



Richmond Community Alliance
Encouraging constructive community engagement and action

NEWSLETTER

No. 11 February 18, 2024

Peaks

RICAS Rockstars: Featuring Richmond Elementary School

RI Department of Education (RIDE) recently featured Richmond Elementary School (RES) in their ongoing “RICAS Rockstars” series. The Rhode Island Comprehensive Assessment System (RICAS) assessments were introduced in 2018 and are aligned to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). RIDE applauded RES, “where high-quality instructional materials and passionate administrators and educators are driving forces behind their noteworthy growth.” According to the video, RES saw an 18 percentage point gain on the 2023 RICAS English Language Arts assessments from the prior year. Teachers credited the new curriculum recently purchased by the district and professional development that has been provided in the Science of Reading. Hear more from the RES community: [RICAS Rockstars: Richmond Elementary School Shines!](#)

Valleys

Fear Mongering About Toxic Waste

At a recent School Committee meeting, Senator Elaine Morgan made the unfounded claim that there could be toxic waste buried under the existing schools, citing the possibility as a reason for not building new schools on those sites: “Our area Charlestown, Hopkinton and Richmond have been toxic waste dumps for decades, so what if we start digging and we uncover [toxic waste] . . . this is a major concern. . . we have a lot of stuff that was dumped down here for decades, and that could be a very big hindrance [to building new schools].” Video 1:47:18 [2024-02-15 School Committee Meeting](#)

We hope that Sen Morgan will share her information about toxic waste on these sites with Chariho and DEM, as School Committee Chair Guisti requested.

Town Council Approves a Resolution to Oppose Chariho New School Initiative

At the February 6 meeting, Council President Trimmer proposed a resolution opposing the Chariho New School Initiative and Stage II RIDE Application stating “We as Richmond Town Council do not stand for option A (new schools) as presented.” The Town Council approved the resolution, with Councilors Trimmer, Sheehan, Colasante voting for it and Councilors Nassaney and Wilcox voting against. This resolution has no impact on the process required to bring this proposal to Chariho voters who will decide whether to approve Option A at a referendum scheduled for May 7. The information below from Chariho shows the anticipated impact of each option on taxpayers. Not sure why the council majority would oppose Option A. Here is the entire presentation [Chariho 2024 - Stage II Capital Improvement Presentation](#)

Chariho Schools

Potential Impact on Taxpayers

Using **conservative numbers** -the chart below compares the current 3 options (**Note-cost can decrease based on current interest rates etc...**)

★ Bond Option A Spring 2024	Bond Option B Fall 2024	Option C If Bond Options 1 & 2 Fail
Three New Elementary Schools & Main Campus Projects	Prioritized Elementary & Main Campus Needs	Emergency needs <small>increases may be necessary due to increasing needs</small>
\$28 Million Cost of Bond to Local Taxpayers 81% reimbursement 20- 25 year bond <small>*could decrease annual cost and amount of bond needed by moving to 30 yr bond and building two schools at one time</small>	\$11.7 Million Cost of Bond to Local Taxpayers 61% reimbursement 6-10-year bond	\$2.3 million minimum Pay As You Go Year to Year
Yearly Cost to Chariho Budget \$2.3M <small>*principal & interest are reimbursable</small>	Yearly Cost to Chariho Budget \$2.3M <small>*principal & interest are reimbursable</small>	Yearly Cost to Chariho Budget \$2.3M
Hopkinton enrollment (1123 students) 38.26% \$879,980 (total cost) Richmond enrollment (1106 students) 37.68% \$866,640 (total cost) Charlestown enrollment (706) 24.05% \$553,254 (total cost)	Hopkinton enrollment (1123 students) 38.26% \$879,980 (total cost) Richmond enrollment (1106 students) 37.68% \$866,640 (total cost) Charlestown enrollment (706) 24.05% \$553,254 (total cost)	Hopkinton enrollment (1123 students) 38.26% \$879,980 (total cost) Richmond enrollment (1106 students) 37.68% \$866,640 (total cost) Charlestown enrollment (706) 24.05% \$553,254 (total cost)
Hopkinton tax impact: tax increase of \$0.67 A \$400K home would result in \$269.59 per yr Richmond tax impact: tax increase of \$0.65 A \$396K home would result in \$256.50 per yr Charlestown tax impact: tax increase of \$0.13 A \$578,000 home would result in \$75.14 per yr	Hopkinton tax impact: tax increase of \$0.67 A \$400K home would result in \$269.59 per yr Richmond tax impact: tax increase of \$0.65 A \$396K home would result in \$256.50 per yr Charlestown tax impact: tax increase of \$0.13 A \$578,000 home would result in \$75.14 per yr	Hopkinton tax impact: tax increase of \$0.67 A \$400K home would result in \$269.59 per yr Richmond tax impact: tax increase of \$0.65 A \$396K home would result in \$256.50 per yr Charlestown tax impact: tax increase of \$0.13 A \$578,000 home would result in \$75.14 per yr
Based on current information from Member Town		
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*Based on average home value per member town ***Financial projections are subject to change based on enrollment data and property values

Other Items of Note

Finance Director Laura Kenyon Leaving

Richmond posted a notice seeking a new Finance Director last week, so presumably Laura Kenyon will be leaving her position. Laura was appointed in April 2019; prior to working in Richmond, she worked for the towns of Narragansett and Hopkinton for five years each. Laura has been a valued member of the Town Hall staff who was invaluable in navigating administering the COVID money received by the town, and has not hesitated to speak up to correct those providing incorrect or misleading information. Those interested in the position can apply at <https://www.richmondri.com/Jobs.aspx>

Gary Robar Hired as Director of Department of Public Works

At the last Town Council meeting, the council unanimously approved the hire of Gary Robar as the new Department of Public Works (DPW) Director, replacing retired Director Scott Barber. Robar previously served as the DPW Superintendent.

Commission/Board Appointments

On February 5, Council unanimously appointed Peter Burton to the Planning Board. Peter has a background in engineering and construction. He is also a member of the Economic Development Commission. Kristen Chambers was appointed to the Richmond RI 250th Commission. Kristen is also President of the Richmond Historical Society.

Community Profile

Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association

Established in 1983 as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, the Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association (WPWA) has a mission to preserve and protect the integrity of the lands and waters of the Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed for the benefit of our natural and human communities. WPWA is recognized as an outspoken voice working for those who use and enjoy the rivers. Many of WPWA's activities are directed toward educating and informing residents, visitors, and public officials about the watershed's pristine lands and water resources. The WPWA's campus on the upper Wood River provides an administrative headquarters, conference and program facilities, and a handicapped-accessible public fishing and canoe access with parking. The WPWA provides members with free use of their fleet of kayaks, canoes and paddleboards; their newsletter "Watershed"; and a host of other programs. Visit <https://wpwa.org> to join or learn more.

Upcoming Meetings

March 5 – Town Council Meeting – 5 pm at Town Hall

March 5 – Chariho Budget Public Hearing – 7:30 pm at Middle School Auditorium - 25 registered voters from each town required for a quorum

March 12 – Planning Board Meeting – 6:30 pm at Town Hall

March 12 – Chariho School Committee – 7:00 pm at CHS Library

Town Council and Planning Board agendas: <https://clerkshq.com/richmond-ri>

School Committee agendas: https://www.chariho.k12.ri.us/school_committee/meeting_schedule

Community Calendar

Richmond Recreation Summer Camp 2023

Registration is now open! Camp runs from June 26 to July 28, 9am – 3 pm and is open to Richmond and non-Richmond residents in K-7th grade. Sign up at:

<http://richmondri.com/166/Recreation>

Free Plant & Paint – February 21 from 10–11:30am – Richmond Carolina Fire Station

The Richmond Recreation Department is hosting a free school vacation plant & paint event for kids ages 4–13. Come plant marigold seeds and paint a planter for free at the Richmond Carolina Fire Station Hall. RSVP is not required but helpful for material purposes. Contact Morgan at recreation@richmondri.com or 401-932-1219 with questions or to RSVP.

Community Giving Events

“Show Some Love” hosted by State Rep. Megan Cotter – February 20 at 6 pm – Tilted Barn

Bring personal care items such as shampoo, tampons, razors, etc., and enjoy a complimentary dinner. Donations will be split between RICAN and the Exeter Department of Social Services.

Details: <https://www.facebook.com/events/1057082518863097>

Future Ideas

We would like to spotlight local businesses, people, and points of interest in our area in future newsletters. If you have an idea for a person/place to feature, or an event to include on the community calendar, feel free to email us at rca4richmond@gmail.com. We also welcome any tips or items of concern that you wish to bring to our attention.