

THE EASTFORD Communicator



MAY 2026 **EASTFORD.NEWS** "Eastford: One of Connecticut's best small towns." - Carol Davidge VOL. 34, No. 10

Town Meeting set for May 14

VOTERS TO DECIDE FATE OF TOWN, SCHOOL SPENDING PLANS

BY ADAM MINOR
MANAGING EDITOR

EASTFORD — Residents of Eastford will make their voices heard on Thursday, May 14, as the town is gearing up for its Annual Town Budget Meeting.

The Town Meeting was preceded by the Annual Budget Hearing, which was held Thursday, April 30, after the Eastford Communicator's publishing deadline. The information presented in this article is based on information posted as of April 20, 2026.

The general town government budget proposal is currently set at \$2,204,416, which represents an increase of \$118,847 (5.7

percent) over fiscal 2025-26. The Board of Education has presented a budget proposal of \$4,937,953, which represents an increase of \$143,774 (3 percent). Combined, both budget proposals total \$7,142,369, an increase of \$262,621 (3.8 percent) over fiscal 2025-26. If passed, the budget would result in a new property tax rate of 22.2 mils, a 1-mil increase over fiscal 2025-26 (21.2).

Capital projects planned for 2026-27 (out of the Municipal Reserve Fund) include funding for Open Space acquisitions (\$25,000); funding toward future purchases to replace Eastford

Turn to **BUDGET**, pg. 23

Town Meeting voters reject land use ordinance

BY ADAM MINOR
MANAGING EDITOR

EASTFORD — At a Special Town Meeting Thursday, April 16, voters rejected a proposed "Ordinance Establishing Minimum Land Use Regulations," by a vote of 110-87.

According to Chuck Lee, chairman of the Planning

Committee, in a summary of the proposed land ordinance provided to the town, the reason for drafting the proposed minimum land use ordinance was in response to "complaints from residents of increased development density not in character with previous development in Eastford." The

Turn to **ORDINANCE**, pg. 23

THE HUNT IS ON!



EASTFORD — The town's Recreation Commission hosted its annual Easter Egg Hunt on Saturday March 28, unleashing dozens of children to search for eggs under the watchful eye of the Easter Bunny. At left, Corey Arpin was one of the winners of a gift basket, awarded to one who found a special, golden egg. Above, Valerie takes a moment to pose for a photo with the Easter Bunny. For more photos, turn to page 21!
Adam Minor photos

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THE
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Communicator
LOCAL NEWS SINCE 1992

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EES seeks funds for D.C. field trip

BY CAROLE MCCOMBE
SPECIAL TO THE COMMUNICATOR

EASTFORD — For many Eastford students, the eighth-grade trip to Washington, D.C. is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity — one that broadens their understanding of history, government, and the world beyond their hometown.

For nearly 30 years, Eastford Elementary School has proudly provided this fully funded educational experience to its eighth-grade students (with the exception of the COVID-19 shutdown year). This culminating trip leaves a lasting impression. For some students, it is their first time traveling beyond Connecticut or even New England. For others, it is their first visit to our nation's capital.

While our fundraising efforts remain strong, rising costs for transportation, lodging, and meals have made it increasingly difficult to sustain this tradition. Our annual Goods and Services Auction raises an average of \$10,000 each year, thanks to the incredible generosity of local businesses, families, and community members. However, with total trip costs now exceeding \$20,000, we are seeking to raise an additional \$10,000 to ensure that every student can attend at no cost to their family.

To help bridge this gap, families of students attending this May's trip are organizing several additional fundraisers. These include a "Someone Special" Dance on Saturday, May 9, sales of Munson's chocolate bars, and a Pampered Chef event, which will donate 15 percent of proceeds to the trip fund. To access the Pampered Chef fundraiser, scan the QR code accompanying this article, or visit <https://www.pamperedchef.com/party/Fr5Gdu>.

We are reaching out to the Eastford community for support and encourage all residents to consider contributing. You can help by participating in these events or by making a direct donation through the Eastford Elementary School main office. Donations are tax-deductible, and additional information is available upon request. Contributions are especially needed in the coming weeks as we finalize preparations for the May trip.

This long-standing tradition reflects the strength, generosity, and community spirit of Eastford. We believe strongly that every student deserves the opportunity to participate in this meaningful educational experience,



Due to rising costs, Eastford Elementary School is hoping to raise an additional \$10,000 to support the school's annual Washington D.C. field trip, scheduled this year for May 19-22. Scan the pictured QR code to access the link to the Pampered Chef fundraiser. File photo



regardless of financial circumstances. No child should have to miss this trip due to cost.

Please consider supporting our students and helping us continue this cherished tradition. To contribute, please contact the Eastford Elementary School main office at (860) 974-1130 or e-mail Principal Carole McCombe at cmccombe@eastfordct.org.

We are sincerely grateful for your continued support of our students and school community.

DONATIONS MAKE THE COMMUNICATOR POSSIBLE!

Please consider a donation to the Communicator!

Send checks to:

Eastford Communicator, P.O. Box 253, Eastford, CT 06242

Second suspect finally sentenced for role in 2023 CCE fire

BY ADAM MINOR
MANAGING EDITOR

EASTFORD — A second person who was arrested following a series of local fires — including one that destroyed the Congregational Church of Eastford in April 2023 — was finally sentenced nearly three years after the church's destruction.

In Danielson Superior Court Tuesday, March 31, the second, female suspect — who pled guilty and was convicted of second-degree arson on Oct. 28, 2025 — was sentenced to 20 years of jailtime (with execution to be suspended after 30 months, and probation after five years). This is nearly the same sentence the first, male suspect received back on Sept. 5, 2025, who received a suspension of three years (36 months) instead of 30 months. Both suspects were minors at the time of the incident, and their names have not been made public, even though both have turned 19 since the incident.

In practice, the sentencing for both minors means that despite the 20-year sentence, each will only serve about three years in actual custody, and the remaining 17 years are suspended. That means those years will not be served unless the person violates

probation or commits another crime. After being released from those three years in custody, the person must complete five years of probation, under supervision and with conditions (such as regular check-ins, no new offenses, etc.). However, if they violate probation or reoffend, the court can reimpose some or all of that suspended time.

The sentencing truly brings the case of the Congregational Church of Eastford's destruction to a close. The fire, which occurred on April 23, 2023, only two weeks after Easter Sunday, burned the church, then located at 8 Church Rd., to the ground. Connecticut State Police Troop D, along with the Connecticut State Police Fire & Explosives Investigation Unit (FEIU), Eastern District Major Crimes, and federal agents from the bureau of Alcohol Tobacco and Firearms, conducted the investigation that led to the arrest of the two then-minors, who were also connected to a similar incident in South Windsor and a break in and small fire at Crystal Pond Park in Woodstock, police said.

On Sept. 8, 2023, the juvenile male was charged with first-degree arson, third-degree burglary, first-degree criminal mischief and reckless endangerment. On Sept.

27, 2023, the juvenile female was charged with first-degree conspiracy to commit arson, third-degree burglary, first-degree criminal mischief, and first-degree reckless endangerment.

In the three years since the fire, CCE has since purchased land on John Perry Road, and construction continues on a new building, which is planned to open this summer. CCE Pastor Mike Moran, in a written column exclusive to the Communicator back in June 2025, expressed his belief that despite the tragic loss of the building, God has used this situation to bless his congregation.

"Our time without a building has been one of great blessings," he wrote last June. "Our church family has grown substantially, and we are thriving in every way."

Moran shared in a public Facebook post in reaction to a story published by WINY Radio on March 31 that he was at the sentencing earlier that day, and was able to share from a victim impact statement that he had previously shared with the court at the first suspect's sentencing.

"[The statement] enumerated all the losses — the beautiful building, the history, the memories, the grief and anger, a whole bunch of money, the volunteer hours since the fire and

so forth," he wrote. "This is how our statement concluded: 'As followers of Jesus, we understand and firmly believe that we are so loved by our good and great God that He sent His one and only Son, Jesus, to earth. This Jesus willingly laid down His life for us so that He might pay the penalty for the sins of all humanity such that those who put their trust in Him might be completely and unconditionally forgiven.'"

"We know we have been forgiven much and that we are the object of God's breathtaking love," he continued. "Accordingly, it is our heart to forgive the perpetrator of these crimes against us just as God in Jesus has forgiven us — completely and unconditionally. We would love to share that face-to-face with [the second suspect]. If not, we request that you do so. Further, we hope you might share with her our love for her and our deep desire for God's best and greatest blessings for her. We also know that sometimes we must go through difficult passages in this life to receive God's best. Accordingly, we entrust those matters to the judicial system. If this seems alien and weird — it is. The love and mercy of Jesus is beyond imagining. It is why we celebrate Easter."

THE JOY OF PAINTING



EASTFORD — To celebrate the Easter season, Eastford Baptist Church (EBC) hosted a Community Painting Class on Friday, March 27. More than 20 people came out to enjoy a relaxed time of painting, which depicted a series of three crosses and an empty tomb to symbolize the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. EBC regularly hosts Community Painting Classes. For more information, visit www.eastfordbaptist.com, and check the "Events" tab.

Courtesy photos

Werstler launches campaign to challenge in 35th Senate District

BY ADAM MINOR
MANAGING EDITOR

The race for the 35th State Senate District is beginning to take shape.

According to a press release sent to the Communicator in early April, Ethan Werstler (D-Woodstock) has officially announced his candidacy for the Connecticut State Senate, seeking to represent the 35th District, which is comprised of Ashford, Chaplin, Coventry, Eastford, Ellington, Hampton, Stafford, Thompson, Tolland, Union, Vernon, Willington, and Woodstock. The seat is currently held by Sen. Jeff Gordon (R-Woodstock), who was first elected in 2022 and is currently serving his second term in office. Gordon announced his re-election bid in January.

The general election is slated for Nov. 3, with primaries slated for Aug. 11, if necessary.

Werstler previously ran on the Democratic ticket for election to the Connecticut House of Representatives to represent the 52nd District (Stafford, Somers). He lost in the general election on Nov. 5, 2024, to Republican Kurt Vail.

According to the release, Werstler is seeking to bring “deep roots in northeastern Connecticut to the practical agricultural, housing, small business, and rising cost concerns that are priorities for individuals and families in the region.”

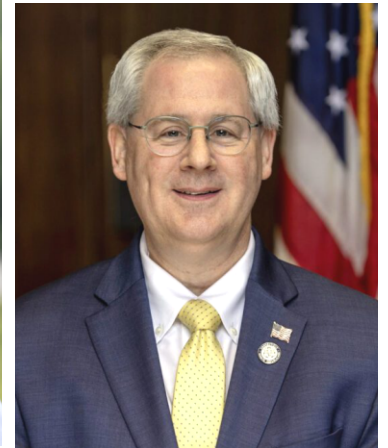
Werstler is a “fourth-generation UConn graduate, [and] third-generation Woodstock resident.” He said he is “familiar with the challenges faced by the rural communities of our state,” is a

“small business owner, an associate at a top government affairs firm in Hartford, and volunteers on the Board of Trustees of Woodstock’s Roseland Park.” He has served as a full voting member of the UConn Board of Trustees, is an advocate for residents facing food insecurity, and is a community leader.

“My campaign will not be about making noise. It is about listening, learning, and working hard to represent our citizens with integrity,” Werstler said. “I am energized by the residents I’ve already had the opportunity to meet, and I look forward to hearing from many more across the district.”

When Werstler officially announced his campaign, he did so while seeking to qualify for Connecticut’s Citizens’ Election Program, which requires small-dollar donations from residents in the district to secure public campaign funding. In an updated announcement on April 14, Werstler announced that he had achieved the \$20,000 threshold in only three days, exceeding the required 300 in-district donations needed to qualify for the program.

The Connecticut Citizens Election Program is a voluntary program which provides clean elections financing to qualified candidates for statewide offices and the General Assembly. To qualify for public campaign financing, candidates must demonstrate substantial public support by soliciting small-dollar donations and raising \$20,000. Candidates participating in the Connecticut Citizens Election



Ethan Werstler (D-Woodstock) has announced his campaign for the Connecticut State Senate. Assuming no other challengers present themselves in a Democratic primary (which would be held Aug. 11), he will be looking to challenge incumbent Sen. Jeff Gordon (R-Woodstock), who was elected to the office in 2022, and is currently serving in his second term. Gordon announced his re-election bid in January. Courtesy photos

Program may not accept donations from state contractors, political action committees, corporations or lobbyists during the legislative session.

Gordon confirmed in January that he had met the criteria to qualify, and looks forward to November.

“This is about the people of our district stepping up and saying they want a continued common-sense voice in Hartford and a state senator who understands what they’re going through,” Gordon said. “Costs are rising, access to medical care remains uneven, and families are looking for practical solutions, not D.C. rhetoric. I am proud to be that voice and work for the people of the district to get things done.”

Gordon, who is a Hematology-Oncology doctor, and said he has centered his legislative and campaign agenda on “lowering the cost of living; expanding access to

care, particularly in rural and underserved communities; protecting people’s rights to decide what’s best for their communities, not Hartford bureaucrats; and supporting public education.”

“At the Capitol, I’ve focused on the issues I hear about every day from patients, families, small business owners, and our towns,” he said. “That means making Connecticut more affordable, tackling healthcare costs and access, supporting our veterans, protecting our rights and freedoms, helping towns through more education and other funding, and ensuring taxpayer dollars are spent responsibly and transparently.”

Gordon currently serves as Ranking Member on the Planning & Development Committee and the Veterans’ Affairs Committee, and sits on the Appropriations, Public Health, and Public Safety Committees. He is a co-chair of the Rural Caucus.



A DAY OF CELEBRATION

EASTFORD — Despite cloud cover and precipitation blocking the town’s view of the rising sun on Sunday, April 5, both Eastford Baptist Church and the Congregational Church of Eastford celebrated Resurrection Sunday with a Sunrise Service. Dozens turned out at 6:30 a.m., both at Buell’s Orchard (EBC) and at 8 Church Rd. (the former site of CCE), to sing songs and hear the message of the risen Savior.

Courtesy photos

WHAT'S NEW WITH SCOUT TROOP 92?

ASHFORD/EASTFORD — take place the end of May and should produce life long memories.

The Troop will assist the New England Garden Club by planting their oak tree right near the General Lyon building in Eastford. This planting commemorates the 250th anniversary of our country. The Ashford Garden Club is planting a tree in Ashford.

In May, the Troop plans to hold their annual Mother's Day Flower Sale. This is a major fundraiser for our Troop. It helps to offset the costs of summer camp and other activities. Please support our local Scout Troop and purchase some lovely spring flowers. The sale will take place at the old post office building across from the town hall in Ashford, and in Eastford Center, on Saturday, May 9.

Troop 92 will replace worn flags at town cemetery grave sites in time for Memorial Day. The Troop hopes to assist with Ashford's Memorial Day ceremonies. May is a busy month for the Scouts!

Plans for the whitewater rafting trip have been completed. This will

The Troop will assist the New England Garden Club by planting their oak tree right near the General Lyon building in Eastford. This planting commemorates the 250th anniversary of our country. The Ashford Garden Club is planting a tree in Ashford.

Two of our Scouts, Joe and John, had their final Eagle Board of Review. The date for their Eagle Court of Honor has not yet been determined. We are so proud that their efforts have taken them this far!

The Cub Scouts had a great time at the spring Hartford Yard Goats Scout Night in April. Our Scouts' favorite part of the event was the overnight where they pitched their tents and camped in the outfield of Dunkin Park after the game!

In May, the Pack plans to hold a second overnight at J.N. Webster



Scouts plan delicious meals for the next campout. Scouts will cook and clean up too. Courtesy photo

for the annual Barry E. Grant Memorial Fishing Derby. We'll see who has the first catch of the day at the fishing derby!

Cub Scout meetings are held the first Friday of the month at 6 p.m. in Knowlton Hall. New Cubs are always welcome! Scout meetings are the second and fourth Tuesday evenings of the month at

6:30 p.m. New members are welcome.

- Submitted by BSA Troop 92: Nord Yakovleff, Assistant Scoutmaster; Jesse Burnham, Scoutmaster; Gerard Taylor, Assistant Scoutmaster; Rob Hany, Committee Chairman; Doug Jenne, Cubmaster

BOYD, GORDON FIELD QUESTIONS AT LEGISLATIVE UPDATE EVENT



EASTFORD — State Sen. Jeff Gordon and State Rep. Pat Boyd held a Legislative Update coffeehouse hour at Always Moore on Saturday, April 18. Both Gordon and Boyd highlighted their bipartisan efforts in the northeast corner, stating that they may not always agree, but they like to work together for their constituents. Eleven people in attendance asked questions ranging from the topics of budgets and town aid, to special education and school costs, to the affordable housing bill, the cost of solar permitting and plug-in solar, and changes to the vaccination laws. Gordon shared that there is a lot going on right now in Hartford with some bills being redrafted daily. However, Boyd stated that the session ends May 6, no matter what. Connecticut must pass a balanced budget or there can be a civil suit. Residents can go to <https://www.cga.ct.gov> to see bills, testimony, what committees are doing, and more. Check in regularly as the page is updated frequently. Julia Torcellini photos



Want to see the *Communicator* in its full-color glory? Download the latest PDF at:

eastford.news

EES announces second trimester honor roll

EASTFORD — Eastford Elementary School has announced the Second Trimester Honor Roll for Grade 6 to 8.

High Honors

Grades of A (including A+ and A-) in every academic and special subject, allowing for one B+

Owen Barlow
Katherine Douglass
Xander Sughrue
Georgia Barlow
Logan Gillett
Jillian Norman
Grace Witter

Honors

Grades of A or B (including B+ and B-) in every academic and special subject

Alina Platt
Myckenzie Coldwell
Olivia DePercio
Isla Lupacchino
Chloe Minor
Ilsa Reiner
Aiden Abbamonte
Blake Gilbert
Callum St. John
Jericho Hillman

Recognition

Students must hand in homework, seek extra help, participate in class, and work to best of ability

Trey Hutchings
McKenna Tacy
Sylas Platt
Leilani Soucy-Brodeur

CITIZEN OF THE TRIMESTER



EASTFORD — At its meeting on Thursday, April 9, the Eastford Board of Education recognized third grader Savannah DeLay as Citizen of the Trimester. Savannah was selected for this honor by faculty in recognition of her leadership qualities, respect for others and property, encouragement and support of peers, and involvement in school activities. DeLay was presented with a certificate at the April 9 meeting by Principal Carole McCombe, while her parents, Travis and Becca DeLay, looked on with pride. *Adam Minor photos*

DID YOU KNOW?



EASTFORD — On Thursday, April 2, the Eastford Public Library hosted an Adult Trivia Night, as host Jeremy Barlow tested the knowledge of participants. From numbers to flags of the world, sound clips of famous voices to chemistry knowledge and more, Jeremy posed some challenging questions to the teams. A great time was had by all. *Courtesy photo*

EES students awarded AHA certificates

EASTFORD — It is with pleasure for American Heart Association Instructor Jeannine Spink to announce that grades 6, 7, and 8 Health class students have successfully completed three months of training in the skills of CPR/Defibrillation, Heimlich Maneuver, Rescue Breathing and Basic First Aid for infants, children, and adults in accordance with the standards and guidelines established by the American Heart Association. Beginning in January, each class met weekly during their Health class blocks until they successfully completed all the elements required and awarded a Certificate of Completion and Understanding. Thank you to Principal Carole McCombe for allowing these students to enhance their learning process and build confidence in knowing how to recognize and render basic care until help arrives. Eastford parents need to be proud of their students as participants in Eastford's HeartSafe Community Program.

CONSERVATION AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION UPDATE

ROGER WOLFE

And just like that, spring is upon us. Temps have fluctuated from the 20s at night to almost 80! However, flowers, shrubs and trees are in bloom, bees are all a buzz (and blackflies too!) and warmer weather is here to stay.

Bears are more active — sows are kicking out the yearlings to make way for this year’s cubs so “Be Bear Aware.” Check out the DEEP Wildlife Division’s website for more information. Also, with warmer weather comes ticks. Check yourself frequently for ticks whether you are outdoors in the yard or in the deep woods.

The CHPC had a bit of a hiatus with snowstorms and cancellations, but we’ve still been active nonetheless. We are working with the Quiet Corner Garden Club who has offered to donate a white oak sapling to towns in the northeast corner in

celebration of the nation’s 250th anniversary. It was a white oak, the Charter Oak, that the early colonists hid the state constitution in to prevent it from falling into the hands of the British. As Eastford does not have a lot of municipal open space to plant a white oak tree (which could grow to be over 80 feet tall), we are fortunate to live in an area with much state forest land. We have made arrangements with the DEEP Forestry and Park Divisions to have the memorial tree planted at the General Lyon Homestead (“the Chimney”) on Kingsbury Road in the Natchaug Forest. The event took place on Tuesday, April 28. Please take some time to visit the homestead and see the tree and plaque.

Earlier in April, two representatives from the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) met with a group at the

Ivy Glenn Memorial (our library) to answer questions and consider the Ivy Glenn for placement on the state or federal register of historic places. They discussed grant opportunities and walked the group through the procedures necessary to have a building registered. Much thanks to Deb Richards for drawing this opportunity to our attention, and a special thanks to Jeanine Spink for compiling an enormous amount of historic documents and background information.

Some of us have been involved in the Natchaug River Healthy Watershed Implementation Plan. This is an EPA-funded project administered through the CT DEEP and the Eastern CT Conservation Commission. The eight towns that exist in the watershed have agreed to support and encourage clean water conservation and a healthy watershed. Check it out on their

Facebook page at Naturally Natchaug. They have a number of events scheduled this spring and summer to raise awareness of the Natchaug River Watershed.

Please take time this spring to get out and hike the trails in the area. Notably, the Boston Turnpike Trail, the George Askew Trail behind Eastford Elementary, the trails at Crystal Pond Park, and the numerous trails that wind through the Natchaug and Yale Forests. We hope to schedule some trail cleanups this spring. Stay tuned if you’d like to participate.

Don’t forget to come visit us at our table on June 6 for Experience Eastford. We hope to have a number of conservation organizations participating.

Finally, we normally meet the first Tuesday of every month at 7 p.m. Come check us out! Also keep tabs on what’s going through the town’s website.

RECREATION COMMISSION UPDATE

After a successful egg hunt in late March, the Recreation Commission has two events on tap for the coming weeks.

First up is a bike/scooter/stroller patriotic decorating contest during the Memorial Day Parade on Monday, May 25. The parade steps off at 9:30 a.m. from the EES parking lot. For the bike contest, assemble at EES side parking lot prior to the parade. Judging will begin at 9 a.m. and close at 9:20 a.m. Judging categories include Most Patriotic, Most Creative and Best Overall.

Kids of all ages are encouraged to bring their decorated non-motorized transport – bike, trike, scooter, wagon, wheelchair, skateboard, stroller, etc. This year is our 250th Birthday – so go patriotic, go long!

Next up is Experience Eastford on Saturday, June 6. The day will begin with the “Heart of Eastford” 5K run at 9 a.m. Last year we set a new record for number of runners, and we look forward to smashing the record this year. All proceeds go to individuals in need and also to help Eastford Food

Pantry. Every year these funds help more than 20 families in need. Registration is open at <https://runsignup.com/race/ct/eastford/2026heartofeastford5k>.

The day continues with Experience Eastford from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Eastford Elementary School. There will be vendors and exhibits, two live bands, a food truck, ice cream, baked goods sale, bounce house, the “hula hoop lady,” pie eating contest, games for kids, a car show at Bowen’s Garage and much more. Vendor/exhibitor registration is at

the following link:

<https://forms.gle/AYZ6gCCfoyfbY6yA7>.

Watch for more details at <https://www.eastfordct.gov/recreation-commission>.

Thanks to all for supporting your Recreation Commission. If you are interested in getting more involved, contact us at reccommitteeofeastford@gmail.com.

-Submitted by Mike Moran, Recreation Commission



DID YOU KNOW?

Did you know? A dog's sense of smell is 10,000 to 100,000 times more acute than ours. To put that in perspective, if we can smell a teaspoon of sugar in a cup of coffee, a dog could smell that same teaspoon in two Olympic-sized swimming pools!



DOG OF THE MONTH

Meet Ruby! An adorable 30-ish pound mystery mix who looks like she could be some sort of basenji mix, but only a DNA test will reveal the truth. Ruby did an amazing job raising her seven puppies, and now it's her turn to find a forever home. She is a true cuddle bug who will happily settle right into your lap. Ruby gets along well with other dogs, has done great with the foster's cat, and loves children. She's learning to walk on a leash, is almost a pro at pottyng outside, and rides great in the car. She is under 2 years old, medically up to date, microchipped and spayed. PawSafe is located at 348 Old Colony Rd., Eastford. Learn more at www.pawsafe.org.

IN THE GARDEN SUSAN BURNS

I've said it before, but it bears repeating because it's so important. Native plants are the foundation of healthy ecosystems. They are prized for their resilience in local soils and climate and for their unmatched value for wildlife, from fungi to butterflies to birds.

There is a movement in gardening now that encourages people to increase biodiversity by planting more natives and removing invasive plants on their own properties and public spaces. By inviting nature back into our gardens, we gain songbirds, butterflies and more life outside our windows. By adding native

plants to your home landscape you are practicing conservation.

Please remove: Winged Euonymous, Japanese Barberry, Oriental Bittersweet, Japanese Knotweed, Bradford Pear, Garlic Mustard, Autumn Olive, Mugwort, Mile-a-Minute Vine. There are others, of course, but these are the worst. As I wrote in an earlier Eastford Communicator, these plants are taking over our forests and wild lands to the detriment of nature, meaning flora and fauna.

Next month, I will list for you the plants that you can use to replace the above invasives. You will be so glad you did.

DID YOU KNOW?

EASTFORD HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Did you know that during the horse and buggy days, when many mail trains were running, it was possible to send a letter to Hartford and get a reply the same day? The letter would leave Eastford at 4 a.m. via Putnam and the reply would come via North Windham and be delivered to Eastford at 7 p.m. the same day. Oh, for the good old days!

To learn more about the Historical Society and Eastford history visit us on our website, <https://www.eastfordct.gov/community/page/eastford-historical-society>.

Kindly consider joining our

organization and/or its collaborative Google Photo Album called "Eastford's Shared History Album." If you wish to join our organization, membership forms are available on our website or at the Town Clerk's office, Library, or Post Office. Our mailing address is P.O. Box 350, Eastford, CT 06242. If anyone has historic photos of Eastford and would like to either donate them or make an appointment (860-974-1610 or 860-974-3311) to bring them in for scanning, we would greatly appreciate the opportunity to add them to our collection.



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WANT
YOUR
PHOTOS!**

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CALENDAR

Calendar entries must be submitted before the 15th of the month preceding publishing. Please send all calendar content to eastfordnews@gmail.com, and limit submissions to less than 100 words. All entries are subject to editing at the editor's discretion.

Tuesday, May 5

Eastford Public Library will host "Homeschool STEAM Hour" at 10:30 a.m. Please register, as space is limited. The library will close at 5 p.m. Sorry for the inconvenience.

Thursday, May 7

The National Day of Prayer event will take place on Thursday, May 7, at 7 p.m. at the Eastford School flagpole. Visit nationaldayofprayer.org for more information.

Eastford Public Library will host "Storytime" at 11 a.m. Join us for a story, craft, snack and time of free play. In the afternoon, we will host a Dungeons & Dragons club from 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. (ages 11-13). This group will continue to meet every Thursday. Please register.

Saturday, May 9

Eastford Public Library will host a "Mother's Day Craft" at 10:30 a.m. Please register. In the afternoon, The Page Turners, will meet at 1 p.m. to discuss "In the Garden of Beasts" by Erik Larson. Copies of the book will be available for check out.

Have someone special in your life — like a mother, father, aunt, uncle, grandparent, or family friend? Help send our seventh and eighth graders to Washington D.C. this May in a special way! Eastford Elementary School will host a "Someone Special Dance," Saturday, May 9, from 3:30 to 5:30 p.m. at the EES Gym. Tickets are \$10 per duo. Additional family members can attend for \$3 per ticket. There will be a bake sale, and a photo booth. All proceeds will benefit the annual eighth grade Washington D.C. field trip.

Wednesday, May 13

Eastford Public Library hosts "Maker's Night" from 6 to 7:30 p.m. for teens and adults. We will be creating a Bridgerton-inspired craft. Please register.

Thursday, May 14

Eastford Public Library will host "Storytime" at 11 a.m. Join us for a story, craft, snack and time of free play. In the afternoon, we will host a Dungeons & Dragons club from 4:30 to 5:30 p.m.

Saturday, May 16

On Saturday, May 16, Eastford

Baptist Church will host its 4th Annual Olympians LEGO Derby! The event, which is for kids in Grades 1-6, starts at 1:30 p.m. at the church's Family Activity Center gym, where kids will build their LEGO racecars. Racing heats begin at 2 p.m. The event will also feature snacks, crafts, games, and other activities! Parental pickup at 4 p.m. Join us for a great afternoon of racing action! For more information, e-mail ebcolympians@gmail.com!

Thursday, May 21

Eastford Public Library will host "Storytime" at 11 a.m. Join us for a story, craft, snack and time of free play. In the afternoon, we will host a Dungeons & Dragons club from 4:30 to 5:30 p.m.

Monday, May 25

Eastford honors America's 250th anniversary! Join us Monday, May 25, for the Town of Eastford's annual Memorial Day Ceremony and Parade. Memorial Services/Military Salutes: General Lyon Cemetery, 8:30 a.m.; Grove Cemetery, 9 a.m. Memorial Day Parade starts at 9:30 a.m. from Eastford Elementary School. Community

members are invited to participate! Ceremony will immediately follow the parade at the Veterans Memorial, featuring the laying of a memorial wreath and a military salute, the recognition of an Eastford veteran, and honored speaker Mark W. Sheldon Sr., 1st VP of the CT Society of the Sons of the American Revolution. All are welcome to attend!

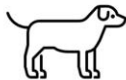
Wednesday, May 27

Eastford Public Library will host a special Bridgerton prelude. Ashley Baxter from Movement Magic in Putnam will offer a one-hour group Regency Dance Class from 6 to 7 p.m. Come learn some steps in advance of our Bridgerton Soiree on Saturday, May 30. Following the class, we will make some hair accessories such as headbands and fascinators to wear to the event. Please register.

Thursday, May 28

Eastford Public Library will host "Storytime" at 11 a.m. Join us for a story, craft, snack and time of free play. In the afternoon, we will host a Dungeons & Dragons club from 4:30 to 5:30 p.m.

**ATTENTION DOG OWNERS:
JUNE IS LICENSING MONTH!**



Pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes 22-338, all dogs six months or older must be licensed.

Dogs are licensed at your Town Clerk's office. The Town Clerk's webpage lists current procedures for licensing. Please contact the Town Clerk with any questions at (860) 974-1885, ext. 5.

Fees are as follows: \$8 for a neutered or spayed dog and \$19 for an unaltered dog. Valid rabies certificate required. New dog registrations require proof from your vet if your dog has been spayed/neutered.

All current dog licenses expire on June 30, 2026. There is a \$1 per month late fee after July 1.



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VITAL STATISTICS

BIRTHS

March: 0

MARRIAGES

March: 1

DEATHS

March: 1

REAL ESTATE TRANSACTIONS

Feb. 4: 27 Church Rd., \$408,500, Nancy L. Kilburn Est. to Susan Desiato

Feb. 18: US Route 44, \$50,000, Foundation Solutions of NE LLC to William E. Rogerson Jr.

Feb. 25: 6 Nahaco Hill Lane, Unit 6, \$325,000, Nahaco Development LLC to Robert Tolliver

PUBLIC MEETINGS

MAY

Sunday, May 3: Recreation Commission, 3:30 p.m., Town Office Building

Monday, May 4: Board of Selectmen, 7 p.m., Town Office Building

Tuesday, May 5: Conservation and Historic Preservation Commission, 7 p.m., Town Office Building

Tuesday, May 12: Planning Commission, 7:30 p.m., Town Office Building

Wednesday, May 13: Crystal Pond Park Commission, 6 p.m., Crystal Pond Park

Thursday, May 14: Bowen's Field Committee, 6 p.m., Town Office Building; Board of Education, 6 p.m., Eastford Elementary School Library

Thursday, May 28: Library Board of Trustees, 6:30 p.m., Eastford Public Library; Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission, 7 p.m., Town Office Building

Sunday, May 31: Recreation Commission, 3:30 p.m., Town Office Building

TIDYING UP



EASTFORD — On Saturday, March 21, the Trustees of the Eastford Grove Cemetery Association gathered together for their annual removal of seasonal decorations. From left, Ken Grube, Faye Logee, David Barlow, Lauren Anderson, and Alex Kowalchuk. *Photo courtesy Carolyn Hazard*



Our next issue will be published on:

June 1

Please send all submissions to eastfordnews@gmail.com by:

May 15

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<https://neccoanimalservices.org/>

ASSESSOR

Mary Hawley
(860) 974-0133, ext. 7
Fax: (860) 974-0624
Office Hours: Tuesdays, 5-7:30 p.m.; Fridays, 1-4:30 p.m.
E-mail: assessor@townofeastford.com

BUILDING OFFICIAL

Joseph Pajak
(860) 974-2068, ext. 8
Office Hours: Tuesdays, 5:30-7:30 p.m.
E-mail: joseph.pajak@eastfordct.gov

BURN OFFICIAL

Gordon Spink
(860) 234-2012 (available by phone 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.)

EASTFORD FOOD PANTRY

Audrey Carabeau – Coordinator
(860) 933-7685
Location: Eastford Baptist Church, 133 Union Rd.

EASTFORD PUBLIC LIBRARY

Katie Ball – Librarian
Jennifer John – Assistant Librarian
(860) 974-0125

Hours: Tuesdays, 11 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.; Wednesdays, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Thursdays, 11 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.; Saturdays, 9 a.m. to 12 p.m.
E-mail: eastfordpublib@gmail.com

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Deborah Richards – Director
(860) 974-0133, ext. 10
All Emergency Calls: 911
State Police: Troop D – Danielson: (860) 779-4900

FINANCE DEPARTMENT

Martha Burgess: Treasurer
Kimberly Cyr: Deputy Treasurer
Lisa Kellermann: Accountant
(860) 974-0133

LAND USE OFFICE

Jim Larkin: Land Use Agent
(860) 774-1253
Susan Welshman – Land Use Secretary
(860) 974-2068, ext. 9
Office Hours: Tuesdays, 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.

VETERANS SERVICES

Garry Brown – Municipal Veteran Representative
(860) 928-2309
Office Hours: First Tuesday of the month, 3:30-5 p.m.
Appointments preferred, but walk-ins welcomed
E-mail: garry.brown71@aim.com

PUBLIC WORKS

Ben Schmidt – Public Works Supervisor
(860) 974-2259
Address: 264 Westford Rd., Eastford, CT 06242
Office Hours: Monday to Friday, 6:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.

REGISTRARS OF VOTERS

Toni Doubleday: Republican Registrar
(860) 974-0133, ext. 2
E-mail: toni.doubleday@eastfordct.gov
Kathleen Healey: Democratic Registrar
(860) 974-0133, ext. 2
E-mail: kathleen.healey@eastfordct.gov
Office Hours: Second and fourth Wednesday of the month, 4-6 p.m.

SELECTMEN'S OFFICE

Deborah Richards
First Selectman
E-mail: firstselectman@townofeastford.com
Ashlyn Ellsworth
Selectman
E-mail: ashlyn.ellsworth@eastfordct.gov
Paul Torcellini
Selectman
E-mail: selectmantorcellini@eastfordct.gov
Emily John
Administrative Assistant
E-Mail: selectmen@townofeastford.com

(860) 974-0133, ext. 3
Fax: (860) 974-0624

Office Hours: Mondays, 9 a.m. to 12 p.m., 1-5 p.m.; first and third Tuesdays, 9 a.m. to 12 p.m., 1-5 p.m.; second and fourth Tuesdays, 9 a.m. to 12 p.m., 1-6:30 p.m.; Wednesdays, 9 a.m. to 12 p.m., 1-5 p.m.; Thursdays, 9 a.m. to 12 p.m.
First Selectman available by appointment.

TAX COLLECTOR

Christine Hustus, CCMC
(860) 974-1885, ext. 6
E-Mail: christine.hustus@eastfordct.gov
Office Hours: Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 10 a.m. to 12 p.m., 1-4 p.m.; second and fourth Tuesdays, 1-6:30 p.m.

TOWN CLERK

Johanna Wolfe
(860) 974-1885
Office Hours: Tuesdays, 10 a.m. to 12 p.m., 1-4 p.m.; Wednesdays, 10 a.m. to 12 p.m., 1-4 p.m.; second and fourth Tuesday each month, 10 a.m. to 12 p.m., 1-6:30 p.m.
E-mail: johanna.wolfe@eastfordct.gov

TRANSFER STATION

Address: 264 Westford Rd., Eastford, CT 06242
Hours: Sundays, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.; Wednesdays, 1-3 p.m.; Saturdays, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

WINDHAM-TOLLAND 4-H CAMP NEWS

As we talked about last month, the focus for the month of May at the Windham-Tolland 4-H Camp is on our 72nd Annual Fundraising Auction and Tag Sale. Here are the basic details:

- Auction: May 1- 2, 5 p.m. Preview, 6 p.m. Auction both nights. New, used, antique goods, gift certificates, live plants, silent auction, raffles, hot food, bake sale, and more. Tag Sale is free to all Friday, May 1, 10:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Saturday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Early Bird Buy In is \$5/ person, 9-10:30 a.m. Friday only. Over 4,000 square feet of household items – we have it all!

It is clean and organized by type of item, inside the lodge and under the tents. Our business donors have donated sports memorabilia, gift certificates to restaurants, golf courses, ski lifts, museums, hair salons, ice cream stands, family fun, theatres and more. There will be a 50/50 raffle and silent auction baskets both nights as well.

On Friday, bid on a one-night, off-season weekday stay at the Bayside Resort in West Yarmouth, a trip on the Essex Steam Train, visits to museums and restaurants to make your summer interesting. Saturday

night is sports night, featuring the opportunity to bid on two VIP Boston Red Sox vs. Baltimore Orioles tickets on July 21, with seats directly behind home plate, pregame tour, parking and your name on the scoreboard. Minimum bid required. A once-in-a-lifetime experience! Sports memorabilia and gift certificates to golf, skiing, and other related activities will also be available.

New, used, and antique furniture and collectibles are ready to be sold off the block by local auctioneer Ernie Eldridge both nights. Mary's Kitchen is open during the auction and tag

sale – save room for some homemade pie! We hope to see you sometime during this fun two-day event. All money raised goes towards operating expenses to keep camp fees as low as possible. Please note that the south end of Taft Pond Road is closed at the bridge. Enter off of Route 244 or take Firetower Road off of Route 44 and follow the detour signs to get to the bargains!

Camp starts June 21 and slots are filling quickly, especially for day camp. Go to www.4hcampct.org to register online.

Pomfret/Eastford Little League spring season in full swing

POMFRET/EASTFORD — The Pomfret Eastford Little League (PELL) spring season has begun! In all, 148 children registered this year. Opening Day was held Saturday, April 18.

This season, PELL is featuring the following teams: 1 Majors baseball; 1 AAA baseball; 2 AA baseball; 2 Minors Softball; 3 Coach Pitch Baseball; 1 Coach Pitch Softball; 4 Tee Ball.

Field clean-up days were a huge success! In Eastford, clean-up was held at Bowen Memorial Field on Saturday, April 4. In Pomfret, clean-up was held on Saturday, April 11.

The PELL Midseason Classic will take place on Saturday, May 9, at 63 Hampton Rd., in Pomfret. The day will feature a full schedule of games starting at 9 a.m., ending with a Majors night game at 7:30 p.m. Yummys food truck and Frozen Cheeks Frosty Treats will be there. Jump Zone is donating a dunk tank and games.

The Midseason Classic schedule is below. The following games will be played on the baseball field.

- 9 a.m.: Coach Pitch Baseball 2 vs. CPB3
- 11 a.m.: Coach Pitch Baseball 1 vs. Thompson 2
- 12:30 p.m.: AA 1 vs. KL 2
- 2 p.m.: AA 2 vs. KL 1
- 4 p.m.: AAA Minors vs. BK 1

• 7:30 p.m.: Majors vs. Killingly 2
The following games will be played on the softball field.

- 10 a.m.: T-Ball 2 vs. T-Ball 4
- 11 a.m.: T-Ball 1 vs. T-Ball 3
- 1 p.m.: Coach Pitch Softball vs. Brooklyn 1
- 3 p.m. and 5 p.m.: Softball Minors

The following is a list of the remaining home games at Pomfret Field at 63 Hampton Rd., Pomfret.

- Saturday, May 2, 9 a.m., T-Ball 2 vs. 3, PELL Softball
- Saturday, May 2, 10 a.m., T-Ball 1 vs. 4, PELL Softball
- Saturday, May 2, 10 a.m., PE 1 vs. PE2, PELL Baseball, CPB1 & CPB2
- Saturday, May 2, 6 p.m., Stafford 4, PELL Baseball, AAA
- Sunday, May 3, 2 p.m., Woodstock, PELL Softball, CPS1
- Monday, May 4, 5:30 p.m., Brooklyn3, PELL Softball, SM2
- Tuesday, May 5, 5 p.m., T-Ball 1 vs 2, PELL Softball
- Tuesday, May 5, 5:30 p.m., Brooklyn3, PELL Baseball, AAA
- Saturday, May 9, 9 a.m., PE2 vs. PE3, PELL Baseball, CPB2 & CPB3
- Saturday, May 9, 10 a.m., T-Ball 2 vs. 4, PELL Softball
- Saturday, May 9, 11 a.m., T-Ball 1, PELL Softball
- Saturday, May 9, 11 a.m., Thompson2, PELL Baseball,

- CPB1
- Saturday, May 9, 12:30 p.m., Killingly2, PELL Baseball, AA1
- Saturday, May 9, 1 p.m., Brooklyn1, PELL Softball, CPS1
- Saturday, May 9, 2 p.m., Killingly1, PELL Baseball, AA2
- Saturday, May 9, 3 p.m., PE1 vs. PE2, PELL Softball, SM1 vs. SM2
- Saturday, May 9, 5 p.m., PE1 vs. PE2, PELL Softball, SM1 vs. SM2
- Saturday, May 9, 4 p.m., Brooklyn1, PELL Baseball, AAA
- Saturday, May 9, 7:30 p.m., Killingly 2, PELL Baseball, Majors
- Monday, May 11, 5:30 p.m., Thompson2, PELL Baseball, AA1
- Monday, May 11, 5:30 p.m., Brooklyn1, PELL Softball, SM1
- Tuesday, May 12, 5:45 p.m., Woodstock1, PELL Baseball, AAA
- Thursday, May 14, 5:30 p.m., Plainfield2, PELL Baseball, Majors
- Friday, May 15, 5:30 p.m., Woodstock, PELL Softball, CPS1
- Saturday, May 16, 10 a.m., Woodstock3, PELL Baseball, CPB3
- Saturday, May 16, 10 a.m., T-Ball 1 vs. 4, PELL Softball
- Saturday, May 16, 7 p.m., PE1 vs. PE2, PELL Baseball, AA1 vs. AA2
- Tuesday, May 19, 5:30 p.m.,

- Woodstock2, PELL Baseball, AAA
- Tuesday, May 19, 5:30 p.m., Brooklyn2, PELL Softball, SM1
- Wednesday, May 20, 5:30 p.m., Brooklyn1, PELL Baseball, AA1
- Thursday, May 21, 5:30 p.m., Plainfield, PELL Softball, SM1
- Friday, May 22, 5:30 p.m., T-Ball 3 vs. 4, PELL Baseball
- Friday, May 22, 7 p.m., Plainfield1, PELL Baseball, Majors
- Tuesday, May 26, 5:45 p.m., Manfield1, PELL Baseball, AAA
- Tuesday, May 26, 5:45 p.m., Stafford1, PELL Softball, SM1
- Wednesday, May 27, 5:30 p.m., Brooklyn1, PELL Baseball, AA1
- Wednesday, May 27, 5:30 p.m., Brooklyn2, PELL Softball, SM2
- Saturday, May 30, 9 a.m., T-Ball 2 vs. 4, PELL Softball
- Saturday, May 30, 9:30 a.m., KL2, PELL Baseball, AA1
- Saturday, May 30, 10:30 a.m., T-Ball 1 vs. 3, PELL Softball
- Monday, June 1, 5:30 p.m., Thompson1, PELL Baseball, AA2
- Saturday, June 6, 8:30 a.m., T-Ball 3 vs. 4, PELL Baseball
- Saturday, June 6, 10 a.m., T-Ball 1 vs. 2, PELL Baseball
- Saturday, June 6, 10 a.m., Mansfield, PELL Softball, CPS1
- Monday, June 8, 5:30 p.m., Thompson1, PELL Baseball, AA2
- Thursday, June 11, 5:30 p.m., T-Ball 2 vs. 3, PELL Softball



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FROM THE EASTFORD INDEPENDENT FIRE COMPANY #1 INC.



What do you do to remember people who have died for their country? If they are from your family, you might go to the cemetery to put flowers on graves. From the time of the U.S Civil War, Americans have set aside

time to remember those who served their country. One of those times is Memorial Day.

No one knows for sure when people first started honoring the Civil War dead. Originally, it was called Decoration Day, because the graves were decorated with flowers. Many southern families began the tradition during the war. A hymn was published called "Kneel Where Our Loves Are Sleeping," and it was dedicated to the ladies who decorated the graves of fallen soldiers.

General John Logan declared May 30, 1868 a day to decorate the graves of soldiers from both the

North and the South in Arlington National Cemetery. New York was the first state to give official recognition to the holiday. Most states in the North recognized it by 1890.

In 1922, the VFW – Veterans of Foreign Wars – became the first national American veterans' group to see artificial poppies. Two years later, disabled vets began making the poppies to sell. In the 1950's American flags were placed on the graves in Arlington National Cemetery. They serve as a reminder of the importance of national unity and gratitude.

In recent years, many people

have forgotten the true meaning of Memorial Day. They think of it only as a holiday to mark the start of summer. When we think of Memorial Day this year, remember the soldiers who served our country. Many of them died to give us the freedoms we now enjoy.

Before Memorial Day, U.S. flags with service honor markers will be displayed at the Grove Cemetery, along with flags to honor deceased fire department members. Take a moment to slow down, reflect and give thanks. Home of the free, because of the brave.

-Submitted by Jeannine Spink

FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT DONNA LEAKE

The end of the school year is an ideal time to provide important updates regarding Eastford Elementary School, the recent actions of our Board of Education (BOE), and an update on state legislative actions.

Several activities are scheduled to take place, as the school year ends at Eastford Elementary School. These include the:

- PreK + K Orientation on May 28 from 6-6:45 pm.
- DARE graduation on May 18, 9:30-10:30 a.m.
- Washington, D.C. trip on May 19-22
- PTO Book Fair: May 28-29 and June 1-3

At its meeting on April 9, the BOE took the following actions:

- Set June 19 as the last day of school for EES
- Set the Grade 8 Graduation date for the evening of June 18
- Assigned Terry Cote and Lauren Barlow to serve on a

committee to review updated information regarding The Woodstock Academy and E.O. Smith High School. Terry and Lauren will provide a summary of this information to the board for their August meeting.

- At the request of the Board of Selectmen, the BOE reviewed their 2026-2027 budget. The BOE voted 4-2 to submit a revised 2026-27 Board of Education budget of \$4,934,723, an increase of 3 percent over the 2025-26 budget, to the Board of Selectman. The Town Meeting to vote on the town and school budgets will take place on May 14.

- Reviewed and accepted the recommendations of the Policy Committee for several BOE policies.

- Reviewed and authorized the recommended transfers made

As mentioned previously, the state is reviewing legislative recommendations of importance to

small rural towns such as ours. It is important our local leaders closely monitor proposed changes to existing bills and Eastford citizens stay in touch with local leaders. Patrice McCarthy, the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education attorney, recently provided me with the following update:

"In the final weeks of the legislative session issues evolve quickly as amendments are added and some pieces of legislation are combined into larger bills. Important possible actions include:

- It appears likely that there will be additional funding in the Education Cost Sharing grant, as there is broad support for education aid. However, the exact amount and distribution has not yet been determined.

- There is also significant support for providing resources for free school breakfasts for all

students in the state.

- The legislation to allow districts more flexibility in the use of the Special Education and Expansion Development (SEED) grant, specifically allowing the use of third-party contractors, is particularly important to our smaller districts.

- There is also more flexibility proposed in the aspiring educators scholarship program by removing the limitation that recipients have graduated from an alliance district high school.

- The legislature is considering a proposal to empower the Education Mandate Review Advisory Council to provide input on the impact of newly adopted mandates and to continue to review and make recommendations regarding existing mandates."

As always, never hesitate to contact me at dleake@eastfordct.org.

FOOD PANTRY UPDATE

AUDREY CARABEAU

The Eastford Food Pantry is located at the Eastford Baptist Church, 133 Union Rd. Please see our hours of operation at the end of this article.

We continue to seek individuals or families who reside in Eastford and are in need of food assistance. If you are in need of food, call Audrey Carabeau at (860) 933-7685 to sign up. We have the

resources to help you! All referrals are kept confidential. Delivery is available to those who are homebound.

Thank you to all who donated food, home goods and money in the month of April. Your donations are greatly appreciated by our pantry families. The Eastford Food Pantry relies on donations from the community.

All donations to the pantry can be dropped off at Bowen's Garage or at the Town Office Building during regular business hours. Check donations can be mailed to Eastford Food Pantry, 16 Westford Rd., Eastford, CT 06242.

We have a good supply of home goods, including dishes, mugs and glasses. If you are in need of these

items, give us a call. Donation suggestions include tuna, canned fruit, healthy snacks, crackers, jelly, pasta, pasta sauce, toothpaste, deodorant, and laundry detergent. Thank you for your support!

Eastford Food Pantry hours for May. Are Monday, May 4, 8-11 a.m.; and Wednesday, May 20, 2-4 p.m.

FROM THE FROM THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF EASTFORD: MIKE MORAN

Hello Eastford! What a blessing the month of May can be as the weather begins to settle down, as everything gets so strikingly beautiful in our New England landscape, and as activities move outdoors. It is a season of good cheer and hope for many. But to be honest, there are plenty of reasons for people to feel concerned, burdened, anxious, fearful, perhaps angry and just plain sad.

In a recent gathering, I was part of a discussion about what people these days need. Hope was the one-word answer. How about you? Are you hopeful?

I often tell people that fears, worries, and anxieties are the fruit of "unauthorized time travel." In our minds we hop into a time machine and go off into the future, and we survey a land we imagine.

In fact, it is made up — complete fantasy. And what we see in our made-up future is desolation, destruction, catastrophe — it is just awful. Then we get back into the time machine and bring it home to our today. It wakes us up in the middle of the night so we can toss and turn. It preoccupies our days, so we live in anxiety and fear. And it deceives us to make terrible decisions. I have read that some young people today are choosing to not have children because of what they believe about the future.

One of the most profound blessings of our faith is that we can have hope for the future. Two and a half millennia ago God spoke these words through a prophet named Jeremiah —

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you,


plans to give you hope and a future."

Last month, Christians around the world celebrated Easter. They marked two powerful events. The first was when Jesus, God's perfect Son, died on a cross for the sins of the world. Every single one of us has done things which God measures as "sin" — separating us from Him. What Jesus accomplished was to take away our guilt, shame and the long-term consequences of our sin — death and punishment. And then the second event — Jesus rose from the dead, victorious over death and as proof and a portrait of the future God offers us. We're talking about immortality and real life in the perfections and beauties of heaven, unbreakable peace, joy and breathtaking love.

When I step into the time machine in my mind, the future I see is that incredible resurrection life. The Bible describes it as a "living hope." Hope is about the future, but it is a gift for today. You see, when we have assurance of the future, there is no place for our dark imaginings. How can I despair if I know the story ends in beauty and perfection? How can I have anything but hope — right here and right now?

Our prayer at the Congregational Church of Eastford is that we all might know that hope. It is free for the taking. Want to know more? Let's talk. Or join us on a Sunday at 10 a.m. in the Eastford School gym. I know that the Lord loves you and wants you to have His hope!

You can check us out at cceedford.org. As a believer following Jesus,



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FROM THE FIRST SELECTMAN

DEB RICHARDS

Volunteers are ordinary people with extraordinary hearts. They give the gift of their time to inspire, build, grow, teach, and guide others. They ask for nothing in return, yet the value of their contributions is immeasurable. Volunteers extend a hand, give a hand, and create lasting change that touches lives for years to come.

Thank you to all our dedicated volunteers, including the Planning Commission, Conservation and Historic Preservation Committee, Crystal Pond Park Commission, Transfer Station Committee, Emergency Management, Agent for the Elderly, Food Pantry Coordinators, Municipal Veteran Representative, Recreation Commission, Eastford Public Library Board of Trustees, Board of Assessment Appeals, Inland Wetlands Committee, and Bowen's Field Committee.

Each of you makes a meaningful difference in our town. We are deeply grateful for your commitment and service — this community would not be the same without you.

FROM THE GROVE CEMETERY ASSOCIATION BOARD OF TRUSTEES

• Memorial Day Weekend: American flags and Fire Department flags will be placed at eligible gravesites on Friday, May 22, at 5 p.m. The placement of any flag, including the American flag, is limited to those flags placed on the graves of military and fire department veterans by the Board of Trustees. Unauthorized flags will be removed.

• Flag Holder: If you are interested in ordering a flag holder for your veteran's flag, call (860) 428-0280 by May 1.

• Plot/Space Purchase: Appointments can be made to view the cemetery grounds and to select a plot for purchase. Call (860) 428-0280 for more information.

• Plot Diagrams Available: Plot owners, or a family member, may obtain a diagram of their plot by writing to: EGCA Inc., P.O. Box 284, Eastford, CT 06242.

• Mowing Season is March 15 to Thanksgiving: Only live flowers may be planted, or placed in plastic pots, within 12 inches of the base of a monument; all artificial flowers and ornaments are prohibited and will be removed.

For more information, contact a member of the Board of Trustees: Linda Torgeson, Rick Torgeson, Lauren Anderson, Ken Grube, David Barlow, Carolyn Hazard, Alex Kowalchuk.

EASTFORD GROVE CEMETERY PERPETUAL CARE DONATION FORM

Yes, I would like to help. Enclosed is my gift of \$ _____

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Gift in memory of _____

Send to: Eastford Grove Cemetery Assoc., Inc. P.O. Box 284, Eastford, CT 06242

WHAT'S GOING ON AT THE EASTFORD PUBLIC LIBRARY?

KATIE BALL, LIBRARIAN

Our seasonal StoryWalk will be unveiled this month in the town park on Old Colony Road. If you are interested in visiting other StoryWalk locations in the state, please visit the Connecticut State Library website. It is an amazing way for families to engage in reading while enjoying the outdoors. We are beyond thrilled that our library has made the list!

Please join us on May 30 as we transport you back in time to the Regency Era. The Social Season is upon us and we invite you to partake in the festivities. Library hours are Tuesdays 11 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.; Wednesdays 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Thursdays 11 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.; and Saturdays 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. You may reach us at (860) 974-0125 or by e-mail at eastfordpublib@gmail.com. Upcoming events and programs can be seen on the town page or on social media. If you haven't yet, please follow Eastford Public Library on Facebook and/or Instagram @eastfordpubliclibrary.



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KIDS FUN RUN
SATURDAY, JUNE 6TH, 2026
Eastford Elementary School
16 WESTFORD RD, EASTFORD, CT 06242
RACE START 8:30AM
REGISTRATION OPEN 8:15AM
RACE ROUTE: JOHN PERRY RD TO CHURCH RD AND BACK
600 METER DASH MOM/ STROLLER/ KIDS OF ALL AGES WELCOME
Entry Fee: Donation/ item for Eastford Food Pantry or Animal Shelter

5K ROAD RACE
Come together for
THE HEART OF EASTFORD
5K road race
Saturday, June 6th 2026
RACE START TIME 9AM
REGISTRATION OPENS 8:30AM
EASTFORD TOWN PARKING LOT
16 Westford rd, Eastford, CT 06242
Register online: <https://runsignup.com/Race/CT/Eastford/2026HeartOfEastford5K>
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Presented to you by the Eastford Recreation Commission

Memorial Day Bike Parade!

Monday, May 25

Eastford Memorial Day Parade begins at 9:30am from the EES Parking Lot and finishes at the Eastford Library/ Ivy Glenn Memorial

Assemble at EES side parking lot prior to the parade to enter bike decoration contest!!

Judging begins at 9am and closes at 9:15am

Let's see your Patriotic Spirit celebrating the semiquincentennial

250 YEARS OF AMERICA

Judging categories include: Most Patriotic, Most Creative, Best Overall

Kids of all ages are encouraged to bring their decorated non-motorized transportation: Bicycle, tricycle, scooter, stroller, wagon, wheelchair, skateboard, etc. & join the parade!!

Children must be accompanied by an adult



Eastford Honors America's 250th Anniversary

Eastford Memorial Day Ceremony and Parade

Monday, May 25

Memorial Services/Military Salutes:

8:30 a.m. General Lyon Cemetery

9 a.m. Grove Cemetery

Memorial Day Parade: 9:30 a.m.

Parade begins at Eastford Elementary School.

Community members are invited to participate!

Ceremony immediately following the parade at the Veteran's Memorial, featuring the laying of a memorial wreath and a Military Salute — the recognition of an Eastford Veteran — Honored speaker Mark W. Sheldon Sr., 1st V.P. of the CT Society of the Sons of the American Revolution.

All are welcome to attend!

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www.eastfordct.gov/recreation-commission

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Spring cleaning: Town roads get facelift thanks to clean-up event

EASTFORD — More than 30 volunteers gathered on Sunday, April 12, to clean up the streets of Eastford, traversing nearly 17 combined miles of roadway to remove trash, in an effort to beautify the town. Volunteers met at the Eastford Elementary School and Town Office Building parking lot at 12:30 p.m. for a hot dog lunch, followed by road work, which ended at around 3 p.m., where volunteers returned to the parking lot for ice cream. The event was jointly spearheaded by Eastford Baptist Church and the Congregational Church of Eastford. *Courtesy photos*



Community turns out for morning of egg-cellent Easter fun

EASTFORD — The town's Easter tradition continued on Saturday, March 28, as the Recreation Commission hosted its annual Easter Egg Hunt at Eastford Elementary School. Dozens of children gathered in surprisingly cold temperatures to hunt for eggs and enjoy some time outside looking for treats. *Adam Minor photos*



Owen King visits Eastford for 'Author Talk' event at library

EASTFORD — On Saturday, April 25, Eastford Public Library hosted an "Author Talk" with writer, television and film producer Owen King. The event was filled to capacity. King, who is also the son of author Stephen King, sat down with Jody Blanchette to speak about his passion for writing screen plays, comics and books, his creative process, and how he enjoys collaborating with others on projects. He also spoke about books that inspired him growing up, read to him by his parents; his favorite landscaping job as a teen; his adoration of cats; and why he didn't care much for Halloween as a child, and more. After a final series of rapid-fire questions by Jody, there was time for questions from the audience. He then autographed books and paused for photos, while guests were treated to a themed reception. *Courtesy photos*



ATTENTION

OUT-OF-TOWN RESIDENTS

There is an annual \$50 subscription fee for non-Eastford residents to receive the *Communicator*, which covers production and mailing costs. For uninterrupted service, if you would like to continue receiving the *Communicator* for the next year, please mail a check for a minimum of \$50 to *Eastford Communicator*, P.O. Box 253, Eastford, CT 06242. We must receive payment no later than May 15.

Land use ordinance defeated at special town meeting

ORDINANCE
Continued from pg. 1

ordinance, Lee said, would have been a “temporary measure to address citizen concerns without significantly impacting most properties in town, adjust[ing] setback to be consistent with existing subdivision regulations for lots of record ... [and] allow[ing] for one to three residential units on existing lots of record before subdivision is required.” A “lot of record” is defined as a lot that has not been divided — or only divided once into two lots — since the adoption of subdivision regulations.

Lee stated in the summary that working with Town Planner Jim Larkin, the Planning Commission drafted the proposed Minimum Land Use Regulations Ordinance to prescribe minimum land use regulations for a maximum of five years if accepted. After five years, the ordinance would end. If the town's citizens wished to continue similar or more advanced land use controls, it would have to adopt some form of zoning. The proposed ordinance was based on templates used by other towns, the summary stated — and the draft

document was reviewed by Town Land Use Attorney Matt Willis.

According to Lee, Eastford adopted subdivision regulations in 1967. Among other responsibilities, he said, “the Eastford Planning Commission is responsible for reviewing and approving proposed subdivisions of lots for consistency with the Subdivision Regulations. In general, the subdivision regulations require minimum setbacks, side yards, driveways, and lot sizes for single family homes, multifamily homes, commercial, and industrial development.”

The background of how this ordinance made it to town meeting began in March. According to notes provided by the Board of Selectmen, “many Eastford residents have expressed interest in implementing limited land use restrictions over the past three years.” The ordinance originated as a draft developed in December 2023 by the Planning Commission, which never advanced to the Board of Selectmen.

According to First Selectman Deb Richards, a resident obtained a copy of this draft ordinance and submitted it as part of a formal petition presented to the Town

Clerk and verified on March 24. The petition was verified to contain 67 signatures, 47 more than the 20-voter minimum. The petition was accepted by the Board of Selectmen at its March 26 meeting, at which point a 21-day deadline began to hold a town meeting.

Selectmen determined the request raised by the petition warranted public discussion and consideration first, along with additional public input, and so the selectmen responded to the petition by scheduling a public hearing April 2 in advance of an April 16 town meeting vote. This was done to inform residents and permit them to “discuss and consider” the proposed ordinance two weeks ahead of the vote.

Being required to officially publish notice five days before the meeting on the town signboard outside the Town Office Building and in the proper print media, the town posted notice on the town signboard and website on March 26; with a legal notice published in the Shoppers Guide on March 25;

and additional notice given on the digital signboard from March 30 through April 2 (*Editor's note: The Eastford Communicator's deadline and publication schedule did not align with the hearing notice timeline. Deadline for submissions is the 15th of every month.*)

According to the minutes of the April 2 Town Meeting, selectmen opened the floor for questions and comment for nearly 50 minutes before adjourning.

A second Town Meeting was announced for April 16 to vote on the ordinance, two weeks after the first hearing. Notice was posted on the TOB's digital sign starting on April 6, shared on the town's Facebook page on April 9, and published in the Shoppers Guide on April 8 (*Once again, the Communicator's deadline did not align with this notice timeline.*)

At the April 16 Town Meeting, vote was taken by paper ballot, leading to the defeat of the ordinance, 110-87.

For more information on the ordinance, visit <https://www.eastfordct.gov/media/6556>.

Town, school budgets up for vote May 14 at Town Meeting

BUDGET
Continued from pg. 1

Independent Fire Company's ET 171 and ET 271 trucks (\$60,000); funding to purchase a new EIFC pickup truck (\$50,000); funding to purchase a new Public Works payload (\$50,000); funding toward a future Eastford Elementary School (EES) Gym HVAC upgrade project (\$75,000); funding toward the future replacement of the elevator at EES; mandated funding for the town's Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) (\$10,000); funding toward the future Ivy Glenn upper-level floor replacement project (\$20,000); and funding toward the future Ivy Glenn HVAC project (\$25,000).

At the Annual Budget Hearing, there is typically a presentation of

the budget where people can ask questions and make recommendations. At Town Meeting, the vote will be separated between the school and town budgets. Motion can be made to change a line item, but according state statutes, a motion can only reduce a line item, followed by a vote. Finally, voters in attendance can vote to approve or vote down the budget as it is presented.

The Annual Town Budget Meeting will be held Thursday, May 14, at 7 p.m., at Eastford Elementary School. For more information on the budget proposals, copies are available at the Town Office Building, or online at on the town website at <https://www.eastfordct.gov/board-selectmen/meeting/annual-budget-hearing-0>.



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