grow our local economy in ways that can both preserve our quality of life and protect it against the shocks of future dislocations. Our Town Plan offers a blueprint for sustainable growth, and our CCIF Fund provides the means to realize it.

The proposed CCIF Plan is available at the Town Office, on the Town website and in the pages of this issue of the *Chronicle*.

confirm that the principal balance which they are requesting be forgiven is actually lower than the \$25,721. The regular monthly payments made for the last 20+ years equal \$48,275.49; \$25,595.94 in principal and \$22,679.55 in interest. With \$25,595.94 in principal paid, the balance of principal to be forgiven as of January 2025 would be \$24,404.06. The principal balance will be further reduced as Cabot Commons continues to make our monthly payments. Should our request for loan forgiveness be approved by the taxpayers, the lower amount would be forgiven. This loan forgiveness will not affect the property tax rate.

Cabot Commons, Inc., has a second

UDAG loan in the amount of \$100,000 which has annual payments of \$2,000. There are no modifications requested for that loan. Cabot Commons will continue to make these payments annually, as they have for the last 20 years.

UDAG money was intended to be granted & loaned to Cabot citizens and organizations to contribute to the Town's well-being and prosperity. The awards from the UDAG fund to Cabot Commons Senior Housing were made while the project was being designed and were an integral part of the funding provided to bring the vision of this affordable rental housing to reality.

Cabot Commons Senior Housing features eight affordable apartments for elderly and disabled individuals. Since its completion it has been successfully keeping Cabot seniors in safe, warm housing close to home and loved ones, exactly as planned.

Cabot Commons, Inc., is requesting this loan forgiveness to ensure that the

Support the Cabot Library on Town Meeting Day!

Librarians, Kathleen Hoyne and Amanda Otto, would like to express their gratitude for the outpouring of support from Cabot registered voters who signed the petition to place an article on the Town Meeting ballot to support the full annual budget for the library. The article reads as follows:

Shall the voters of the Town of Cabot appropriate the sum of \$5,234.35 to the Cabot Public Library to support the full budget request put forward by the Cabot Library Board of Trustees for the coming year? The Cabot Selectboard has made the decision to cut the Library budget, significantly reducing the modest budget request put forward by the Library Trustees (a 4.8% increase, exclusively to cover the cost of inflation, increased health insurance, and small cost-of-living increases for staff). This additional allocation would cost taxpayers an estimated \$2.00/\$100,000 household worth. A vote against the measure will result in the need to cut programs for children and adults and dramatically reduce the purchase of new books and other materials. The total budget amount (\$122,234.35) has been approved and put forward by the Library Trustees, as required by Vermont Law.

To help voters make an informed decision, we believe it is important to provide a fuller understanding of the library's budget, which can be broken down into four main areas: payroll/taxes/benefits, operating expenses, programs, and collection. By Vermont law, the Library Trustees set the librarians' salary and hours of operation for the library, and these costs represent the bulk of the budget each year. For the coming year, the trustees approved small-cost of-living increases as well as a standard adjustment to a health insurance stipend, a benefit offered to all full-time town employees. Operating expenses, such as the Inter Library Loan system, maintenance of the library's databases, and online audio/eBooks through Libby were all impacted by inflation, costs over which the Trustees and staff have no control. The budget for our collection (meaning books and other forms of con-

property can continue to have a balanced budget. The rents at the property are restricted to ensure they are affordable for moderate- and low-income tenants. The property cannot raise rents to match operating expenses if operating expenses exceed rental income. This year increases in property taxes and property insurance have impacted the property's budget.

Cabot Commons Senior Housing is managed by Downstreet Housing and Community Development in Barre. However, Cabot Commons, Inc., run by a local Board of seven members, owns the property. The Board has worked hard to help Downstreet Housing and Community Development to manage the budget and help find cost savings. Reducing the debt service will help meet this goal.

Thank you for your support of Cabot Commons Senior Housing.

Susan Carpenter, Rosalind Daniels, Judy Pransky, Leah Sare, Betty Ritter, Theresa Lay-Sleeper

tent) continues to be below standards set by the Vermont Library Association, and our programming budget (\$3,000) is also extremely modest.

Point being, the approved budget put forward by the trustees is quite frugal, but like all organizations, cost-increases caused by inflation are a fact of life. To help offset this, the library staff does seek funds from other sources, where possible. For instance, the library occasionally receives grants to offset costs of special programs/projects. This past year, the Friends of the Library (Sandy Atkins, Beth Wade, Norma Bermingham, Maria Achione-Goodrich, and Janet Westervelt) generously donated funds to purchase new Early Literacy books. Similarly, a charitable organization, the Weinig Foundation, provided some support for early literacy programs, and another organization, The Wiswell Foundation, provided funds to help the library hire summer teen help. The Flood Commemoration event held in July was aided by funding from the Vermont Community Foundation. Finally, the VT Dept. of Libraries provided funding to switch out obsolete equipment for the fiber connect system that enables us to provide high-speed internet access, the closest thing to a community broadband service in town. Nonetheless, this kind of funding is sporadic, and not something we can count on receiving year after year.

What keeps the library going, what enables us to provide access to quality reading material, content and engaging programs and services, is the people of Cabot. Please vote "YES" on Town Meeting to fully fund the Cabot Library.

If you have questions, please take a look at our report in the Cabot Town Annual Report for a more in-depth accounting of what we've been up to this past year. Libraries are more important than ever, providing access to accurate information, books to suit all interests, programs for all ages, free audio/eBooks and even free videos – stop in, look around and don't hesitate to ask us about these many services. We welcome your ideas and suggestions!

Thank you for your support!

Cabot Library Trustees
Kurt Steinert, Niall McCallum, Angela Ogle, Erin Ruddell and Taeryn Robbins

CABOT VERMONT ANNUAL EVENTS 2025

**Monday, March 3, 2025
ANNUAL SCHOOL DISTRICT MEETING**

**Tuesday, March 4, 2025
ANNUAL TOWN MEETING**

**Sunday, April 20, 2025
CABOT UNITED CHURCH
EASTER DAWN SERVICE**

**Saturday, May 3, 2025
GREEN UP DAY**

**Saturday, June 28, 2025
TOWNWIDE YARD SALE**

**Friday, July 4, 2025
INDEPENDENCE DAY CELEBRATION**

**Saturday, September 13, 2025
CABOT UNITED CHURCH
HARVEST SUPPER**

**Sunday, September 14, 2025
RIDE THE RIDGES**

**Saturday, September 27, 2025
CABOT FALL FOLIAGE, CHEESE &
CULTURE FESTIVAL & TURKEY DINNER**

**Saturday, September 27, 2025
CABOT BULK DISPOSAL DAY (TENTATIVE)**

**Sunday, December 7, 2025
CABOT COMMUNITY MEMORIAL TREE**

**Friday, Saturday & Monday
December 12, 13 & 15, 2025
TOY AND WARM CLOTHING SHARE**

**Saturday, December 13, 2025
CABOT HOLIDAY FESTIVAL
& OUTDOOR MARKET**

**Thursday, December 25, 2025
CABOT COMMUNITY
CHRISTMAS DINNER**

Budget & Town Meeting

(continued from page 6)

- School Board members presented results of their deliberations, student count and state data to report an expected reduction in tax rate and a change of the plan to borrow money and "flip the campus" and use a smaller amount of money for needed

repairs. Comments from the floor noted positive changes in the school this year.

- The Select Board presented a proposed town budget and received input on budget items for the Trails Committee, Library, and Cabot Ambulance.

Cabot School - Ballot Articles

- Good Budget News
- Campus Plan Re-thought

by Ellen Cairns, School Board Chair

I'm very pleased to report great news on behalf of the School Board!

1. Our budget is in good shape and we are predicting a tax decrease this year. We know we asked for a lot last year, and we are so grateful that the voters supported the school when we needed it. We always work hard to keep expenses as low as possible, and this year the new funding formula has worked in our favor; and we are pleased to be able to reduce the tax burden.

2. Part of the reason for the good news with the budget is that our enrollment has increased. We recently welcomed four new students, two of whom are tuitioned from other area schools. We have a total of 15 new students in our school community this year, which is great news on many levels!

3. Last year, based on a recommendation from the school administration, there was an article on the ballot to approve a loan of up to \$500,000 to 'flip the campus' and move the elementary school into the main building and the

high school into the satellite buildings. After consultation with a construction firm, our new administration does not believe this is the best use of the funds and would prefer to use a smaller amount for needed building repairs. You will see an article on the ballot this year asking that the school be allowed to borrow a smaller amount (most likely up to \$250,000) to be used for building repairs. This is INSTEAD OF, not in addition to, the amount that was approved last year. We are seeking your permission to do this, since the rationale given last year was to change the campus configuration, and we want to have full transparency of how much money is needed and what it will be used for.

The School Board will host an informational meeting on Monday, March 3, at 6:30 pm in the Cabot School Performing Arts Center. If you have any questions on the school articles you would like answered before then, please feel free to reach out to Ellen Cairns, School Board chair, at ellen.cairns@ccsuvt.net, or any school board member at first name.last name@ccsuvt.net.

Year End 2024 Treasurer's Report Cabot Emergency Ambulance Service, Inc.

Expenses for 2024: \$55,900.73
Income for 2024: Town of Cabot \$20,064.25, Fees as per contract \$7,504.29
Donations \$2,037.75 - MANY THANKS!
Total Income: \$29,606.29

When we get a settlement from insurance companies, our portion is often less than the amount billed and takes long periods to receive. We thank the town for paying regularly on a monthly basis now, previously we received our appropriation in November of each year so we were operating through much of each year with no regular payments from the town.

Recently in budget meetings, we submitted a FEE for the 2025/2026 fiscal year of \$45,000 should the town decide to renew our ANNUAL contract. Thus far, the selectboard has been silent on a renewed contract, so we don't know what the future holds. We have seen in the *Chronicle* we are being cut \$5,000 and will "have to live with it." With any

other service that fee would be non-negotiable. Right now, we charge 7 1/2 cents/day per person. That's a bargain, anybody else is twice the price, IF you can get them to cover our town.

In 2025, we need to get new tires for the ambulance, costs of dispatching (of which we pay 50% of cost of both FD and CAES), fuel, supplies, medications and more are all rising. We are looking at grants to build a garage, update equipment and replace the aging ambulance. We have very modest funds on hand which we carefully manage.

Based on the numbers above without an income increase, or grants, we have just over two years of funding on hand - but, without a significant increase of fees we may be unable to continue service to the town beyond that time. We appreciate the support of our fellow community members! We are all volunteers and are committed to continue serving our community.

Respectfully submitted
Ruth Goodrich, Treasurer

There are four community members running for two selectboard seats and two individuals running for two school board seats. At the end of the meeting, when asked if voters would prefer an in-person event to meet and talk with candidates, or a series of questions asked of all candidates and printed in the March *Cabot Chronicle*, the response was, "Why can't we have both?" So, watch for details on Front Porch Forum for a February 6 candidate event, and the March *Cabot Chronicle* for a series of Q&A from those running for office.

A recording of the evening's discussion is available on the Cabot Community Association website (CabotVermont.org), the *Cabot Chronicle* website (CabotChronicle.org) and the town's website (Cabotvt.us).

Bottom Line: If you want to see change, come to the meetings - in person or via Zoom - and speak up. The school and select boards work for the voters. If you don't share your opinion, they can only assume what voters want. Don't make them guess.

The Vermont Institute for Government

How and Why
To Read a Town Report

Compiled by Paul Cillies

A few days before town meeting, it's time to sit down and look over the town report. Often it doesn't take that long, because it doesn't seem all that interesting. Oh, sure, there's a nice picture of a new plow or sewage treatment plant on the front, and a list of those who haven't paid their property taxes this year, but most of the pages in the town report just don't sing. Who would blame us for doing off after only a few minutes?

Before you do, however, think about what this report means. A good town report can tell you a great deal about your town. While town expenditures and tax rates are important to all of us, the reports of town officers—from the select board to cemetery commissioners—help us understand what has been going on during the last year and what may be planned for the future.

The budget is up for a vote, but is it a fair and responsible budget? How does the highway budget proposed for this year compare with last year? How much did the zoning administrator take in fees and penalties, and how much did the grand list grow? The answers to these and other questions are in the report, but for many voters, the town report arrives in the mail, gets put somewhere where "I'll read it later," dropped behind some chair, and then if read at all is tipped through in less than a minute, often with a distasteful feeling because it reminds you of some other tax you have to pay.

Sit down with it, in good light, and give it a chance. It's the report of your town.

Opening the Cover

Find the index or table of contents. Some town reports have both, but others only a listing of the various items, often without any discernible order. Look either at the front or back of the booklet. Now scan the listings. Usually there are three or four parts to a town report.

First is the audit, done by professionals or our own auditors, listing how money of the town (and school, in some towns that don't separate the reports) was spent during the previous year. A year can be either the calendar year, or a fiscal year beginning July 1.

Second is the budget—what the selectboard proposes to spend on town needs during the coming year. Actually, if you're a town with a calendar fiscal year, you're already more than two months into that year already, but that's the way it's always been.

Third will come a series of reports from town officials, including the selectboard, the zoning board, the tax collector, followed some times by a listing of the salaries and payments made to town officials during the year.

Those are the big categories. Before diving into them, however, we have to locate one vital entry first before all the others. That's the warning for the meeting.

The Warning

The first item we want to look at is the warning. It's usually within the first five or six pages at the front or at the back of the booklet. Occasionally it is in the middle, at the staples. Don't go any farther with the book until you find it. There is usually one for the town and one for the school district.

The better the town report, the more knowledgeable the community. Who could complain about that?

Look at the heading. Are you sure this isn't last year's minutes? They are important, but keep hunting for the warning.

Now let's see. Where and when the meeting is being held. Put it on the calendar right away. Reserve the day or evening and protect it from excuses or competing events. This is town meeting. Come on.

Okay, let's see what they are trying to put over on us this year. Find the budget article. Circle that amount. Write it on the back cover right now. Later we're going to want to know the answer to the most important question to be asked at town meeting this year. How much does the budget increase over last year? And why?

That information is in a different

continued on page 2

Knowing enough about the rules of town meeting to handle basic motions is an important advantage at a floor meeting of the town. You might want to read "The Meeting Will Come to Order," another in this series of pamphlets. Call VIG.

PAGE 1

The Warning (continued)

part of the report, and we'll find it.

First, read through or skim each of the articles. Elections, setting the tax due date, discounts, installments, the rate of interest on delinquencies, and a whole long list of organizations who want some town money, each have their own questions. It ends with "Other Business," and we're out of here.

See if there are any public questions in the list. Do you get to vote on a zoning amendment or a bond this year? Is there something political, like supporting some legislation or taking a stand on national or international policy?

Some questions may be voted by Australian ballot. Make sure you distinguish them from those to be discussed on the floor of the meeting.

Fold the page of the warning or mark it somehow so you can find it when you need it at the meeting.

The Budget

Okay, I want to know how much the budget went up and how. The answer is in this book.

First, find the budget. Look at expenditures first. This section is usually broken down into categories, beginning with "General Government," and running down, page by page, each of the departments and functions of town government, including roads, sewer, water, and the like. Each heading is followed by a series of columns, showing the actual and budgeted expenditures for the last three years. Running your finger or a straight edge along this line shows how the budget has changed over time. It also shows how well the selectboard has been in predicting how much the town needs for line items.

Go to the last page of the bud-

continued on page 3

PAGE 2

The Budget (continued)

get where it says "Grand Total" for all expenditures. This is the money proposed to be spent in the town this coming year. The grand total does not include money to be appropriated at town meeting for special expenditures, including social service requests.

The next section is revenues. This is a listing of where the money needed to run the town originates, hopefully. State funds, fees, penalties, and interest are listed there. So is the amount proposed to be raised in property taxes for the town. At the bottom of this section you see "Total Revenues."

Town meeting will consist of various skirmishes about individual lines in this budget. People will debate how much officers should be paid in salary, and why the salt budget is so high. Some will argue over math errors, or how things are presented in the budget. Beware of the distractions of minor issues. The budget is the key to everything a town does.

The Audit

What can we say about the audit. It usually takes up many pages in the town report and is the least read of the sections. Some say it is written by CPAs for CPAs. But take a little time with it. In it is the detail on how money is spent in the town, category by category.

Start with the letter from the accountant to see objections on how the books are kept. Review the balance sheet and statements of revenue and expenditures, and the others. Skip the Summary of Significant Accounting Policies unless you're preparing for the accountancy exam.

Why care about all this? A lot of money is being spent here, and it belongs to you. Don't just leave it to others to run your government. You are one of the bosses.

The Reports

Tired of numbers? Here come the words. It can be just fascinating if you read them all at one sitting. People write like they speak, and we all have different voices, and here among the reports are a good number of your neighbors, telling you how it went this year.

Generally the reports are upbeat, except perhaps the selectboard's contribution. It will recite the washouts, the unexpected expenditures, and the hardships that the town encountered during the year.

There is a lot of interesting details in the reports. You can learn how many zoning permits were issued, how many fires were extinguished (hopefully all of them, eventually), and how many of the social services agencies work. Some of this won't interest you, but give everything a try. They're trying to report to you, after all.

Use of the report at town meeting

The town report is obviously essential to a full appreciation of town meeting. You don't have to read the whole thing to recognize it doesn't answer all your questions. But it can certainly get you organized to form those questions and have them ready to go at town meeting time.

Rolled up, it can serve as a great prop for railing against government spending. It's also handy for taking notes on things. There are sometimes blank pages at the back.

Having your report handy, you can follow along when the debate gets hot. Don't wait until town meeting to read your report, but having it with you during boring portions of the meeting may actually provide some entertainment.

Most importantly, the report gives you a reference tool for finding answers from town officials. Asking what something means, calling out a number that seems excessive or too conservative, you can cite authority if you have your report with you at town meeting.

Use of the Report after town meeting

Keep it handy. It has phone numbers and addresses of town officers. It has sentimental value. Some families keep theirs in order, year after year, building a set. It's history in the making.

History of the Town Report

Before there were town reports, there was a committee of people in town to "settle" with the clerk, treasurer, and overseer of the poor. The committee would review expenses, authorize payment of bills, and file a report for the town clerk to transcribe in the records. As citizens became more interested in knowing about town finances, a different method evolved—the town report.

The earliest town reports came at the end of the Civil War and were broadsides—single sheets posted at stores, post offices, and on trees where people could read them. About the middle of the 19th century, printed booklets began to appear. From these early beginnings town reports have grown into substantial volumes as each part of town government has sought to report its activities. Today, the modern town report is a fascinating compilation of information.

The law makes the auditors primarily responsible for the report. In many towns the town clerk and treasurer also play a leading role in putting it together. Citizens can help by making sure their officials know what the town report lacks, either in content or organization.

Most important is a good index, in addition to the table of contents. An alphabetical index helps people find what they want to read, without having to flip through the whole report again and again.

PAGE 3

How to Get a Copy of the Report.

Getting a copy of the town report may take a little work. The law requires towns to make them available to every voter. Some mail them directly to each home. Others expect the voter to stop by the town office in order to get a copy or to call to get one by mail. But don't let town meeting come with you having to read the report at the meeting itself. It just won't be the same. You need to know what the warning says before you vote those articles. You need to know the financial background in order to understand what the officials are asking of you.

Remember, town meeting belongs to the voters who participate; the articles are really only proposals. Too often, voters feel compelled to accept the recommendations of local officials without question, confusing loyalty to the town with acquiescence to the wishes of local officials. The two aren't the same thing at all. Town meeting is the one place in the world where the voter decides directly how much money to pay out for government. It isn't the place to punish all government for its sins; that wouldn't be fair. But if voters don't turn out on the first Tuesday of March, insist on answers, and exercise their authority, we might as well give up on the idea of democracy altogether.

A test to see if you read your report

Find your current town report. Find the answers to these questions:

1. What was last year's tax rate?
2. How much was taken in by the town in property taxes last year?
3. Did the town have a deficit or surplus, and if so how much was it?
4. What is the town's total outstanding debt?
5. What monies does the town have in special funds that don't revert each year to pay for the normal needs of the town?
6. How much was spent on winter road maintenance last year?
7. How much did the selectboard make in town salaries last year?
8. Is the town involved in any current lawsuits?
9. How many speeding tickets were issued last year?
10. Name the health officer.

A Word about The Vermont Institute for Government

The Vermont Institute for Government (VIG) is a nonprofit corporation dedicated to improving educational opportunities for local officials and the public on how government works. It consists of representatives from each of the major groups in Vermont that offer such training.

The VIG has published other pamphlets that may be of use or interest to you. They include:

- *The Meeting Will Come to Order*, covering town meeting procedures;
- *Changing the World*, about how to increase your effectiveness in meetings of local and state boards and commissions;
- *Are You Appealing?*, which covers the tax grievance and appeal processes at the local level;
- *Isn't This My Land?*, relating to local planning and zoning; and
- *The Vermont Citizenship Comprehensive Examination*, a fun test of basic information a citizen ought to know about Vermont government.

• *The Public Right of Way and You*, covering town highways.

Contact the VIG office for free copies of any of these pamphlets or to learn more about VIG.

Vermont Institute for Government
8 R. 4, Box 2298
Montpelier, Vermont 05602
223-6500

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Jaquith Public Library Upcoming Events

All events are free and held at the **Jaquith Library** *unless noted otherwise*.
For more info: 802-426-3581 or email: jaquithpubliclibrary@gmail.com
Or visit our website:
www.jaquithpubliclibrary.org

Pop-up Cards with Ellen Bresler
Wednesday, February 5 from 4-6 pm
Join Ellen Bresler at the library to make cards for Valentine's Day or any other occasion. It's such a kick to start with a flat piece of paper and bring it to life with a few folds and cuts. For all ages but children 8 years and under need to be accompanied by a caregiver. Registration is required.

Bach Flower Essences and Well-Being
Saturday, February 15 at 2 pm
Bach Flower Essences are a set of 38 tinctures made from common flowers that are used to balance emotional states that get in the way of healing and health. Learn more about them, and make and take home your own remedy for your own issues. Presented by Anne Miller, who has not balanced all emotional states, but could be much worse. Please pre-register at jaquithpubliclibrary@gmail.com or 802-426-3581.

Jaquith Library's Annual Invitational Group Art Show
Opening Reception February 21 at 6 pm
Join us in a celebration of Marshfield's local art scene with local artists: Sarah Albert, Jenni Bee, Barbara Bendix, Ed Epstein, Diane Fitch, Maggie Neale, Viuu Nüler, Margaret Pulaski, Helen Rabin, Frederick Rudi, Merry Kelb Schmidt, David Smith, and Janet Van Fleet. This eclectic exhibit is representative of each individual's personal subject matter and choice of medium. **Refreshments will be served. The exhibit may be viewed during regular library hours from January 20th through April 20th.**

All Hands Together Community Crafting Group on Tuesdays 4:30 to 6 pm
and the fourth Saturday of every month 11:30 am to 1 pm
Bring whatever craft you are working on or start a new project. All ages are welcome if they are old enough to sit and work on a craft. Knitting and spinning maven, Donna Hisson from Marshfield, is the host of the group.

Baby & Caregivers Meet-up with Good Beginnings
Every Wednesday from 10:30 to 11:30 am
Join us for our weekly gatherings where caregivers can relax and connect while their babies play and explore in a calm, supportive setting. Geared toward babies ages 0-18 months and their caregivers. Siblings can come along as well.

Winter Story Time and Playgroup on Wednesdays from 10:30 to 12:30 a.m.
For children birth to age six and their grown-ups. We follow the Twinfield Union School calendar and do not hold the program the days Twinfield is closed.

Monthly Book Group for Adults on

Fourth Mondays at 7 pm
Join us for the Jaquith book group. For copies of the book, please stop by the library. New members are always welcome, and it's only one hour a month!
February 24 *The Nightingale* by Kristin Hannah
March 24 *A Midwife's Tale* Laurel Thatcher Ulrich

Chapters in History Book Group
Second Saturdays of the Month
Starting in February at 2:00 pm
The public is encouraged to participate in this free reading and discussion series of presidential biographies. Books are available for loan from the library.
February 8 *Destiny of the Republic: A Tale of Madness, Medicine, and the Murder of a President* by Candace Millard (winner of the Edgar Award in 2012)
March 8 *A Man of Iron: The Turbulent Life and Improbable Presidency of Grover Cleveland* by Troy Senik

Call for Actors! Have you always dreamed of treading the boards AND supporting your local library? We are looking for Marshfield-area actors to perform in a staged play reading of the play ***Murder by the Book*** by **Laura Teasdale, sponsored by author Lousie Penny**. Want to know more? Contact Bethany Bohall, Chair, Friends of the Jaquith and the play reading's director, at bethanyannbohalla@gmail.com. Beginners and experienced theater folk are welcome!

Just Food Hub Fundraiser for the Jaquith Library
Give Someone you Love a Gift Basket!
The Jaquith Library is raising money by collaborating with Just Food Hub, a profit-free, volunteer-run coop in Marshfield that helps raise funds for organizations and groups. When you go to jaquithlibrary.justfoodhub.us to order, **the Jaquith gets 30% of all purchases**. Just Food Hub sells ethically sourced, authentically fair-traded food from around the world. Mostly sourced from Equal Exchange, Just Food Hub food is organic, grown by small farmers and worker coops in the Global South and across the US. As part of the alternative trade system, Equal Exchange and Just Food Hub are focused on fighting racism, fighting climate change, and supporting organic food, workers co-ops, and small farmers. **WE ALSO SELL JUST FOOD HUB ITEMS AT THE LIBRARY.**

Wood Moisture Meter is available to borrow at the Jaquith Library The Vermont DEC's Air Quality & Climate Division (AQCD) and the Department of Libraries have co-sponsored the statewide wood moisture meter loan program. Hand-held wood moisture meters are available at 63 public libraries for patrons to borrow for free to check the moisture content of their firewood. Wood burning is an economical way to heat homes. However, proper burning practices are necessary to prevent poor air quality and protect public health. **We also have an Indoor Air Quality Meter for Loan.**

Marshfield Historical Society

and the Jaquith Public Library Presents

FEB
7

**"1800 AND FROZE TO DEATH:
THE COLD YEAR OF 1816"**

Presentation by Howard Coffin
Twinfield Union School Library 5:30-7:00 pm

1816 has long been known as the year without summer. Vermonters still call it "1800 and Froze to Death," a year of frosts every month, dark skies, and mysterious lights that caused a widespread belief that a higher power was displeased. In this talk, historian Howard Coffin includes scores of anecdotes on the dark year of failed crops, scarce food, and religious revival.

This popularly-acclaimed program is a Vermont Humanities series co-hosted by the Marshfield Historical Society and the Jaquith Public Library.

Free and open to the public. For more information, please call (802) 454 - 1680
Supported in part by the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) and Vermont Humanities. Any views, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this program do not necessarily represent those of the NEH or Vermont Humanities.

Service Appropriations Request Fairbanks Museum, 1302 Main Street, St. Johnsbury www.fairbanksmuseum.org

**By Damon Cawley,
Fairbanks Museum**

Mission: To inspire wonder, curiosity and responsibility for the natural world. The museum has welcomed students from Cabot schools on field trips for decades. Museum educators have also run after school programs for students.

Cabot residents have been paying admission to enjoy the galleries since opening in 1891. This tax appropriation would entitle all Cabot residents to have pre-paid (free) admission to the museum (\$15-17 per person) for the year. It does not include the Planetarium (\$8 admission). See the beautifully redone exhibits and facility for free.



Re-Elect



Karen Larsen
Cabot Selectboard
Two-Year Seat

- Service to Community
- Communication with Neighbors
- Resiliency in Rebuilding
- Responsible Fiscal Stewardship

Great Big Thank You To The Community For The Cabot Christmas Dinner

by Fred Ducharme

Thank you to the many cooks, bakers, organizers, couriers, cleaners and all the helpers who made this dinner possible. I am especially grateful to Shirley, Cindy, Dale and Robert, without whom the work would be impossible. We had a fabulous team of volunteers, and we are grateful for the use of the Cabot School facility.

We also appreciate the generous financial donations that allow us to make this event free for all.

A special thank you goes to Richard Ducharme for donating the Adirondack chairs which netted \$450 toward dinner expenses.

And the fabulous bakers of Cabot made the meal special for everyone with their generous artistry.

A very special thanks to the delightful community members who participated and made our day! We had fun, and we hope you did, too. This is what makes a community, and I'm glad I live here.

*Donations are always welcome at
CCA, PO Box 245, Cabot, VT 05647, marked "Christmas Dinner."*



Twin Valley Senior Center

P.O. Box 152
East Montpelier,
VT 05651
802-223-3322
director@twinvalleyseniors.org

TWIN VALLEY SENIOR UPDATE

Twin Valley Senior Center is located at 4583 US Rte. 2 in E. Montpelier

Upcoming events:

Assorted pies and whoopie pies sale
Wednesday, February 12, from noon to 5 pm
Pies \$20 to \$25; Whoopie pies 3 for \$10 or \$4 each
Contact director@twinvalleyseniors.org or call 802-223-3322 for the selection and to order.

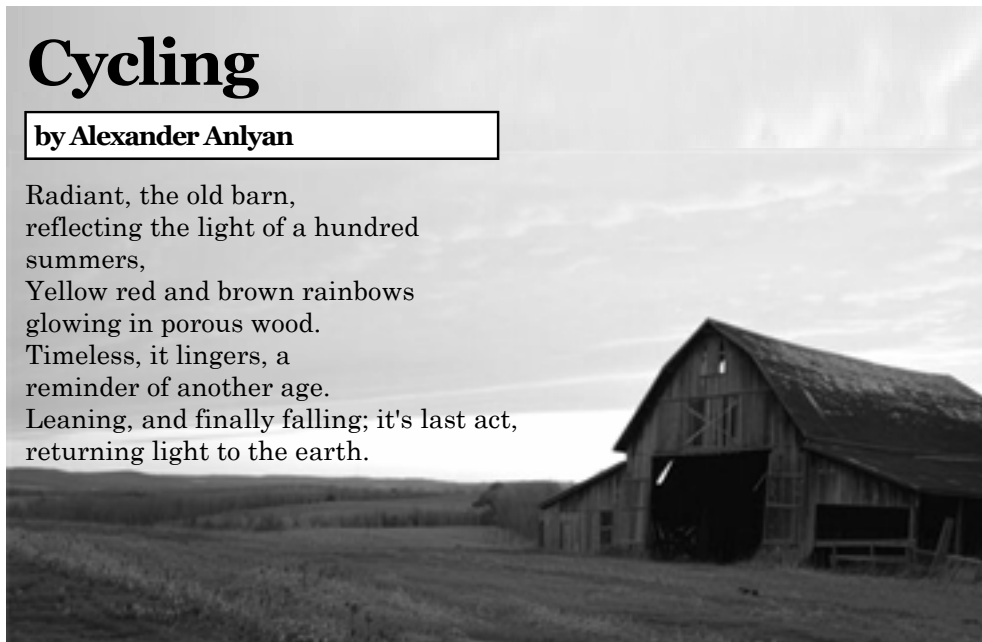
AARP FREE tax clinic begins in mid-February
Tuesday and Thursday from 9 to 5:30 pm
Appointments must be scheduled by contacting info@twinvalleyseniors.org or calling 802-223-3322

Visit our website for additional information at <https://www.twinvalleyseniors.org>

Cycling

by Alexander Anlyan

Radiant, the old barn,
reflecting the light of a hundred
summers,
Yellow red and brown rainbows
glowing in porous wood.
Timeless, it lingers, a
reminder of another age.
Leaning, and finally falling; it's last act,
returning light to the earth.



Mid Winter BINGO Celebrate National Mentoring Month



CABOT PUBLIC LIBRARY NEWS

LIBRARY HOURS: Monday noon - 6 pm, Tuesday 10 am - 6 pm, Wednesday 2 - 6 pm, Thursday noon - 6 pm, and Saturday 9 am-noon. Curbside library service is still available during regular library hours.

Dungeons and Dragons (ages 9 - 13) - **Ongoing - Tuesdays, 3:30 - 5:00 pm** - Join Losada Stoddard as DM for our newest D&D campaign. Learn how to build a Dungeons and Dragons character and then set out on your Adventures. No experience necessary! Come for the mysteries and magic, tails and talons, puzzles and prophecies! Snacks provided. New members are welcome anytime!

Story and Activity Time (ages birth - 5+) - **Ongoing - Wednesdays, 10:30 - 11:30 am - Willey Building 3rd Floor** - Join youth librarian Amanda Otto for stories, songs, snacks, crafts and open play! All are welcome!

Chess and Checkers Club (ages 6+) - **Wednesdays, Jan. 8th & 22 and Feb. 12 & 26, 2:30 - 4:00 pm** - Drop in to play chess and checkers with other kids and special guest players. Don't know how to play? No worries, we will teach you! Younger kids interested in learning to play are welcome with adult supervision. Popcorn provided.

Black History Month - Farmer Ama and Rajnii Eddins with Cabot youth - Poetry, Song, Potluck, and Community Art Making - Friday, February 7, 5-7:30 pm - Willey Building Kitchen Meeting room - All are welcome! The Human Family Potluck (donations appreciated, but not necessary), Poetry/Stories/Community Art with Farmer Ama and Cabot youth from 5-6:30, Rajnii Eddins from 6:30-7:30. Special tribute to the late poet Nikki Giovanni. Book signing with Rajnii Eddins. Special thanks to Salon Black Walnut for cosponsoring this event.

Vermont Author Kevin Graffagnino - Wednesday, Feb 12 - 7 pm - Land speculator, revolutionary, pamphleteer, politician, and empire builder, Ira Allen was a key figure on the late eighteenth-century Green Mountain frontier. Based on his new book *Ira Allen: A Biography*, J. Kevin Graffagnino's talk evaluates Allen's checkered career and makes the case for including him in our picture of Vermont's formative decades.

Cabot Book Group - there are two options to meet - Wednesday, Feb 19 at 6 pm or Thursday, Feb 20 at 2 pm. Feel free to choose whichever time suits you. February's book selection will be *How to Love a Forest: The Bittersweet Work of Tending a Changing World* by **Ethan Tapper**. Please see below for a book summary. Copies of this book will be available in the library for you to borrow. All are welcome! - Email cabotlibrary@yahoo.com for more info and to be added to the book group email list. Only those who love trees should cut them, writes forester Ethan Tapper. In *How to Love a Forest*, he asks what it means to live in a time in which ecosystems are in retreat and extinctions rattle the bones of the earth. How do we respond to the harmful legacies of the past? How do we use our species' incredible power to heal rather than to harm? Tapper walks us through the fragile and resilient community that is a forest. He introduces us to

wolf trees and spring ephemerals, and to the mysterious creatures of the rhizosphere and the necrosphere. He helps us reimagine what forests are and how to care for them. This world, Tapper writes, is degraded by people who do too much and by those who do nothing. As the ecosystems that sustain all life struggle, we straddle two worlds: a status quo that treats them as commodities and opposing claims that the only true expression of love for the natural world is to leave it alone. Proffering a more complex vision, Tapper argues that the actions we must take to protect ecosystems are often counterintuitive, uncomfortable, even heartbreaking. He shows how bittersweet acts-like loving deer and hunting them, loving trees and felling them-can be expressions of compassion. Tapper weaves a new land ethic for the modern world, reminding us that what is simple is rarely true, and what is necessary is rarely easy.

Vermont Author Ethan Tapper - Tuesday, Feb 25 - 6:30 pm - How to Love a Forest: The Bittersweet Work of Tending a Changing World - Ethan Tapper's stunning literary debut is a tender and fearless reimagining of what it means to care for forests, ecosystems and each other.

In 2017, Ethan bought a 175-acre forest in Bolton, Vermont that he named "Bear Island." When he bought Bear Island, it had, as he says: "every problem that a forest could have." As Ethan worked to help this forest heal, Bear Island helped him crystallize many of the ideas that would eventually become *How to Love a Forest*. Today, Ethan spends countless hours working at Bear Island, performing the countless bittersweet and beautiful acts required to help this forest "reach towards wholeness again." Where once he saw Bear Island as a symbol of the dysfunction of the modern world, now, he sees it as "a symbol of what is possible, a symbol of hope." Ethan donated a conservation easement on Bear Island to the Richmond Land Trust in 2022 - protecting this forest forever. Come listen to Ethan's firsthand account of his experiences. **Thank you to the Cabot Conservation Committee for co-sponsoring this event.**

Community Live Storytelling Event - Thursday, February 27 - 6:00-8:15pm - 3rd Floor Auditorium - Willey Building - Ten storytellers, neighbors and fellow Vermonters, each with a 5- 7-minute story will share their true, first person, no notes story - Interested in sharing a story yourself? Please contact Samara Anderson at anderson_samara@yahoo.com First time storytellers are welcomed and encouraged! Storytellers will also share a book. Refreshments will be available. Donations welcome but not necessary.

Thanks so much to Chip Taylor for a fascinating look at Minuteman Missiles. Much appreciation to Grace Hoffman, Vicky Palmer, and Beth Wade for their volunteer help. Thanks so much to the Library Trustees for their many hours of volunteer work and dedication to the library: Niall McCallum, Angela Ogle, Kurt Steinert, Taeryn Robbins, and Erin Ruddell. Additional thanks to Losada Stoddard, Jen Tidd and Neil McCallum for their program contributions!
Kathleen Hoyne - Library Director
Amanda Otto - Youth Librarian

JENNIFER MINER

FOR CABOT SELECTBOARD

If you think this name sounds familiar, you're probably right, if you've been around Cabot during the two most recent floods, COVID, or called 911 for an Ambulance in Cabot in the past 15 years.

I am running for a Town of Cabot Selectboard seat this year because I have heard the community concerns surrounding transparency, insufficient representation and about our voices not being heard clearly by elected officials.

As a business professional for over 25 years, I believe in open door policy, transparency, clear communication and doing what is best for a majority, not just a chosen few. All taxpayers should have a voice and be respected regardless of their social stature.

I have not only witnessed, but been the recipient of behaviors unbecoming of a public official.



**If you believe it's time for a change
I ask for your vote on
Tuesday, March 4th.**

NEW & USED EQUIPMENT

TANKS, TUBING, FITTINGS, MAINLINE, FILTRATION & MORE!

**LARGE
SUPPLY OF
CRUCHON,
VMSMA &
MAPLE LEAF
CONTAINERS**

**PLASTIC &
STAINLESS TANKS
TUBING FITTINGS
& MAINLINE**



CONSULTATIONS

- ✓ TUBING LAYOUTS & INSTALLATIONS
- ✓ SUGARHOUSE DESIGN
- ✓ EFFICIENCY & IMPROVING YOUR OPERATION
- ✓ TROUBLE SHOOTING

**STOCK UP
ON JUGS
& GLASS**

SEE A LISTING OF EQUIPMENT FOR
SALE ON OUR FACEBOOK PAGES:

Facebook



goodrichsmapple@yahoo.com 1-800-639-1854 www.goodrichmaplefarm.com



CABOT FEBRUARY Calendar

FREE Food Share

February 12th & 26th

DRIVE-UP from 12:00 - 2:00 pm

Senior Adventures

February 4th & 18th

**American Red Cross
Blood Drive: FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 21ST**

12:30 - 5:00 PM

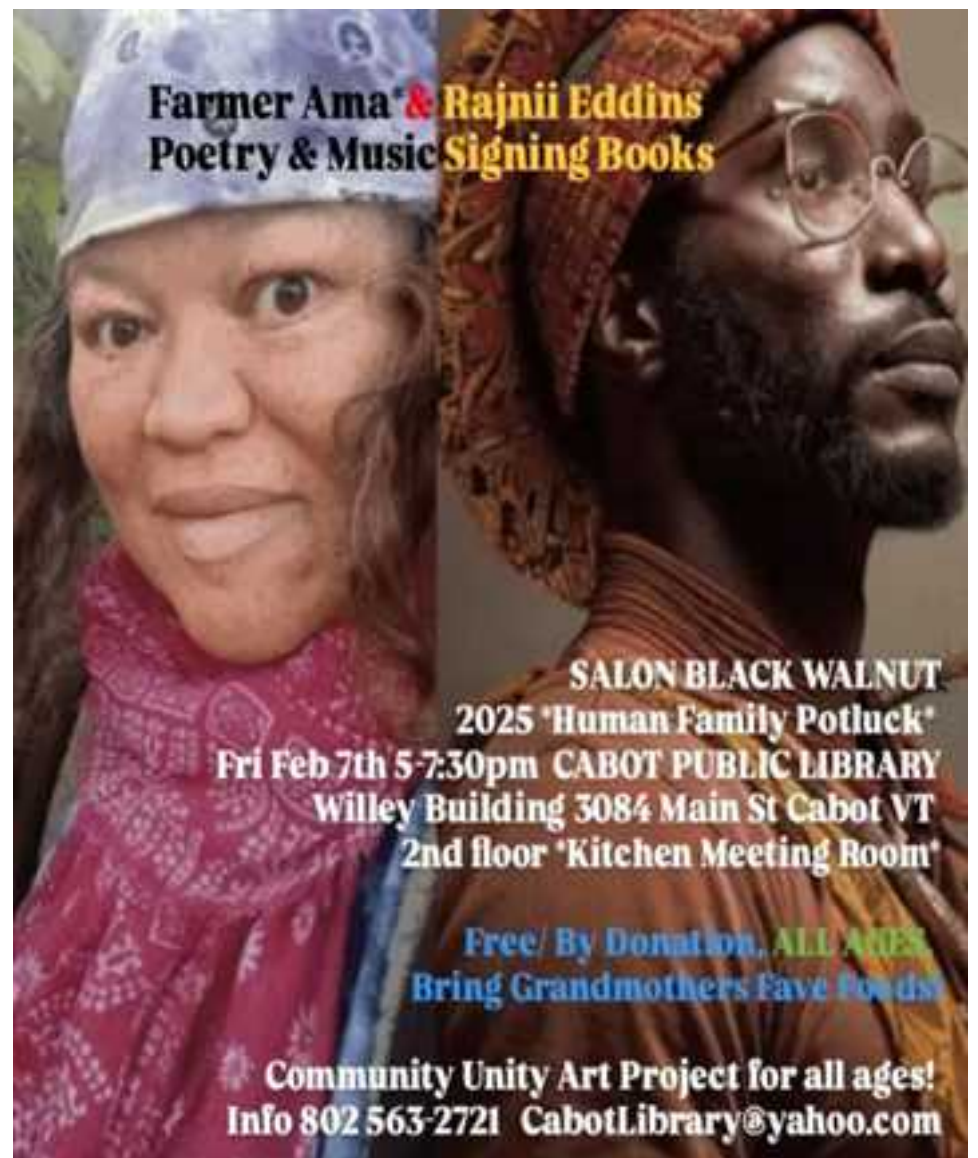
Please call 1-800-RED CROSS
(1-800-733-2767) or visit RedCrossBlood.org
and enter: "neighbor" to schedule an appointment.

NO Community Supper in FEBRUARY See you in March!

3339 Main Street
Downtown Cabot Village
Call: 802-563-3322

NeighborsinActionVT.org
www.facebook.com/neighborsinact

Farmer Ama* & Rajnii Eddins
Poetry & Music Signing Books



SALON BLACK WALNUT

2025 'Human Family Potluck'

**Fri Feb 7th 5-7:30pm CABOT PUBLIC LIBRARY
Willey Building 3084 Main St Cabot VT
2nd floor 'Kitchen Meeting Room'**

**Free/ By Donation, ALL AGES
Bring Grandmothers Fave Foods!**

**Community Unity Art Project for all ages!
Info 802 563-2721 CabotLibrary@yahoo.com**