

# THE NORTH STONINGTON QUARTERLY

## SPRING 2023

### BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Transfer Station Stickers...UGH!

I would normally use this platform to tell you about all the wonderful things that are happening in North Stonington (and there are many). However, I thought it best to address the “elephant in the room,” the dreaded Transfer Station Fees.

As we know, the cost of disposing waste is getting more expensive every year. We have had a wonderful option over the years of being able to dispose trash, recyclables, and bulky waste with no additional charge to the resident, other than what was carried in the yearly Town Budget. We, the Selectmen, felt the time had finally come for us to explore a user fee of sorts and have decided to institute a sticker fee and a bulky waste fee, which would both begin in July of 2023.



**Transfer Station Sticker Fees:** We will begin selling vouchers for stickers at the Town Hall beginning on Wednesday, July 5<sup>th</sup> during regular Town Hall hours (Monday – Friday from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm). You will also be able to purchase a voucher on the following Saturdays: July 8<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, 22<sup>nd</sup> from 9:00 am until 12:00 noon. You will then be able to go to the Transfer Station to get your sticker applied to your vehicle. The new sticker program will be enforced after Wednesday July 19<sup>th</sup>, however, a proof of residency will be required up until that time. The BOS will be fine tuning the actual logistics of this program over the next few months.

Sticker fees will cost \$40.00 and will be good for 2-years. One fee per household. All other vehicles could get a sticker at no addition charge. The additional vehicles will need to go to the Transfer Station to have stickers applied to their windshields. The new fee program will be strictly enforced.

**Bulky Waste Fees:** We will start this program establishing fees for Small, Medium, Large and Ex-Large trucks (fees to be determined). We will also be exploring the use of scales and what expense is associated with their use. We know that our Bulky Waste pile’s life will be coming to an end soon. We hope with the use of fees and enforcement, we can prolong that life. Closing the Bulky Waste pile will create a large expense to the Town. This part of the new initiative would begin on July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023.

BOB CARLSON, NICOLE PORTER, BRETT MASTROIANNI      [selectmen@northstoningtonct.gov](mailto:selectmen@northstoningtonct.gov)

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### 2023 PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT

The Focus Groups and Neighborhood Meetings are well underway. We are gathering information to use in the 2023 POCD and the more input we receive, the more relevant the vision and goals will be! There is still time to join a neighborhood meeting. See the Town Website for the schedule of events related to the POCD. We hope to hold a visioning session toward the end of May – stay tuned. In the meantime, one of the most effective ways to gather input is through the POCD Survey.

Use the QR code to link to the survey. Links will also be provided on the Town Website, and paper copies will be available at Town Hall and at the Wheeler Library. PLEASE take a moment to complete the survey and let your opinions be heard. Thank you!



THE POCD STEERING COMMITTEE

## NORTH STONINGTON AGRICULTURAL FAIR



Welcome Spring!!! Along with the warmer weather comes many days/evenings of working on and off the fairgrounds in preparation for the Fair. There are several upgrades/projects being worked on, contracts are being looked at, entertainment is being booked, baking contest recipes are ready and much more.

We are excited to welcome back on our main stage three local entertainers! Nick Casey will take the stage on Thursday evening, Nick Bosse will put on two shows on Friday evening and Ken Atkins and the Honky Tonk Kind is scheduled for Sunday.

**EXCITING NEWS:** the fair will be holding TWO nights of truck pulling!! Southern New England Truck Pullers will once again put on a Saturday evening show and on Friday night, CT Truck Pullers will hold a pull which is open to ALL. If you've got a truck that you'd like to put out on the track and have fun with, just read their rules and regulations and give it a go! Continue to check the website at [www.northstoningtonfair.org](http://www.northstoningtonfair.org) for all updates and events.

We are excited to have had a few new members join us over the winter and we continue to welcome new ideas and individuals to join us at our monthly meetings held the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of each month at 7pm. April 11<sup>th</sup> will be our Potluck Dinner, open to all volunteers and committee members. Mark your calendars: July 13<sup>th</sup> -16<sup>th</sup>!!

JODY WHIPPLE      [pineneedlehomestead@sbcglobal.net](mailto:pineneedlehomestead@sbcglobal.net) 860-599-8498

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## PAWCATUCK NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER

The Pawcatuck Neighborhood Center will offer a free Speaker Series, with a light lunch at noon each Tuesday, beginning in April.

- On April 11th, Navy Veteran Barry Russack will bring his therapy dog, Rosie, to discuss the benefits of therapy dogs.
- Chris Morren, M.D. of the Mystic Geriatric Institute, will present "Nutrition Basics for Caregivers" on April 20<sup>th</sup>.
- Attorney Sandra Sharr will present "Preparing You Home for Your Loved One" on April 27<sup>th</sup>.



The series is free of charge, registration is required by emailing [info@thepnc.org](mailto:info@thepnc.org) or calling (860) 599-3285, ext. 103. We are also planning walks to raise food insecurity awareness.



The PNC Senior Center offers free lunches and BINGO every Monday and Tuesday at 11:00. Times for other classes that include, tai chi, yoga, line dancing, painting, and writing. Registration is being accepted for the June 22nd trip to see Carole King the Musical at Theater by the Sea.

The PNC food center is available to North Stonington residents, Monday through Friday, 9:00 to 3:30. Please consider joining the PNC Team on May 20th at Dunkin' Park, Hartford, as we Walk Against Hunger with Connecticut Foodshare. Registration can be found at [p2p.onecause.com/ctfoodsharewalk/team/pawcatuck-neighborhood-center](http://p2p.onecause.com/ctfoodsharewalk/team/pawcatuck-neighborhood-center). We can be found at [www.pawcatuckneighborhoodcenter.org](http://www.pawcatuckneighborhoodcenter.org).

SUSAN SEDENSKY

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

## NORTH STONINGTON LIONS CLUB



The North Stonington Lions went back to work after our Christmas break. At our annual Christmas party, our members donated \$850.00 in gift cards that were given to both the North Stonington Food Pantry and the North Stonington Senior Center. The cards were distributed to families and individuals in need, to help with expenses during the holidays.

We started off 2023 with honoring Karcher Deshefy as our Humanitarian of the Year, for the outstanding job she does as North Stonington's Animal Control Officer. We were pleased to give her the recognition she deserves for her hard work, devotion, and compassion for animals. Congratulations Karcher! Our town is so lucky to have you!

- In February we held a Pajama Drive by placing collection bins in some of our local businesses. Through the generosity of many residents, we collected 55 pairs of pajamas that were given to children throughout Connecticut to keep them warm this winter.
- On March 18<sup>th</sup>, we held our second Soup Supper. We hope you enjoyed the delicious soups, sandwiches, and desserts that our members prepared. All our profits go toward the many causes we support.
- And finally in April, we will be offering scholarships to graduating seniors who live in the town of North Stonington. Please see your school guidance counselors for applications.

We are always eager to have new members join our club. If you are interested, please contact me at [twbyassee@gmail.com](mailto:twbyassee@gmail.com). We hope all our fellow residents have a wonderful spring.

TERRY BYASSEE    PRESIDENT

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## HEWITT FARM

As we wait for spring to arrive, Hewitt Farm with its open space continues to draw visitors for the clean air and the many trails that are so popular. Across the field from the house is the pavilion inviting visitors to stop, sit and enjoy the day after walking the trails.

The Artisan Farm Market will host four events at the farm through spring and summer in 2023. Last year's events were a complete success. The first event is scheduled for May 21<sup>st</sup>. Future event schedules are posted on the Recreation Department web site. The pavilion can be reserved for a private event by visiting the Recreation Department website and scheduling the event.

A young resident, working on his Eagle Badge has built an Orienteering Course on the farm. An orienteering course is essentially a land navigation course composed of a start point, end points and mid points by which one typically uses a map and compass to complete. The course utilizes our existing trails. Anyone can use it and instructions are posted by the community garden corn crib.

Hewitt Farm is open daily from dawn to dusk. It's free, easy to get to, right near the village and Holly Green. Park just inside the Hewitt Road entrance off Route 2 or at the parking area down Hewitt Road from Ryder Road. You can download the Hewitt Farm Trail Map from the town website ([www.northstoningtonct.gov](http://www.northstoningtonct.gov)).

ED HARASIMOWIZ                      CHAIRMAN                      860-245-5305

## NORTH STONINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The North Stonington Public Schools are busy, productive, and happy places. The relationships between our energetic youth and dedicated staff blend to create an awe-inspiring love of learning. It is just beautiful to witness! However, due to many factors, the needs of students have changed. Increased mental health and behavioral concerns are impacting student learning, for the students who are struggling, and for others around them. For numerous reasons, we cannot ignore what we know - our children have needs that we are not adequately addressing with our current level of staffing. Consequently, the Board of Education Budget for 2023-2024 includes resources which allow us to be more proactive in assisting our students and families.

I encourage you to become familiar with the Board of Education budget. Please watch the presentation on our webpage or contact me for a conversation about the budget, which I believe you will find transparent, reasonable, and responsible. The budget adds a few support staff, including a social worker, a reinvigorated woodshop, and an alternative education program. We feel that these additions will meet the interests and needs of many students and allow for savings in the future.

Thank you for your interest in your schools! Strong schools lead to a strong town. We have both!

TROY C. HOPKINS          SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS          hopkinst@northstonington.k12.ct.us

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## WHEELER HIGH SCHOOL/MIDDLE SCHOOL



The school year is flying, and we have had so much to celebrate over the last few months. Our Wheeler seniors are already making decisions regarding their plans for post-graduation. Our teachers continue to provide robust programming for our students and students are beginning to schedule their courses for the 2023-2024 school year! We are thrilled to re-open our wood shop, allowing our students to enhance and practice their manufacturing skills. In the upcoming weeks, middle and high school students will take their annual standardized tests – SAT, SBAC, NGSS and AP to name a few. Our school will use this data to begin supporting students who need additional support. On May 24<sup>th</sup>, our district will be hosting a Health and Wellness Day across District. We are grateful for the support we have received from the community as we continue to plan for this amazing day.

Wheeler inducted its newest members into the National Honor Society in March. Our Winter sports season provided a tremendous amount of Wheeler Pride and our Spring sports season is already underway! In May, our Wheeler Drama Department will present, “A Little Mermaid,” on May 12<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup>, and 14<sup>th</sup>. If Mother Nature cooperates, our end of the year events will begin to get tentatively scheduled. After April 1, we will begin to share these important dates with you all. Happy Spring and thank you for being such wonderful Wheeler supporters!

KRISTEN ST. GERMAIN          PRINCIPAL

## ASSESSOR'S OFFICE

**Elderly homeowners who were 65 years old or older on January 1, 2023**, and who had income under \$49,100 for a married couple, or \$40,300 for a single person, can apply for the elderly homeowner's program. Disabled homeowners can also apply if they are on the disability program; the same income limits apply. The benefit range is from \$150 to \$1,250 off your town property taxes. The benefit depends on your income. This is a State of Connecticut program.

**The paperwork required to file** includes your federal income tax return that you filed with the internal revenue service, plus your social security 1099 form(s). If you do not need to file with the IRS, then copies of your 1099's for interest, dividends, and all other income, including social security, is required. This is based on 2022 earnings and applications are accepted until May 15<sup>th</sup>.

**Veterans can receive an increase in benefits if they qualify for the Elderly Homeowner's Program.** The deadline for filing is October 1, 2023.

**Renters with a social security disability, or who are 65 years old**, can apply for the Renter's Program between April 1<sup>st</sup> and October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023. Paperwork includes the same income as the Elderly Program, plus rent receipts, your electric bills, and your heating bills for the year 2022.

Pro-rates on your motor vehicle taxes, for those that sold a motor vehicle and returned the license plate, are available. To apply for a credit, you must show a plate receipt that indicates the vehicle was sold. The credit equals an 8.33% reduction for every month from when you sold the vehicle, to September 2023. As an example, if you sold your vehicle in March 2023, you are entitled to a 50% reduction in your tax bill.

DARRYL L. DEL GROSSO, CCMA 11

ASSESSOR

860-535-2877 ext. 23 or 24

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## TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE



Happy Spring! Fishing season will soon be here. Come to the office to get your sporting licenses and regulation guides or purchase them online at [www.ct.gov/deep](http://www.ct.gov/deep).

The Spring season also brings an increase in marriage licenses. If you plan on getting married in North Stonington, a marriage license must be obtained from the Town Clerk's Office. Please call the office with any questions.

Dog licensing for the new dog licensing year will begin on June 1st. Due to scheduling conflicts, the Rabies Clinic will be held earlier this

year. The Rabies Clinic is being held on **Saturday, May 27, 2023**, from 10:00 AM to 12:00 Noon at the Town Hall. The fee is \$15.00 cash only. All dogs must be on leashes and all cats in carriers. The Town Clerk's Office will start selling dog licenses on **June 1, 2023**.

The Town Clerk's Office is the place to obtain an absentee ballot for all town referendums, primaries, and elections. There will be a Budget referendum in May. There is an election for Town offices on November 7, 2023.

The Town Clerk's Office is open on Monday through Friday from 8:00 AM until 4:00 PM, except on legal holidays. Please contact me at (860) 535-2877 Ext. 121 and at [townclerk@northstoningtonct.gov](mailto:townclerk@northstoningtonct.gov).

ANTOINETTE PANCARO, MMC, MCTC, CCMO

TOWN CLERK



**NORTH STONINGTON VOLUNTEER FIRE CO., INC.**  
 25 Rocky Hollow Road  
 North Stonington, CT 06359  
 (860) 535-0937



**FIRE APPARATUS AGES**

TRUCK	PURCHASE YEAR	AGE
Engine 1	2010	13
Engine 2	1995	28
Engine 3	2021	2
Engine 4	2001	22
Brush Truck	2018	5
Service Truck	1993	30
Rescue Truck	2003	20

**The average age of cars on the road today in the USA is 11.9 years old.**

National Fire Protection Association (NFPA)1901 is the Standard which we follow when building/purchasing emergency apparatus. This and other similar standards help dictate a town’s ISO rating (Home Insurance Cost).

This Standard provides the following:

- Any apparatus over 15 years of age should be put in reserve.
- Any apparatus over 20 years of age it isn’t cost effective to update (refurbishment).
- Any apparatus 25 years of age or older should be placed out of service.

This information was given to the Board of Selectmen and Board of Finance so they could see on a single page the age of our current fire apparatus. We are in a critical position that needs to be addressed. These trucks belong to the Town, and I feel we need to come up with, and commit to a Long-Range Capital Plan that addresses the replacement of these apparatus in a timely manner. Years of pushing off purchases has caused the fleet to become aged and is now causing a potential significant budget impact. Over the years the Fire Company has continued to present long range plans to address a systematic schedule of apparatus replacement which have not been accepted and/or followed. Any current plan looking at less than 15-20 years can skew the actual anticipated needs at today’s level.

I ask that an account be created for Fire Apparatus Purchases and funded in each budget. These funds shall remain in the Town’s possession until a request is made to the Board of Selectmen for a purchase that follows the Apparatus Replacement Schedule.

CHARLES A. STEINHART V

FIRE CHIEF

## BOY SCOUTS TROOP 71

Troop 71 has had a very busy winter! The troop participated in the Wolf Pack Scout Night and were able to watch an exciting hockey game! They attended an orienteering hike at Hewitt Farm, created by Eagle Scout candidate, Noah Slitt. In February, six scouts were elected to the Order of the Arrow, Boy Scouts Honor Society: Peter Levanto, Jake Neddeau, Joshua Porterfield, Evan Richter, Gavin Wiggins, and Joseph Zichichi. They have the option to attend an induction ceremony called the 'Ordeal' later this spring. Congrats to all elected!

A ceremony was held on March 11<sup>th</sup> to recognize three Cub Scouts who crossed over into the troop. We are excited to have them as part of our Troop 71 family! The troop participated in the Mystic St. Patrick's Day parade in March and attended a backpacking campout at Cochegan Rock.

Be on the lookout for information regarding the rescheduled Baked Potato Fundraiser! Reminder: Troop 71 has an area at the transfer station for bottles and cans donations. This is the troop's biggest fundraiser and helps to support various events like summer camp, and purchase of necessary scout gear.



JENN RICHTER      COMMITTEE MEMBER

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## NORTH STONINGTON GIRL SCOUT TROOPS

We are busy in the middle of cookie season. You may see cookies appearing on the horizon and hopefully some cookie booths around town when cookies arrive on April 1<sup>st</sup>. Brownie Troop 63813 has donated some cookies to the local fire department to say thanks for the service they give to our town.



March 12<sup>th</sup> marked the 111<sup>th</sup> birthday of Girl Scouting in the USA. The Congregational Church hosted a Service for Girl Scout Sunday. Local troops celebrated with Brownie Troop 63813, participating in a program at the Mystic Aquarium to celebrate Girl Scout week, while Cadette Troop 63817 spent the weekend in Boston, walking the Freedom Trail and going to the theater. They are also participating in a program this year titled Letters Against Isolation, which is a National Girl Scout program sending letters of inspiration all over the country.

Brownie Troop 63283 took a field trip to North Franklin to learn about making maple syrup. Ambassador Troop 63061 continue to discuss plans for working on the Gold Award.

Brownie Troop 63813 and Cadette Troop 63817 marched in the Mystic Irish Parade. Girl Scout troops in the area also participated in an outdoor event at the Pachaug Youth Area on March 26<sup>th</sup>, which included a hike, outdoor cooking skills and a flag retirement ceremony. This was in conjunction with the Cub Scouts in North Stonington.

MANDY BRINK      GIRL SCOUT TOWN COORDINATOR      [trekeragb@sbcglobal.net](mailto:trekeragb@sbcglobal.net)

## BOARD OF EDUCATION

Happy Spring! Spring means budget season for the Board of Education and we have been working diligently with the Superintendent to come up with a budget that balances the needs of our students with the increased demand on our taxpayer dollars. We are not immune to the inflationary environment we all find ourselves in and are looking at all avenues to be as efficient as possible. We are excited to be adding the woodshop back into our curriculum and are piloting an alternative education program to better meet the needs of all our students.

Our budget is aligned with our 3 main goals. The 1st being Safe, Valued, and a Sense of Belonging, the 2nd, Innovative Instruction, and the 3rd, Transparent and Efficient. The district has updated its website and we welcome you to look at the new and improved format. We continue to look for better ways to communicate with the community and welcome any feedback. Policy work is ongoing, and we continue to align our policies with our 3 goals.

The Board is currently conducting a study of the athletic fields and grounds and are looking for ways to improve them moving forward. The blacktop at the elementary school has been included in a STEAP grant that was approved by the State and we are hoping to start work on that soon to provide a better play environment for our kids. There are countless opportunities to come and see the amazing work being done at our schools, from Drama and music to outdoor sporting events. Please join us as at any of these events and you will find the excitement contagious as we celebrate our students and their successes every day.

CHRISTINE WAGNER      CHAIRMAN

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## NORTH STONINGTON PARENT TEACHER ORGANIZATION

The PTO has spent the past few months doing what we love – having fun, while getting things done!

Recent events include the “Snowflake Holiday Sale”, a Scholastic Book Fair, an entry in the Town’s Holiday Light Parade, a Free Family Fun Night, and two assemblies featuring Big Lux! (One for the elementary school and one for the middle school.) Mr. Cillino fulfilled his Principal Dare, which the kids will never forget – and neither will Penelope the pig! We held a grade-level competition (Coin Car Race) which raised over \$1,700 for the elementary school.

We have several board openings for the 2023-2024 school year. Please contact us if you’re interested in what is available and what the basic duties are. We can be reached at [board@northstoningtonpto.com](mailto:board@northstoningtonpto.com). Please consider submitting a letter of intent on or before our April 18<sup>th</sup> meeting. Help us keep this organization going!

We are looking forward to all the end-of-year activities that you help us provide to our school staffs, students, and students’ families! Thank you to everyone who supports us! Whether it is with your time or your donations, we couldn’t do it without you!

DAWN GORALEWICZ      [president@northstoningtonpto.com](mailto:president@northstoningtonpto.com)



## NORTH STONINGTON GARDEN CLUB

While Mother Nature continues to tease us with alternating bouts of balmy and Arctic weather, the NSGC is planning for our **Annual Plant Sale**, which will take place, rain, or shine, on **Saturday, May 13, 9am-noon** at the North Stonington Elementary School. Mark your calendars!



Once again, we will be promoting native plants that support pollinators, and members are raising a variety of seedlings, which will be offered as healthy, well-established plants at the sale. This year's selections (which are different from last year) will include anise hyssop (*Agastache foeniculum*), wild white indigo (*Baptisia alba*) and obedient plant (*Physostegia virginiana*). All of these are plants support native pollinators in your garden, promoting your vegetable crops, as well as enhancing your environment with flowers and by attracting butterflies. In addition, of course, we will be offering our usual wide variety of locally grown perennials and shrubs, annuals, vegetables, tomatoes, herbs, bulbs and hanging baskets, as well as our always-intriguing rummage table.

We will have a local representative from Wild Ones on site to answer your questions and to help advise you on incorporating native plants into your home landscaping.

Don't miss the opportunity to bring a soil sample for testing by URI Master Gardeners. You can find instructions for collecting a suitable sample at our website: [www.nsgardenclub.org/the-importance-of-soil-testing](http://www.nsgardenclub.org/the-importance-of-soil-testing).

For your convenience, we will be accepting credit cards and offering a holding area where you can 'park' your plants while continuing to shop. A few carts will be available, but there are never enough, so please feel free to bring your own. Looking forward to seeing you!

JANICE PARKER            COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

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## KEEPING NORTH STONINGTON AFFORDABLE



KNSA has moved forward in the development of land gifted to us by Trinity Long Island Trust, Regina McGowan, Trustee. Our Legacy of Generosity fundraising campaign raised money to have this property declared a usable building lot. This month we successfully subdivided it into two building lots. We now begin the work to obtain the funds to build two affordable homes on this beautifully situated village property.

A grant has been submitted to the 1772 Foundation to do restoration work on the 1840 schoolhouse on Clarks Falls Road which the town quitclaimed to us to be rehabilitated into an affordable home. We wait to hear on the outcome of that submission. We have hired an architectural firm to develop plans for rental housing on Wintechog Hill.

The only way to deliver affordable housing is to use land that is given to us or to acquire land at a very attractive price and to subsequently create units that are cost effective to build. Providing this land for affordable housing while generating tax revenue for the town is a wise use of an available resource.

KNSA is always searching for those who would like to help in its mission to provide affordable housing in North Stonington.

MARY ANN RICKER            PRESIDENT

## CONSERVATION COMMISSION



Much of our work this late winter has been a continuation of planned work. We completed two extensive grant applications for money to begin a wheelchair accessible trail within the Assekonk Borderlands trail between the school's playing fields and Pinewoods Road. The smaller grant has been rejected and we await notification of the larger grant.

We continue making progress on a bicycle trail map showing routes, level of difficulty and elevations. Both road routes and mountain bike trails will be highlighted. We hope to be finished by fall.

This year's community calendar is sold out. The theme for next year is the community events around town. Watch out for photos of some school events, the Memorial Day Parade, the Grange Fair, Halloween Fest, carol singing and a myriad of events at the library.

We have worked throughout the year updating the Plan of Conservation & Development for 2023, identifying land parcels appropriate for adjoining to the three wildlife/greenway corridors. Four landowners have inquired how they may preserve or divest their property. We have shared a host of possible alternatives with them as they make plans for the future of their land.

With spring now upon us and more of us are out hiking our trails, as good stewards of our land, please pick up limbs fallen on the trails and report trees down or other serious impediments to safe travel for our removal.

**Earth Day is Saturday, April 22. Please join us in picking up trash along our roads.**

Those tiny "nips" are everywhere as well as cans and bottles thrown by thoughtless travelers. Choose a side road (not a heavily traveled state highway) and aide us in keeping North Stonington clean & attractive.

BILL RICKER      [williamricker@comcast.net](mailto:williamricker@comcast.net)      860-535-2426

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## NORTH STONINGTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Greetings North Stonington residents! At the elementary school, we have just completed our second trimester and our students' learning and growing continues. Our teachers are beginning to get our students prepared for state testing which is only 2 months away.

Along the way, there have still been a lot of fun for our children. We recently held our school wide spelling bee with the school winner, Cori Welch, advancing to the state finals. We are proud to announce that Cori placed 10<sup>th</sup> overall! We also had our Invention Convention recently. We had 12 inventors showcase their creative talents with some really innovative ideas. In the end, James Olock was the winner with his Card Carrier.

Our PTO also sponsored a wonderful treat for our students. Big Lux, a local violinist, came and performed for our entire school. It was a great performance, and the students and staff loved it! Last week we had a visit from Dune, a therapy dog. She and her owner Lauren visited all the classrooms and talked about what a therapy dog does. The students were wonderful with her and really loved her visit. The Drama Club performance of Willy Wonka Jr. was a real blockbuster. Congratulations to the approximately 80 students involved!

ROBERT CILLINO      PRINCIPAL

## TAX COLLECTOR

Hi, everyone and happy spring! I hope everyone had a safe and healthy winter. I want to take a minute to thank everyone and express my gratitude for all your warm smiles and welcoming comments during my first collection season here in North Stonington. It has been a pleasure to be here and meet those of you who came into the townhall.

For your information, the prior collector and the town engaged a lockbox firm for help with collections. This company receives your payments and processes the checks directly to the bank. They send a file to the tax office for review and the processing your payments. I would gladly have you stop by and pay in person or have you mail it directly to the townhall at 40 Main Street, North Stonington, CT 06359. However, you will receive an envelope to send it to the lockbox service in Boston with your bills.

This was my first experience with a lockbox company, and I must say it was a smooth transition and we worked very well together. Prior to my hire, the town had sent all delinquent bills to American National Recovery Group to help with collecting those delinquent taxes. I have worked with ARNG prior to coming here and they are also great to work with. However, there is a 15% charge on top of the tax, for their service, which you will pay when paying through them. We will continue to use both services, as far as I am aware, as they have already been established. To avoid the collection agency, taxes must be paid in full in a timely manner. We will be sending the current year bills to ANRG soon, as stated on the delinquent notices. To avoid the lockbox process, you can always mail to the townhall, use the drop box outside the townhall or just stop in and pay in person.

The tax office hours are Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday from 8:30 to 3:30 and Friday from 9 to 11 for collections.

I look forward to seeing more of you again in July. Enjoy the warmth of spring!

ZAYNE R. RING, CCMC TAX COLLECTOR taxcollector@northstoningtonct.gov 860-535-2877 x 120

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## NORTH STONINGTON CITIZENS LAND ALLIANCE

### Earth Day Every Day

**North Stonington is a grand place to celebrate Earth Day, April 22<sup>nd</sup>!**

Here are a few ideas from our Alliance file box with its scribbles and notes to help each of us make an Earthly difference by:

- Picking up any trash at our rural mailboxes and along our roadside property.
- Turning off the lights in the evening in at least one room not in use.
- In the car or pick-up, using a lighter foot on the gas pedal will help save gas and maybe some lives.
- For dark skies and more stars, using downward shields on our outdoor lights for special evening events.
- Piling our plant food wastes into a glorious heap in the back yard for compost and less landfill.
- Don't keep the water faucet running when we brush, wash, and clean ourselves up.
- Now and then, using a quiet hand tool instead of the blower.



MADELINE JEFFERY

landallianceinc@gmail.com

860-599-5517

## NORTH STONINGTON COMMUNITY GRANGE #138

When North Stonington Community Grange #138 meets we discuss and act upon not only our Grange needs, but also the needs of our community. We also have an informational program. **All are welcome** to come and have some fun with us. Your input as to our community needs would be greatly appreciated.

Our winter schedule is slower, with a lot of fun to ease the “winter blues”. This year’s theme is “Games” and in January we had visiting “celebrities” be our “Hollywood Squares”. In February we learned about the origins of Valentine’s Day and a little bit about Candyland. The March 10<sup>th</sup>’s program taught us Grange history via “Grangeopoly”, a spin-off of Monopoly. At our our second meeting in March we had our Lecturer’s contest entry “America, 100 years ago”.

Our upcoming schedule:

- On April 14th will be a game night, based on Scrabble.
- On April 28th we’ll honor our long-term members and a Community Citizen.
- May 12 will “Boggle” your mind.
- Our Memorial program is on May 26.
- June 3rd is our annual pot-luck picnic and games.
- June 9th is our election of officers for the new year, with a short program on “Sorry”.

All meetings are at 8:00 pm except the picnic, which begins at 6:30 pm. Come enjoy.

SUE PIANKA      PROGRAM DIRECTOR      860-599-4528

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## ROTARY OF THE STONINGTONS

The Rotary of the Stoningtons has had a very busy few months and we are looking forward to more exciting programming coming up!

This winter we recently had guest speakers Vera Harsh and Kim Hargrave from the Denison Pequotsepos Nature Center, and special guest, 'Albert', the barred owl! We enjoyed learning more about the Nature Center and its diverse programs for all ages and abilities, as well as specific details about their work with rescued owls. We were happily able to hand a check to our guests so they can purchase four stereoscopes for their classroom educational program!

Other recent guest speakers included our new Assistant Governor Area 11, Sam Roudebush (Rotary Club of Ledyard), Shawn Thompson, an international traveler, consultant, and developer of security technology. His work was fascinating! On March 17<sup>th</sup>, we held our annual potluck breakfast and a meeting for our largest fundraiser of the year, our Golf Tournament on Fisher’s Island.

As always, we will be volunteering at 4:30 on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday and the 5<sup>th</sup> Tuesdays of each month at the New London Meal Center (Soup Kitchen). If you can help, we would love to have you join us.

If you are involved in a community project, a local nonprofit, or a local business, we would love to hear from you! To speak at our weekly meetings. Contact Donna Scherer at: [dscherer.rotary@gmail.com](mailto:dscherer.rotary@gmail.com). Interested in joining our amazing club? Contact our Membership chair Carol Umphlett at: [carolu.rotary@gmail.com](mailto:carolu.rotary@gmail.com).





## AVALONIA LAND CONSERVANCY

Enjoy the many opportunities to hike in the open spaces and woodlands in North Stonington, whether they are Avalonia properties or others. Spring is upon us, so enjoy the emerging flora and fauna. At AVALONIA.ORG you can find trail maps and descriptions. Avalonia does more than protect open space. Check EVENTS for scheduled walks and talks. The land trust engages in education, wildlife & waters shed protection, public recreation and more.



- Sound Finances
- Ethical Conduct
- Responsible Governance
- Lasting Stewardship

Your membership is always welcome. For information or to volunteer to monitor a property or help keep trails clear, you may contact Pat Turner, [jmt.pst@gmail.com](mailto:jmt.pst@gmail.com). If you are interested in joining a work party, contact Toby at [tglaza@avaloniaalc.org](mailto:tglaza@avaloniaalc.org).

### EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Greetings, neighbors! In retrospect (since my last Quarterly submission), North Stonington has fared relatively well in terms of impactful weather. We have not experienced any significant hurricanes or tropical storms, debilitating snow/ice storms, floods, tornados, extensive power outages, etc. Except for a bitterly cold temperature spell, we've come through relatively unscathed.

I don't want to "jinx" our good fortune, by reminding everyone that the upcoming 2023 hurricane season officially begins on 1 June and doesn't end until 30 November of this year. While it's still too premature to predict our upcoming 2023 hurricane season, the hurricane and storm events (reportedly) will increasingly become more severe and unpredictable up through the year 2050; just look at recent weather events around our country.

Impactful events that can directly affect us include man-made or terrorist-inspired disasters that have no connection to the weather. Attacks on our infrastructure are also a constant threat to us, and I receive weekly reports about these threats that occur around the country. No one can predict the future, but one thing is certain - everyone must stay prepared to deal with all eventualities of any disaster. Remember: "It wasn't raining when Noah built the Ark." Always plan for the worst and hope for the best.

GARY BARON      DIRECTOR

### POLLINATOR PATHWAY PROJECT

This project is supported by the Town's "Sustainable North Stonington". Everyone is encouraged to provide pollinator-friendly habitat by adding areas of native plants, avoiding pesticides, and rethinking lawn care practices. Create native "pathways" connecting your property, your neighbors', and public spaces. Check out the new Children's Garden behind the library, part of a public and private pathway along Main Street. Children are starting seedlings at the library to add to their garden and are learning about the lives and importance of butterflies and bees and more. Other public areas along the street are at the Congregational Church, the rear of the Village Green, the rear of the historical society home, the town parking lot, and at the fairgrounds. For more information or to sign a pledge and purchase a lawn sign, contact Pat Turner at [No.Sto.Pollinators@gmail.com](mailto:No.Sto.Pollinators@gmail.com)



PAT TURNER

## IMPORTANT INFORMATION FROM OUR REGISTRARS

The Registrar of Voters supports our Town residents in their voting needs. Every year, in order to keep our database up to date and accurate, we are tasked with canvassing residents who have moved out of town, moved within the town, or haven't voted in several years. With that said, if you are planning any moves in the near future, please remember to update your registration.

We are currently awaiting multiple decisions from the State's Secretary on Early Voting and Rank Choice Voting in Connecticut. While we don't have specific details, we are anxiously awaiting the outcome. Stay tuned for more information to follow. If you are interested in helping us at the Polls, we are always looking for volunteers. Contact our office for additional details. It is open every Tuesday and Thursday morning from 10am-12noon. Happy Spring!

CONNIE BERARDI & EMILY LEWIS      REGISTRARS

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## NORTH STONINGTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY



If you have attended the second Saturday open houses, you will also enjoy the interactive presentations each month this spring. If you are not familiar with the Stephen Main Homestead, join us each month to see what you might be missing, and visit the Dye House to understand the role this cottage industry played in our town. In April, we will introduce you to the permaculture technique Hügélkultur being employed to restore the dye garden. Spring is here, and work continues on the Homestead Project, creating an area of native plantings and contributing to the Town's Pollinator Pathway Project.

Please feel welcome to visit the house and the genealogical library Tuesday afternoons or by appointment. Phone 860-535-9448 or 599-3608 or go to [northstoningtonhistorical.org](http://northstoningtonhistorical.org)

DICK SEAGER      PRESIDENT      [dickseager@comcast.net](mailto:dickseager@comcast.net)

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## BETTER TOGETHER CT INC. FARM & SANCTUARY

At Better Together CT Inc. we aim to address the root cause of suicide and opioid epidemic in Combat Veterans, First Responders, and community at large. We are offering the following new programs for 2023:

- Reiki & Health & Wellness Coaching, Yoga - Christine Gentry, BS, MA, RN, HN-BC.
- Free Art Therapy - By Veteran for Veterans - Felicia Stevens, BAAT, NLP.
- Farm to Table Nutritional Ed Program (PTSD Diet)- Stefana Pecher, MD & Guest Chefs (TBA).
- Purpose Changes You(th) (Focus on Change through Community Service).
- Cloning/Growing & Harvesting with UCONN students & Professor Matt DeBacco.

ARC of New London generously donated an Aquaponics System this month. We are excited to get this set up and begin using this sustainable method which combines aquaculture and hydroponics resulting in 90% reduction in water use.

Thank you to our volunteers & supporters! Without your generosity with your time and financial support it would not be possible to help as many people as we have. We are truly "Better Together"!

DR STEFANA PECHER      DIRECTOR      CAROLYN HOWELL      SECRETARY

## BOARD OF FINANCE

Hello North Stonington taxpayers. Budget season is in full swing! At this point the Board of Finance has received all department requests for funding and will now begin the work of determining how to best support town initiatives with the resources at our disposal. This is rarely and easy undertaking but rest assured that we on the Board of Finance will work hard to make sure all taxpayers are in our minds when making decisions on the budget.

Going into the season we received the good news that town revenues have increased. This additional revenue will certainly help fund any increased spending that is ultimately approved by you the taxpayer. The Board of Finance is meeting twice a week (Mondays and Wednesdays) up until the Town Hearing to get this work done. Our meetings will be available for your review on the town website.

PAUL SIMONDS

CHAIRMAN

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## NORTH STONINGTON EDUCATION FOUNDATION



Congratulations to Cheryl Haase and Wayne Coates, who were selected as inductees as Distinguished Wheeler Alumni for their important and substantial contributions to the North Stonington Community.

The February Trivia Contest was a success with eleven teams competing at the VFW in Pawcatuck. The winning team was The Brainy Bunch. The Foundation is sponsoring two spring events. On April 22, an Amazing Race will be held. The Annual Road Race will occur on May 27. Please visit [nsedfoundation.org](http://nsedfoundation.org) for further information.

BERNARD "BING" BARTICK

[bbesail@aol.com](mailto:bbesail@aol.com)

860-389-0264

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## CONNECTION = Volunteering & Veterans Coffeeshouses



Now more than ever community support is so important and impactful! The Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) offers the support someone needs to remain living at home either with grocery shopping needs, visiting, or local medical rides. If you are 55+ contact us to hear how your help may improve the quality of life of an elderly or disabled person by volunteering around your schedule to help a neighbor in your community.



We have a North Stonington community member who needs rides to her doctor appointments! Contact: Renee LaBonte, Program Coordinator, at 860-425-6608 / [rlabonte@tvcca.org](mailto:rlabonte@tvcca.org).

**Connect with veterans!** TVCCA hosts monthly veteran coffeeshouses to meet and socialize with other veterans and their spouses and receive information about veteran benefits and services. They are scheduled on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Thursdays of each month at the Pawcatuck Neighborhood Center, 27 Chase St, and on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of each month at the Mystic Masonicare, 45 Clara Dr. Meeting times are 9-11 am. We offer free baked goods and coffee.

You can visit our website at [tvcca.org](http://tvcca.org) or [facebook.com/TVCCArsvp](https://facebook.com/TVCCArsvp) or contact James Hodge, Veterans Coffeeshouse Coordinator at 860-425-6615 / [jhodge@tvcca.org](mailto:jhodge@tvcca.org).

## CEMETARY COMMISSION

This winter season has been very quiet for the commission. We will start our usual activities later in March when the weather is more cooperative. Flags will be placed at all veteran graves before Memorial Day. David Fede will be overseeing the annual maintenance of the burial grounds. I plan to do some gravestone cleaning so that the inscriptions are not completely lost to time and lichens. I hope we are able to have a presentation by Mike Dibble sometime this spring on our historical cemeteries.

As always, we are so very grateful for our intrepid volunteers who put in both time and financial resources to be caretakers of areas near or on their properties. Please feel free to contact me with any concerns regarding these sacred grounds.

DIANE PRESTON

Home 860-599-1832 / Cell 860-961-2580

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## FRIGHTS & LIGHTS 2023



Save the date! The annual Frights & Lights Halloween Block Party & Light Parade returns on October 21<sup>st</sup>. We have listened to your feedback, and we are excited to announce that the event will now switch to Saturday night, instead of Friday. Plans are in the works to bring more food, vendors, and spooky fun to Main Street.

The summer Quarterly will have information about how to sign up to be a vendor or volunteer, participate in the parade, or provide sponsorship to some unique elements we're hoping to bring in. Last year's event attracted hundreds of people and we're already brainstorming ways to improve. Our goal is to make Frights & Lights a staple on the town calendar, something that is equally enjoyable for adults and children, and we want to provide a delightful, memorable evening to all. Be sure to follow along on our Instagram and Facebook accounts: @NSLightParade.

JEN STRUNK

EVENT ORGANIZER

nslightparade@gmail.com

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## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

The North Stonington Economic Development Commission (EDC) continues to work with the committee updating the new Plan of Conservation and Development. Economic Development focus groups were held in February, and neighborhood meetings began in March. These meetings will be held throughout North Stonington and are a great way for everyone to participate in a discussion on where we would like to go as a community. The EDC is planning and working on an action plan to be included in the new Plan of Conservation and Development.

Local businesses impacted by Covid-19 still have until May 15, 2023, to apply for assistance from the North Stonington Covid-19 Small Business Assistance Program. So far, we have granted over half of our allotted funding to local businesses affected by the pandemic. There are funds remaining, so if you have been impacted, apply today.

We recently approved the application of a new member to join the Commission, someone with extensive experience in the business and entertainment world. We look forward to the Selectmen approving this candidate and bringing her experience to the Commission. Our Commission is here to assist the business community. Stay productive, North Stonington.

CHRISTOPHER P. ANDERSON

860-608-4549

canderson@northstoningtonct.gov

## WHEELER LIBRARY



Wheeler Library has requested an increase in town funding for the 2023-24 fiscal year. This will enable us to expand our hours and increase programming. We appreciate your support during the town budget process.

Get ready - Town Wide Tag Sale Day returns on Saturday, May 6<sup>th</sup>. Sign up soon to get your name and address on the map. Don't miss the Art Opening on Wednesday, April 5<sup>th</sup> for both the Tiny Art Show and the Earth Day-themed Arts Corridor exhibit.

Love to paint? Our CHAIR-ity fundraiser provides artists the opportunity to paint a wooden chair to be auctioned off to benefit the library. We will provide the chair and you'll have all summer to create a unique piece of art.

Details on all library events and activities are available at [wheelerlibrary.org](http://wheelerlibrary.org). Call us anytime at 860-535-0383.

AMY KENNEDY

DIRECTOR

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## THE NORTH STONINGTON RECREATION COMMISSION

### Spring 2023 programs available for registration:

- **"Spirit Moves" Yoga & Pilates:** 3 ongoing programs Tuesday am, Wednesday pm, Thursday am.
- **Adult Tennis Lessons:** Monday evenings starting April 10<sup>th</sup> (for 6 weeks).
- **Youth Tennis Lessons:** Sunday mornings starting April 16<sup>th</sup> (for 6 weeks).
- **First Aid / CPR / AED:** Wednesday April 12<sup>th</sup>.
- **Basic Childcare:** Thursday April 13<sup>th</sup>.
- **Babysitting Certification:** 2-day program (April 12<sup>th</sup> & 13<sup>th</sup>).
- **Golf:** Multiple offerings for youth, adult, & women only.

**Please visit [northstoningtonrec.com](http://northstoningtonrec.com) for more information**

THOMAS FABIAN

DIRECTOR



# SPRING EVENTS



## April

1 <sup>st</sup>	Saturday	10:30am	Wheeler Library	Wet and Dry Felting Class for Adults and Teens, Registration and supplies fee required.
5th	Wednesday	3:00 to 8:00pm	Wheeler Library	Art Opening - Earth Day-themed Tiny Art Show AND Arts Corridor display
8th	Saturday	11:00am to 1:00pm	Stephen Main Homestead	Open House
8th	Saturday	11:00am to 1:00pm	Stephen Main Homestead	Hügelkultur demonstration in the future dye garden location; information on dyeing Easter eggs with natural dyes
15 <sup>th</sup>	Saturday	TBD	Wheeler Library	Kids' Indoor Planting Activity with NoSto Garden club. Details TBD
19th	Wednesday	TBD	Wheeler Library	DPNC after school program "Nature Heroes"
19th	Wednesday	6:30pm	Wheeler Library	Screening of "A Life on Planet Earth" narrated by David Attenborough
22nd	Friday	6:00 to 9:00pm	Around the Town	The Amazing Race. Register at <a href="http://nsefoundation.org">nsefoundation.org</a>
26th	Wednesday	6:30pm	Wheeler Library	Screening of 2023 Oscar Winner "The Elephant Whisperer"

## May

6th	Saturday	8:00am to 2:00pm	Around the Town	Town Wide Tag Sale Day, Spring Cleaning version.
6th	Saturday	6:00pm	Wheeler High School	NSPTO Basket Raffle. Email <a href="mailto:nostobasketraffle@gmail.com">nostobasketraffle@gmail.com</a> for more information.
12th-13th	Friday, Saturday	7:00pm	Wheeler High School	Drama Club's production of Little Mermaid



# SPRING EVENTS

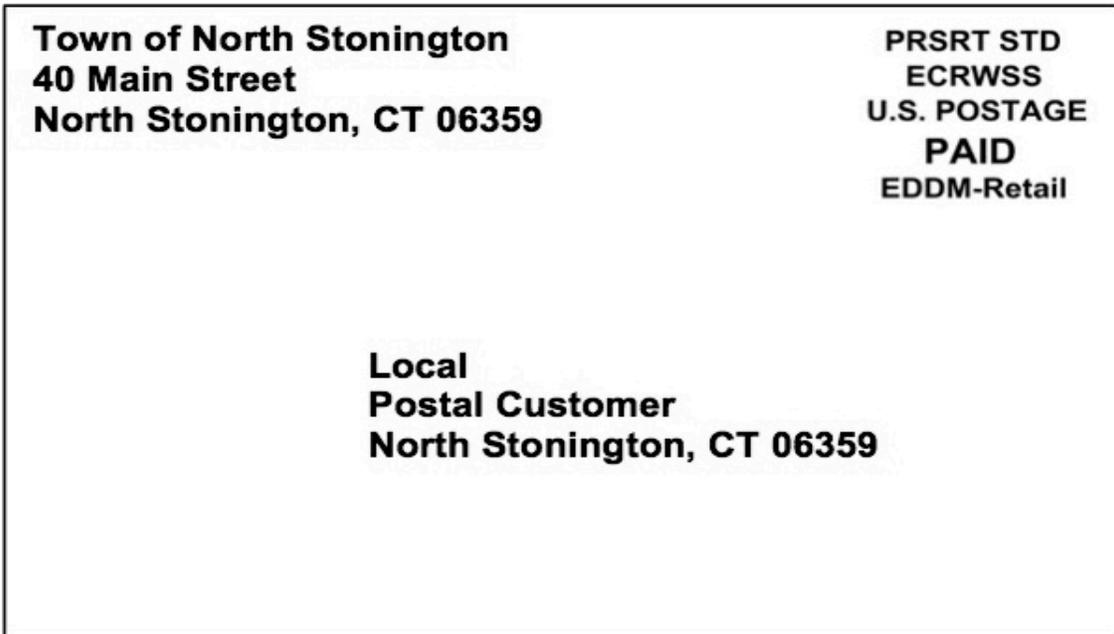


## May Continued

14th	Sunday	2:00pm	Wheeler High School	Drama Club's production of Little Mermaid
13th	Saturday	11:00am to 1:00pm	Stephen Main Homestead	Open House.
13th	Saturday	11:00am to 1:00pm	Stephen Main Homestead	Metal detecting for artifacts on the Homestead property with Nathaniel Cerf.
13th	Saturday	9:00am to noon	North Stonington Elementary School	North Stonington Garden Club Annual Plant Sale.
20th	Saturday	TBD	TBD	Pollinator Garden Planting Day - Details TBD
27th	Saturday	10:00am to 2:00pm	Town Hall	Rabies clinic.

## June

10th	Saturday	11:00am to 1:00pm	Stephen Main Homestead	Open House
10th	Saturday	11:00am to 1:00pm	Stephen Main Homestead	Anthotype photography (using plant dyes) with Boston-based photographer Mary Kocol
21st	Wednesday	6:00pm	Wheeler Library Lawn	Wheeler Class of 2023 Commencement Ceremony
24th	Saturday	TBD	Wheeler Library	Summer at the Library Kick-Off day - Details TBD
27th	Tuesday	6:00pm	Wheeler Library	Summer Music on the Library Lawn Series begins



## The Budget is coming!! Make sure your voice is heard...

Our Town's Boards, Committees and Departments have worked hard and provided their input about expected revenues and expenses to be included in the upcoming 2023-2024 North Stonington Budget.

**VOTING** is the best way for you to support the efforts of our town officials. Your voice matters and every vote counts! Please be "in the know" and plan on attending our Town's Public Hearing, Annual Town Meeting, and then VOTE at the Referendum. The dates are as follows:

✓ **April 17<sup>th</sup>: The Public Hearing**, led by the Board of Finance, will present the budget contents. This is an important step, because it allows taxpayers to gain understanding of what is in the budget and to ask questions of those who have prepared it. Following the public input, any necessary changes can be made before the Annual Town Meeting.

✓ **May 1<sup>st</sup>: The Annual Town Meeting** will be held, and all residents are encouraged to attend. The final budget will be presented and will subsequently be voted upon at the referendum.

✓ **May 15<sup>th</sup>: Budget Referendum**, which will be held in our Town Meeting Room at the North Stonington Education Center. Voting hours are from 6:00am – 8:00pm.

We would like to thank all our contributors for keeping the residents of North Stonington informed. Nearly 10 years and 38 issues filled with high quality, thoughtful articles! That says a lot about our town and those who live and work here. NSQ would not exist without you.

Thank You!

**Nita Kincaid & Lisa Mazzella, NSQ Editors**