



FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 2017



Scan to visit our web site

# THE GARDNER NEWS

GARDNER, MA PUBLISHING SINCE 1869

Your Locally Owned Community Newspaper for Gardner, Ashburnham, Hubbardston, Phillipston, Templeton, Westminster, Winchendon

Vol. 215, No. 224

16 Pages



Public Works Director Alan Mayo points out where a crack has formed in the front frame of the bumper on the department's 1984 Mack 10-wheeler truck which is used for attaching a plow onto the vehicle.

News staff photos by CHRISTINE SMITH

## Vote on raises needs to pass higher hurdle

Second vote will be the key

### ■ GARDNER

By ANDREW MANSFIELD  
AMANSFIELD@THEGARDNERNEWS.COM

The City Council will hold a special meeting next week to vote on proposed pay increases for elected officials and other positions. During their regular meeting on Sept. 5, the City Council voted in favor of giving the mayor and School Committee members a 4 percent raise, giving increases to the stipends for appointed positions, and giving 2 percent pay increases for nonunion city positions, which includes department heads.

The proposals were submitted by Mayor Mark Hawke for their consideration. The only proposal the City Council voted against was to give a 4 percent raise for the city councilors.

On Monday, Sept. 25, at 7 p.m. in the City Council Chamber, Room 219, at City Hall, the City Council has on its agenda the ordinance amendments to enact those pay raises that were previously approved for first printing.

Typically, the vote for second and final printing is treated more as a formality and reaffirms the original vote.

However, in this case, the results could change from the Sept. 5 meeting. Salary ordinances require a two-thirds majority vote for final printing, a higher threshold than the simple majority required for first printing.

At least in recent memory, the issue of salary raises has also proven to produce disagreement among the councilors, particular when dealing with elected officials.

At the conclusion of this week's regular City Council meeting, City Councilor James Walsh urged residents to have their voices heard on all of the salary amendments before the City Council.

### Talking Points

- Mayor and School Committee would get a 4 percent raise
- Nonunion city workers would get a 2 percent raise
- When the School Committee raise was voted on the first time, it didn't have enough votes for a two-thirds majority, which it will need on second printing

"What I'm hoping," he said, "is the people of the city of Gardner will communicate with councilors on their views of these amendments, one way or the other."

In his proposal, Hawke explained his rationale was to give elected officials 4 percent raises — to take effect in January 2018 after the city election this fall — because that is equal to the raises other nonelected positions have received over the last two years. Elected officials are eligible to receive pay increases every two years.

At the Sept. 5 City Council meeting, councilors voted in favor of the 4 percent raise for mayor by a vote of 8-3. That means at least the same number of councilors will have to vote in favor for it to pass second printing.

City Councilor Marc Morgan said the position of mayor in Gardner is "way underfunded" and voted in favor.

If it stands, the mayor's salary will go from \$88,650 to \$92,196, a raise of about \$3,500. In 2015, the mayor's salary was increased by \$10,000 from \$78,650 to its current rate, which amounted to an increase of over 12 percent.

At the time, the position's pay had not been increased since 2009.

RAISES 4

## KEEPIN' THEM ROLLING

Highway Dept. trucks take a beating to keep you on the road

### ■ TEMPLETON

By CHRISTINE SMITH  
CSMITH@THEGARDNERNEWS.COM

Corrosion and rust is undoubtedly not a welcome site to the Templeton Highway Department, but it is nonetheless very prevalent and in some cases is wreaking havoc on the town's aging fleet of trucks and equipment.

"It took a long time to get where we are at, so it will take a few years to get where we should be," said Public Works Director Alan Mayo on a recent morning in his office at the Highway Department garage, where there are still actively used trucks that date back to the 1970s.

Mayo, who absorbed the job of overseeing the town's Highway Department along with his other duties with the parks and cemeteries after a consolidation occurred some months ago, received approval from the Board of Selectmen earlier this month to purchase replacement stainless steel sanders for two of the department's vehicles.



Highway Department mechanic Bob Adams works on removing the large sander dump body from the department's heavy duty 1994 six-wheel Brigadier truck, in preparation for that to be replaced by a newer stainless steel model.

Both sanders were already used for two years, so the town was able to purchase them much cheaper than

new, but they hinted at a much larger need that is only revealed with a deeper investigation of the issues that cur-

rently plague the department.

Sparks flew from the welding torch as Highway Department mechanic Bob Adams worked in the garage in a slow process to remove the large sander dump body from the department's heavy-duty 1994 six-wheel Brigadier truck, in preparation for that to be replaced by one of the new stainless steel models. The old dump body had become so rotted that the piston on the lift ramp had simply become detached, Mayo said, pointing out a section of the underbody ramp that now angled vertically instead of being horizontally flat as it should have been.

"The New England weather isn't a truck's friend, and the salt and sand doesn't help," said Mayo. He and other town officials hope that the truck itself will last another winter plowing season, but realizing that the cab is beginning to let go from the rear frame, know that it, too, should be retired and replaced at that point by a new model.

TRUCKS 4

## TASTE FOR A CAUSE

WINE, CHEESE AND CHOCOLATE TASTING SUPPORTS BACKPACK PROGRAM

### ■ GARDNER

By ANDREW MANSFIELD  
AMANSFIELD@THEGARDNERNEWS.COM

The Gardner Rotary Club is providing plenty to savor to bring people out for supporting one of its most impactful charitable efforts.

On Wednesday, Sept. 27, from 6 to 8 p.m. at the Polish American Citizens Club, 171

Kendall Pond Road, West, the Rotary Club will hold its third annual Wine, Cheese and Chocolate Tasting.

The event is a fundraiser for the Weekend Backpack Food Program, run by the club and Heywood Healthcare. The program provides food over the weekend to Gardner Public Schools third- and fourth-graders from low-income families.

TASTE 4



News staff photo by DONEEN DURLING

Naturalist John Root plucks curly dock and said the greens could be eaten in a salad in the early spring, and later in the year the leaves could be steamed, and the roots used for a detoxifying tea.

## FORAGING FOR FOOD

Naturalist John Root knows his roots and leaves

### ■ WINCHENDON

By DONEEN DURLING  
DDURLING@THEGARDNERNEWS.COM

As soon as the first wild plants push through the soil when the winter slips away, New England becomes a veritable buffet of edible greens and blooms. Naturalist John Root came to Charlie's Redhouse Organic Farm on Sept. 16 to conduct a walking tour introducing people to the art of foraging for edible and medicinal wild plants.

Before the walk began, Root presented a PowerPoint presentation on things to take into consideration when foraging. He said to use the scientific names for the plants.

"Use all your senses, learn habitat, learn companion plants, learn to follow wild edibles through all the seasons, learn which parts of a wild edible plant are safe to use, don't overharvest, consider growing them yourself, avoid toxic areas, if there are aquatic plants in wetlands, know the water source."

FORAGE 2

### WEATHER

TODAY:  
CLOUDY,  
HIGH 70

### INDEX

Classified - 11-13  
Comics - 15  
Editorial - 6  
Education - 7  
Local News - 3-4  
Obituaries - 2  
Sports - 8-10  
TV Listings - 14

### CONTACT US

Editorial Dept.  
978-632-8000 Ext. 6  
editorial@  
thegardnernews.com

Circulation Dept.  
978-630-1200  
circulation@  
thegardnernews.com

Classified Dept.:  
978-632-8000 Ext. 17  
lineclassified@  
thegardnernews.com

### ONLINE AT:

www.thegardnernews.com

