

**REGULAR MEETING AGENDA  
COLUMBIA BOARD OF SELECTMEN**

**Tuesday, January 9, 2024**

**7:00 PM**

**Adella G. Urban Administrative Offices Conference Room & Virtual  
323 Route 87, Columbia, CT**

**Topic: Board of Selectmen Meeting**

**Time: Jan 9, 2024 07:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)**

**Join Zoom Meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88069181201>**

**Meeting ID: 880 6918 1201**

**One tap mobile**

**+13052241968,,88069181201# US**

**Dial by your location**

**• +1 305 224 1968 US**

**Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/u/kbPYMovoPE>**

*This is a hybrid public meeting. The public can attend in-person or electronically. The information provided in this agenda contains the link to access the meeting electronically.*

*The public may view the video recording of the meeting on YouTube at "[Town of Columbia, CT](#)" Please allow approximately 48 business hours after the meeting for the video to be published.*

*For public input before the meeting, please email your comments to [PublicInput@columbiact.org](mailto:PublicInput@columbiact.org) prior to 24 hours before the meeting.*

**CALL TO ORDER:**

1. **RULES OF CONDUCT FOR HYBRID VIRTUAL MEETING:** *This meeting will be held both in-person and virtual. This session is being both video and audio recorded. Board members and staff who are joining virtually will generally remain on mute except when speaking or voting and will generally be keeping video of themselves on throughout the meeting. If a member of the public joining virtually creates an audio or video disruption, they may be manually ejected from the meeting upon recommendation of staff or the First Selectman. If attending virtually, public comments during the meeting can be submitted through the "Chat" feature in or wave your hand and request your mic to be un-muted. PLEASE INCLUDE IN BOTH METHODS YOUR NAME AND ADDRESS.*
2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:**
3. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA:**
4. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**
  - 4.1 BOS Regular Meeting Minutes for December 19, 2023.

5. **AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS:**
6. **OLD BUSINESS:**
7. **NEW BUSINESS:**
8. **COLUMBIA LAKE / DAM / BEACH:**
  - 8.1 Application to Repair dock for James Young on behalf of Tony Clemintino, 3 Upper Woodland Terrace, Columbia, CT.
  - 8.2 Application to Repair a Seawall for Bill Fochi, 62 Lake Rd., Columbia, CT.
9. **APPOINTMENTS / RESIGNATIONS:**
  - 9.1 Resignation of Debbie Fiske, Parks and Recreation Director.
  - 9.2 Retirement of Carol Price, Tax Collector.
10. **TOWN ADMINISTRATOR REPORT:**
  - 10.1 EV Charger Update.
  - 10.2 Horace Porter School HVAC Grant Update.
  - 10.3 Thank You to DPW for Assisting in Pick-up and Delivery of Donated Office Furniture from RJS Associates.
  - 10.4 Community Social Services Coordinator Moving to Senior Center.
  - 10.5 Snow Removal Grant Pilot Program Sustainable Ct - Volunteers Needed - Ace Riker, Sustainable CT Equity Coach - February 29th at 6:00 PM in the Conference Room at Town Hall regarding the Optimize for Equity portion of the Sustainable CT initiative.
  - 10.6 Municipal Finance 101 for Newly Elected Officials.
11. **CORRESPONDENCE:**
  - 11.1 AHM December Program Report.
12. **BUDGET:**
  - 12.1 Transfers:
  - 12.2 Refunds:
13. **APPROVE PAYMENT OF BILLS:**
14. **AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS:**
15. **BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS:**
16. **EXECUTIVE SESSION: Real estate per State Statutes Section 1-200(6)(D); Pending Litigation per State Statutes Section 1-200(6)(B); Personnel per State Statutes Section 1-200(6)(A).**
  - 16.1 Legal
  - 16.2 Personnel
  - 16.3 Real Estate
17. **ADJOURNMENT:**

**REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
COLUMBIA BOARD OF SELECTMEN**

**Tuesday, December 19, 2023**

**7:00 PM**

**Adella G. Urban Administrative Offices Conference Room & Virtual  
323 Route 87, Columbia, CT**

**Members Present:** Steven Everett, First Selectman; Judy Ortiz, Deputy First Selectman; William O'Brien, Selectman; Christopher Lent, Selectman; Lisa Napolitano, Selectman.

**Also Present Remotely:** Mark Walter, Town Administrator.

**CALL TO ORDER:** S. Everett called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

1. **RULES OF CONDUCT FOR HYBRID VIRTUAL MEETING:** S. Everett read the rules of conduct for hybrid virtual meetings.
2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.
3. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA:** S. Everett MOVED to Amend the Agenda to reflect a correction be made to 9.2. It should read "Retirement of Gail McGrath as Assistant Town Clerk. And an addition to the Town Administrators report 10.7 – Grant from the Connecticut Secretary of the State of \$10,500 for costs related to implementing and conducting early voting. S. Everett MOVED to Approve the Agenda with the Amendments. MOTION CARRIED 5.0.
4. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**
  - 4.1 **BOS Regular Meeting Minutes November 21, 2023.** S. Everett MOVED to Approve the Board of Selectmen Regular Meeting Minutes for November 21, 2023. MOTION CARRIED 5.0.
5. **AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS:** None
6. **OLD BUSINESS:**
  - 6.1 **Lake Management Advisory Commissions Proposed Updates to Lake Town Ordinances.** A clean copy of the ordinances was provided, with minor changes to the grandfather ordinance that was discussed previously and referencing drones back to being regulated by DEEP. A draft has been sent for a preliminary review to DEEP. M. Walter said that further discussion will need to be had regarding reckless and unsafe actions on the lake and assessing penalties.  
  
S. Everett asked if we have in our lake ordinances about motorized gas machinery on the lakebed when the water is drawn down or does DEEP have anything that addresses this issue. M. Walter said DEEP doesn't own the bottom of the lake, the town does and DEEP is in charge of the water. M. Walter said he would follow up with Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission regarding this issue.
7. **NEW BUSINESS:**
  - 7.1 **Set Tri-Board Meeting (Board of Selectmen, FiPAC, Board of Education) for**

**Wednesday, January 17, 2024 at 7:00PM.** W. O'Brien MOVED to Set the Tri-Board Meeting for Wednesday, January 17, 2024 at 7:00 PM. MOTION CARRIED 5.0.

7.2 **Approval of the FY 24-25 Budget Process Calendar.** S. Evertt MOVED to Approve the FY 24-25 Budget Process Calendar. MOTION CARRIED 5.0.

**8. COLUMBIA LAKE / DAM / BEACH:**

8.1 **Application to replace dock and seawall for Karen Lewis, 214 Route 87, Columbia, CT.** S. Everett MOVED to APPROVE the Application for the replacement of a dock and seawall for 214 Route 87 upon the recommendation set forth by LMAC. MOTION CARRIED 5.0.

8.2 **Application to repair steps for Rusell Inzinga and Joan Inzinga, 12 & 15 Collins Rd., Columbia, CT.** S. Everett MOVED to APPROVE the Application to repair steps for 12 & 15 Collins Rd. upon the recommendation set forth by LMAC. MOTION CARRIED 5.0.

8.3 **Application for a new dock for Christopher Wante, 146 CT Route 87, Columbia, CT.** S. Everett MOVED to APPROVE the construction of a new dock at 146 Route 87 upon the recommendation set forth by LMAC. MOTION CARRIED 5.0.

**9. APPOINTMENTS / RESIGNATIONS:**

9.1 **Cindee Latko, Payroll Specialist, Completion of 6-month Probation.** S. Everett MOVED to remove Cindee Latko from the 6-month probation and place her as a full-time employee.

9.2 **Retirement of Gail McGrath as Assistant Town Clerk.** S. Everett thanked Gail for her years of service, and she will be missed.

9.3 **Appointment of Karen Butzgy to Assistant Town Clerk.** M. Walter said Karen was already trained in the Town Clerks office and will retain the same hours as Gail at 30-hours a week. Karen has already started taking her advanced training to become an assistant Town Clerk.

9.4 **Resignation of Fred Bednarczyk, Highway Maintainer for DPW.** M. Walter said Fred has found a new job and we wish him well.

9.5 **Resignation of Jon Dilworth as an Alternate on the Inland Wetlands and Watercourse Commission and Appointment as a full member of the Inland Wetlands and Watercourse Commission.** S. Everett MOVED to Accept the Resignation for Jon Dilworth as an Alternate on the Inland Wetlands and Watercourse Commission and Appoint him as a full member. MOTION CARRIED 5.0.

9.6 **Resignation of Dave Holcroft from the Inland Wetlands and Watercourse Commission.** S. Everett MOVED to Accept the Resignation of Dave Holcroft from the Inland Wetlands and Watercourse Commission. MOTION CARRIED 5.0.

**10. TOWN ADMINISTRATOR REPORT:**

10.1 **EV Chargers Update:** The components are all in except for the school.

10.2 **Submitting HVAC Grant:** We are meeting with all the parties to divide up the tasks for submittal. C. Lent said that they are planning to upload the grant to meet the deadline.

10.3 **Lake Gate Repair Update:** No discussion.

- 10.4 **Rec Park Winter Wonderland:** S. Everett said that the Rec Department did a great job, and the event was well attended.
- 10.5 **Furniture Donation from RJS Associates:** M. Walter thanked RJS Associates for their generous offer of office furniture.
- 10.6 **Newly Elected Officials Training:** Training information was sent out to all board Chairs regarding CCM’s training for newly elected officials on January 6, 2024.
- 10.7 **Grant from the Connecticut Secretary of the State of \$10,500 for costs related to implementing and conducting early voting.** M. Walter said the Registrar of Voters received a grant to help compensate the Town for the extra requirements on implementing and conduction early voting.

**11. CORRESPONDENCE:**

- 11.1 **State Police Monthly Report for November 2023.**
- 11.2 **AHM Program Report for November 2023.**

**12. BUDGET:**

- 12.1 **Transfers:** S. Everett MOVED to APPROVE the Transfers as Presented totaling \$7,257.00. MOTION CARRIED 5.0.

TRANSFER #	AMOUNT	FROM A/C #	DESCRIPTION	TO A/C NO.	DESCRIPTION
2024-001	750.00	10-4112-460	Commercial Insurance	10-4112-500	Professional/Tech
2024-002	10.00	10-4130-016	Election Workers Salaries	10-4130-720	Professional Dues
2024-003	1,683.00	10-4800-900	Contingency	10-4133-811	Mach/Equip<\$5,000
2024-004	20.00	10-4230-770	Transportation	10-4230-720	Professional Dues
2024-005	75.00	10-4250-240	Fuel	10-4250-500	Professional/Tech
2024-006	52.00	10-4260-240	Fuel	10-4260-550	Misc Servies/Chgs
2024-007	10.00	10-4530-300	General Supplies	10-4530-520	Printing
2024-008	4,657.00	10-4800-900	Contingency	10-4413-811	Mach/Equip<\$5,000

- 12.2 **Refunds:** S. Everett MOVED to APPROVE the Refunds as Presented totaling \$271.70. MOTION CARRIED 5.0.

- 13. **APPROVE PAYMENT OF BILLS:** S. Everett MOVED to APPROVE the PAYMENT OF BILLS Totaling \$377,264.00, consisting of 2023-2024 Regular, Credit Card, and Paychex. MOTION CARRIED 5.0.

- 14. **AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS:** None.

- 15. **BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS:** L. Napolitano said we need to do a better job of getting the information out for a better turnout for voting. S. Everett thanked DPW for all their hard work during the storm. He also said that Emergency Services did a fantastic job.

- 16. **EXECUTIVE SESSION: Real estate per State Statutes Section 1-200(6)(D); Pending Litigation per State Statutes Section 1-200(6)(B); Personnel per State Statues Section 1-200(6)(A).** S. Everett MOVED to Enter Into Executive Session at 7:35pm and invited Mark Walter, Town Administrator and Jennifer LaVoie, Executive Administrative Assistant. Executive Session ended at 7:49 PM.

**16.1 Legal: Pending Litigation:** No Action Taken.

**17. ADJOURNMENT: S. Everett** MOVED to ADJOURNED at 7:49 PM. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Respectfully submitted by Jennifer C. LaVoie

# LAKE MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

January 5, 2024

Mr. Steven M. Everett  
First Selectman  
323 Route 87, Yeoman's Hall  
Columbia, CT 06237

RE: Application for Repair of a Structure on or Over Columbia Lake  
James Young for Tony Clemintino, 3 Upper Woodland Terrace, Columbia, CT

James Young on behalf of Tony Clemintino at 3 Upper Woodland Terrace, Columbia, CT applied for a permit seeking to repair his dock. During this summer of storms one section of the dock was dislodged and floated away. It was recovered. Upon inspection the dock footings consisting of wooden posts were found to be rotting. Before restoring the top of the dock which remains usable the posts will be replaced in their original locations.

Jim Santos, Bob Millerd and Mary Roickle on the behalf of the Lake Management Advisory Committee reviewed the application. Mary conducted a site visit with Mr. Young present. The proposed work involves replacing the rotting wooden posts and resetting and leveling the dock sections. The location and configuration of the existing dock and posts will remain the same. Mr. Young will use small hydraulic lifts to support the dock as he replaces the posts. There is no significant lakebed impact, and no excavation is involved.

According to the Standards for Granting Permission for the Construction of Structures on Columbia Lake (Lake Guidelines), the repair of the wooden posts and resetting of the dock to its original state is acceptable during the low water season. An administrative approval was given for the repair.

It is the recommendation of LMAC to the Board of Selectmen that this permit be approved with the following conditions:

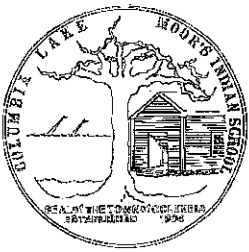
1. All work will be accomplished after Lake Drawdown beginning on November 3, 2024 and shall be completed prior to the lake re-filling on March 15, 2024.
2. No machinery or power equipment will be allowed on the lakebed.
3. No substantial materials will be placed on, added to or removed from the lakebed.
4. The applicant will ensure construction of the repairs will be of sound materials and shall not adversely affect the quality of the Lake water or aquatic life.
5. Disturbance to the lakebed will be minimal. No grading or significant excavation shall be allowed.
6. No electrical lights will be placed in or on the dock.

Your consideration in this manner is appreciated.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Mary Roickle*

Mary Roickle  
Permit Application Sub-Committee  
Lake Management Advisory Committee



# TOWN OF COLUMBIA

323 Jonathan Trumbull Highway, Columbia, CT 06237  
(860) 228-0110 FAX: (860) 228-1952

## APPLICATION FOR CONSTRUCTING STRUCTURES ON OR OVER COLUMBIA LAKE

Date Submitted: 12/8/23

Complete and return to the Board of Selectmen.

Property Owner: Tony Clementino

Address: 3 Upper Woodland Terrace

Property Location: Lake

Applicant if different from owner: James Young

Address: 100 Rt 87 Columbia

Daytime Phone #: 860-933-5594

### Structure Information:

Proposal is for:  New  Replacement  Repair

Structure Type:  Dock  Seawall  Repair  Boat Cover

*4- posts to replace with pressure treated post*

Application must include a sketch of the structure clearly indicating dimensions and placement of the structure in reference to the property, as well as information regarding materials to be used in construction/repair. Supporting information such as maps and pictures are also helpful and may help expedite the process.

**Note: Applications made by persons other than the property owner must contain the written approval of the application by the owner. All fee-owners and owners of rights-of-way shall join in any application. Signature below indicates approval for the Board of Selectmen or authorized town personnel to visit property for the purpose of inspecting prior to and after construction.**

Owner Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Applicant Signature: James Young Date: 12-7-23

**Special Note: Permission by the Board of Selectmen to construct a structure on or above the Town owned lake bottom shall not relieve the applicant from obtaining other required approvals, nor shall Selectmen approval indicate eventual approval by other officials.**

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

First Selectman

Revised: 4/1/97, 12/01, 09/03, 10/03



To Columbia Town Hall

Phone: 860-228-0230; 860-0110 Mark Walker/ Jenifer Lavoie

FAX 860-228-1952

My name is Antonio F. Clementino, owner of #3 Woodland Terrace, Columbia Lake. In the early 1980's I bought this property from my dad, Valentino D. Clementino. In 1960 my dad bought the wooded lot next door owned by my grandfather Antonio F. Clementino Senior. On this lot, my dad built our cottage as it presently exists at #3 Woodland Terrace.

During the last season of storms, our small dock finally failed with considerable rotten wood and failing attachment footings.

I know James Young, a neighbor whose father was my life long friend and whose Mom still lives in their family Lake front home. I authorize this experienced carpenter to remove the rotten wood and replace and improve new more firm footing to my dock. I am in ready communication directly with James and authorize his decision making to end up with a similar wooden dock to provide services for our family and guests.

Any questions, please call me:

Cell (415) 328-6708

Home (415) 456-4546

Signed:

  
Antonio F. Clementino

cc. James Young (860) 933-5594

# LAKE MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

January 5, 2024

Mr. Steven M. Everett  
First Selectman  
323 Route 87, Yeoman's Hall  
Columbia, CT 06237

RE: Application for Repair of Stonewall on Columbia Lake By Bill Fochi at 62 Lake Road

Bill Fochi of 62 Lake Road, Columbia, CT, applied for a permit seeking to repair three sections of his seawall. The wall sections are in disrepair and heaving from tree root growth with areas of erosion that could negatively impact the water quality of the lake.

Jim Santos, Bob Millerd and Mary Roickle on the behalf of the Lake Management Advisory Committee reviewed the application. Mary conducted two site visits reviewing the scope of work which is about 55' to 60' of seawall of the 220' structure built 40 years ago. The proposed work involves restoring the seawall and reestablishing the structure. The configuration and location of the existing wall will remain the same with a slight infringement on the lakebed, by 1 to 2 inches to work around a tree near one of the three disrepair areas. There is no significant lakebed impact, and minimal hand excavation is involved to work around the exposed tree roots.

After discussing the application, an administrative approval was given for the seawall repair. According to the Standards for Granting Permission for the Construction of Structures on Columbia Lake (Lake Guidelines), the restoration of the vulnerable seawall sections are acceptable.

It is the recommendation of LMAC to the Board of Selectmen that this permit be approved with the following conditions:

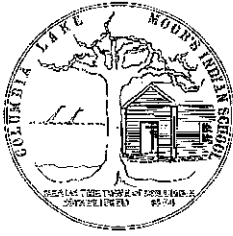
1. All work will be accomplished after Lake Drawdown beginning on November 2, 2023, and shall be completed prior to the lake re-filling on March 15, 2024.
2. No machinery or power equipment will be allowed on the lakebed.
3. No substantial materials will be placed on, added to, or removed from the lakebed.
4. The applicant will ensure construction of the repairs will be of sound materials and shall not adversely affect the quality of the Lake water or aquatic life.
5. Disturbance to the lakebed will be minimal. No grading or significant excavation shall be allowed.
6. No electrical lights will be placed in the repaired stone seawall.

Your consideration in this manner is appreciated.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Mary Roickle*

Mary Roickle  
Permit Application Sub-Committee  
Lake Management Advisory Committee



# TOWN OF COLUMBIA

323 Jonathan Trumbull Highway, Columbia, CT 06237  
(860) 228-0110 FAX: (860) 228-1952

## APPLICATION FOR CONSTRUCTING OR MAINTAINING STRUCTURES AND SHORELINE ON COLUMBIA LAKE

Date Submitted: 12/20/2023

Complete and return to the Town Administrator

Property Owner: SIX 48 ASSOCIATES

Address: 62 LAKE RD

Property Location: 62 LAKE RD (STONE WALL ON EDGE OF LAKE)

Applicant if different from owner: WILLIAM A. FOCIAI SR

Address: 67 TALL TIMBER LANE GLASTONBURY, CT 06033

Daytime Phone #: 860-633-3541 X 204

### Structure Information:

Proposal is for:  New  Replacement  Relocation  Repair  Emergency Repair

Structure Type(s):  Dock  Seawall  Raft  Watercraft Cover  Watercraft Lift  Shoreline

Application must include a sketch(s) of the structure(s) clearly indicating dimensions and placement of the structure in reference to the property and any other previously permitted dock, raft, watercraft covering or watercraft lift, as well as information regarding materials to be used in construction/repair. Supporting information such as maps and pictures are also helpful and may help expedite the process.

*STONE + CEMENT*  
*REPAIR A STONE WALL MATERIALS STONE AND CEMENT*

### Notice:

The guidelines require one or more abutting property owners to be notified. Proof that proper notice has been given is attached.

Note: Applications made by persons other than the property owner must have appropriate status to apply and such application must also be signed by the owner as a co-applicant. All fee-owners and owners of any rights-of-way affected by the application shall join in any application. General or prime contractors must also sign applications in accordance with Article IX, clause a). An owner's signature below indicates approval for the Board of Selectmen or authorized town personnel to visit the applicable property for the purpose of inspection prior to, during and after construction.

Owner Signature: [Signature] Date: DEC 20, 2023

Applicant Signature: [Signature] Date: DEC 20, 2023

Contractor Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*WILLIAM A. FOCIAI*

STONE WALL

COLUMBIA LAKE  
TIE LINE  
N 42° 48' 44" E  
293.68

BM  
PK 24' 45" N  
ELEV = 83.07

STONE WALL  
REPAIR

REPAIR

PO.  
EXISTING  
COTTAGE  
TO BE  
REMOVED  
PO.

PO.  
EXISTING  
COTTAGE  
TO BE  
REMOVED  
PO.

PO.  
EXISTING  
COTTAGE  
TO BE  
REMOVED  
PO.

PROPOSED  
HOUSE

PO.  
EXISTING  
COTTAGE  
TO BE  
REMOVED  
PO.

AREA = 61,642<sup>±</sup> S.F.  
1.42<sup>±</sup> ACRES

EXISTING  
WELL

PROP  
WELL

427.69'

FC 89.5

15.4' 25.0'

END OF  
FOOTING  
WELL

END OF  
FOOTING  
DRAIN

BUILDING

BUILDING

PO.  
EXISTING  
COTTAGE  
TO BE  
REMOVED  
PO.

### **Snow Removal Grant Pilot Program**

If you are a Columbia resident who is a senior 55+ or disabled and have an emergency where you needed to get your driveway and or walkway snow plowed and are having trouble paying the bill please contact Columbia Social Services at 860-228-1008 or [kwilt@columbiact.org](mailto:kwilt@columbiact.org) to apply to the Pilot Snow Removal Grant Program.

Income eligibility is 60% of CT's state median income (household of 1 is \$41,553 and household of 2 is \$54,338)

Required documentation includes gross income (or current Energy Assistance approval), proof of age or disability, completion of the application and release, and invoice from a vendor with a W-9. Household must be willing to share why the service was needed as part of the application.



**Andover, Hebron, Marlborough Youth & Family Services**  
25 Pendleton Drive, Hebron, Connecticut 06248

**AHM PROGRAM REPORT**  
**December 2023**

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**Executive Director Report: Tressa Giordano**

With the hustle and bustle of the holiday season, on top of so many wonderful things going on here at AHM, the month of December has flown by!

This month AHM hosted our first ever half-day Hang Out program. In partnership with the Hebron Library and the Flour Girl, the three locations offered fun and safe activities for RHAM students for a few hours after an early release day. AHM hosted friendship bracelet making materials and snacks. Participation at the three locations was amazing, topping out at about 40 students. We plan to regroup in the New Year to plan more of these activities for future early release days.

The Region 8 Health & Wellness Committee that I co-chair hosted an in-person smoothie demo and tasting for all Region 8 school, town and AHM employees. Locations were set up at the Hebron and Marlborough Elementary Schools. In total we had about 150 staff participate. A group of AHM staff took advantage of this offering and said the smoothies were delicious!

On the 7th I attended our 3rd Screenagers Movie viewing, hosted here at AHM. We are seeing that the more we show these videos, the more parents and youth we have participating, which is AWESOME. We will show all three movies again the winter/spring.

Regular monthly meetings attended include: the CYSA board meeting, the CYSA Directors Round Table meeting, our first Nature & Adventure Day planning meeting, our JRB, the CYSA bi-monthly Truancy meeting, the quarterly Children's Collective meeting, and chairing the monthly East of the River Hunger Action Team meeting here at AHM. I also had a wonderful meeting with Mary Seidner, Director of Old Lyme's Youth Service Bureau. Like AHM, Old Lyme's YSB is a non-profit. Mary and I will be organizing a meeting in the New Year for the other 16 non-profit YSBs to get together to network and share experiences. I am very excited to be part of this planning and bring our non-profit organizations together.

Mike and I continue to meet weekly with Larry, our Harford Foundation for Public Giving consultant who is helping us to prepare for our January 23rd fast pitch. We have made great progress with our business plan this month and will be putting final touches on it so we can have the plan professionally printed. Ann Marie and I have bi-weekly meetings with Sara Leonard, our fundraising consultant, for this project. Invites have been sent out to our guests.

Mid-month, we circulated our second AHM programs and service brochure. Deb, once again, did a phenomenal job bringing all of our programming information together and creating a beautiful catalog. A huge thanks to our programming staff (Becky, Shamane, Jenn B, Kristina, Megan and Laura) for planning such amazing activities for the first part of the 2024. Many of our programs already have high enrollment which is WONDERFUL! It is clear that our residents are LOVING our offerings and truly enjoy having opportunities to connect with those in our community.





**Andover, Hebron, Marlborough Youth & Family Services**  
25 Pendleton Drive, Hebron, Connecticut 06248

On the 11th, Russell Melmed, Director of the Chatham Health District came in to tour AHM and to better understand the programs and services that we offer our four towns. We had a great conversation, primarily around substance use and how we can be of support to each other's work. I look forward to connecting with the health district in the future.

The holiday season always brings fun and excitement to AHM. I enjoyed spending time at the preschool helping students to make delicious gingerbread houses and had a wonderful time at our staff gathering on the 21st. Bringing our staff and board together to unwind, connect and take time to be in the moment with one another is so important.

As we look forward to 2024, my heart is filled with pride and excitement for all we have planned for the New Year! We have much to celebrate here at AHM and I know that with our enthusiastic and inspiring staff supported by our dedicated board, 2024 is going to be AMAZING!

**Individual Giving & Event Planning Coordinator: Ann Marie Drury**

As we wrap up the final month of 2023, I can proudly say that I have been with AHM for over one year. It has been a wonderful journey getting to know my role and working alongside amazing staff, board members, and volunteers. Each event that took place was a learning experience and I look forward to the next year!

The Annual Holiday Auction wrapped up exceeding our goal and raising over \$11,000! Thank you to everyone that participated by donating, bidding, and spreading the word. It was a very successful effort by all.

The Nature and Adventure Day Committee held its first meeting to begin planning for Maplefest 2024. One big change that has come is the name of AHM's event. After a fun brainstorming session, we have officially changed the name from Nature and Adventure Day to Tap into Nature. The committee feels this change encompasses the activities we host here at AHM while also honoring the Maplefest. Mark your calendars for March 16 and 17!

**Clinical Director: Megan Aldridge**

This month we are so excited to welcome Julia Waldron to the clinical team! She started as a full-time outpatient therapist on December 11th, and has hit the ground running! She has already begun treatment with several children and families and is quickly getting to know everyone at AHM. Over the next couple of months she will continue to grow her caseload.

Even with the addition to our team, we continue to see our waitlist grow as several calls for therapy come in each week. We are actively looking at ways to grow and adapt in order to meet the continued need. Families have reached out looking for support around coping with loss, depression, increased anxiety, and significant behavior problems at home and/or at school.

Our school-based counselors and outpatient therapists participated in an exciting professional development opportunity at the AHM office last week. We had staff members from Family & Children's Aid come and deliver their Project Joy training, which focuses on building trauma-informed, play-based interventions to engage children and families in mental health treatment.



**Andover, Hebron, Marlborough Youth & Family Services**  
25 Pendleton Drive, Hebron, Connecticut 06248

We learned about the impact of trauma and play on the brain, and engaged in many fun activities along the way!

**Outpatient Therapist: Sherry Chen**

*No report this month; on leave.*

**Outpatient Therapist: Clay Valentin**

In the month of December 2023, I facilitated 50 therapy sessions and successfully discharged two clients. Common themes discussed this month include self-esteem, core beliefs, family dynamics, and generating positive sustainable change. Thank you, Megan, for organizing the play therapy training for the clinical and school staff. I left the training with a better understanding of the value play therapy can have in the work we do with youth and families. Thank you, Tressa, for getting the AHM family together for the holiday potluck. I have enough food to last me two weeks. Lastly, I would like to extend a warm welcome to Julia. You are a wonderful addition to the team and we are extremely lucky to have you at AHM. Happy holidays everyone!

**RHAM High School Student Support Services: Ryanne Gatti**

This year marks the third year Ryanne has put on the Holiday Gift Card Drive, which collects gift cards to donate to the local RHAM community for the holiday season. This year between the middle and high school, we collected \$1500 worth of gift cards. The gift cards were given to Hebron Interfaith to be given out to community members. The RHAM students have had some great events lately including a clothing swap to promote sustainability. The RHAM music department put on a wonderful winter concert recently as well. As we continue through the winter weather the guidance department continues to work as an amazing team to support our students.

**RHAM Middle School Student Support Services: Jayne Carlman**

Happy December! This month has been flying by as students and staff progress through the second quarter of the year and prepare for winter break. While continuing to support students through individual and group therapy, I have also been collaborating with families, school services and teams, as well as community supports to help support students towards a successful end to the month as we approach the holidays. These final days leading up to the break, I've been working on helping students through psychoeducation to learn more about positive self-care and utilizing positive coping strategies to rest and rejuvenate for a strong start back in the new year!

I also wanted to send a huge thank you as well to the RHAM community for a successful Holiday Gift Card Drive; between the middle school and high school drives, over \$1,150 was donated this year! Thank you to everyone who donated to help support our community!





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**Marlborough Elementary School Student Support Services: Michele Thorn**

December is rolling on by and the level of excitement from the kids is growing by the minute. I just came back from watching the first grade students make their own gingerbread houses. They were smiling and laughing, and gobbling up lots of candy and frosting. It was just incredible. Now that is what this season is all about. The students that I support individually and in groups are doing well. We continue to work on positive communication and respect for others. Kind words and actions are always a topic that we focus on, especially this time of year. I have been talking a lot about patience with all of my students. Patience is a very challenging concept for many students. It can be very hard to wait for a turn to speak or wait in line to get somewhere. It is also difficult to be patient and understanding of others when their needs are different and could take more time to help with. That also ties in with kindness and respect, and thinking of someone else's needs before their own needs. We talk a lot about being positive role models and the wonderful feeling we get when we make someone else feel good. Examples of this could be helping a friend who is sad, letting someone else move ahead of you in line, and playing with someone who needs a friend – random acts of kindness. I continue to spend a lot of time talking with parents on the phone and meeting in person. I listen and give them the time and space to vent and let out their feelings of frustration and worry. I validate their feelings by sharing that so many parents are feeling the same way which makes them feel a little better and not so alone. This is definitely the time of year when all kinds of emotions will surface in kids and families. I do my best to support them and give them comfort. I hope the break will help everyone find the peace and the rest that they need.

**Hebron Elementary School Student Support Services: Meghan McKenna**

Happy December! This month at Hebron Elementary is jam-packed with exciting events and activities for students and staff! We got to see our first band concert of the year, which also happens to be Stephanie Bancroft's last band concert ever, as she officially retired as of Friday, December 15th. While we will miss her greatly, we are so excited for Stephanie to embark on her next journey! We also welcomed Sean Rahusen, who will be our new band director. Fourth, fifth and sixth graders, as well as our jazz band, performed at school and for a nighttime concert on December 23th, and they did a fabulous job! Our first chorus concert of the school year, led by Christine Gee, took place on December 19th as a school assembly and as nighttime concert as well. They sounded fantastic! We are all looking forward to a long break for the holidays for a fantastic 2024!

**Gilead Hill School and Andover Elementary School Student Support Services:  
Bethany Wolff**

**Gilead Hill School**

Gilead has been filled with holiday cheer with Grinchmas parties, PJ day, gingerbread houses, and fun activities to learn about different winter holidays. It is fun meeting with students to hear about these highlights as well as learning about the students' favorite parts of the holiday and family traditions while we meet. While in groups, I love seeing the students connect over their traditions and enjoyable moments of the season. I enjoyed stopping into the winter play group at Gilead to discuss ways to talk to littles about emotions and speaking about the Spot Feelings along the little spot of flexible thinking. Also mentioned ways to enjoy the holidays as parents since we all know it can be very overwhelming. I also explained my position and other supports



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available at the school. I have a busy schedule, as I continue to meet with students through individual sessions, Primary Project and groups. Student and family concerns are continuously being discussed and addressed during our weekly SEL meetings. These meetings are a great way to touch base with school staff and review student progress as well. I look forward to what the New Year will bring.

**Andover Elementary School**

It is the holiday season which is always a fun and magical season time in the elementary schools. At Andover, I collaborated with the Andover Congregational church to find two families that were adopted by the church and provided with a significant amount of gifts. It is heartwarming being able to connect the families with the support and seeing how appreciative the families are of the generosity. I have been continuing to meet with students on my caseload between individual sessions and groups. This season is exciting but can also cause an increase in frustration and anxiety in the classroom for students. Therefore, I have been checking in more with a few students and their teachers more about behaviors displayed as well as connecting additionally with families. Since Thanksgiving, I have been working with two students who have had similar family changes and experiencing new transitions at home. I also have been in contact with parent about progress being made with a recommendation of reducing time which is exciting to share positive growth with parents. Thursdays is the support or provider meetings which helps everyone with staying connected about students. This week leading up to Christmas has been fun watching the students get excited about a visit from the Grinch, tinsel Tuesday, making calendars for their families, and making gingerbread houses.

**H. W. Porter School Student Support Services: Christina Burdzy Herrick**

It has been a busy time at Porter! Excitement for the upcoming holidays is felt in the hallways as students and staff alike are participating in uplifting theme-based spirit days this month.

Services provided include school-wide programming such as the Look for the Good Project, which included two school-wide assemblies, as well as 10 days of gratitude focus and expression. Upcoming program planning includes a student-based internet safety program, Gizmo lessons, and Field Day Presenters.

Individual counseling, group counseling, and student progress monitoring have included: SAEBRS school-wide universal assessment data review, teacher collaboration, and student program planning; kindergarten groups; grade 1 groups; behavioral, tier-based, support call response; crisis counseling to students, families and staff on as needed basis; risk assessment on as needed basis; and Parent Support.

This month we also participated in the Project Joy Professional Development located at AHM. This training was a time to connect, learn and share. There was a psychoeducational as well as an experiential component where we participated first hand utilizing play therapy techniques. I look forward to incorporating some of these strategies and techniques into school-based practice!

Hope all enjoy the remainder of 2023 and looking forward to 2024!

**Family Resource Center Director: Rebecca Murray**

**Preschool**

Children learned about holidays around the world this month. We had presentations about Chanukah, had PJ and Pancake Day, Grinch days, and will be constructing gingerbread houses. Cari arranged for a program with the RHAM gym classes where the teens planned special gross motor activities for our little ones. Kristina and Colleen made a gingerbread house for kids to play in, which was a huge hit! RHAM students have been assisting in our classes.



*Pajama Day as part of  
CCMC statewide  
fundraiser!*

**FRC Groups**

FRC programs continue through the end of December (except for the Sparkler group which will continue into January). This month we added another group, “Winter Fun” where children could work on some projects for the holidays. It has been great watching the children get comfortable with the setting, practice their social skills, start to listen during Circle Time, and enjoy and learn from the activities! In November and December, we completed screenings on eight children using the Ages and Stages questionnaires with families.



*Oats in the sensory table!!*



*Ashlee reads a book  
using a flannel board  
during Circle Time!!*



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**Upcoming**

Families have started signing up for groups in the New Year. Groups will start the second week in January and will include a Play and Learn group, First Steps in Music, and a construction group, as well as the Sparkler group which will continue through January.

**Mentoring Coordinator: Laura Beeler**

December is always a special time for mentors and mentees. Some mentors bring special holiday projects to do together, and some mentors give extra time to listen to students for whom the holidays can bring stress or sadness. Whichever way they provide support, we are especially grateful for our mentors at this time of year. On December 7 several mentors and I had a productive meeting to generate new ideas for bringing more students and mentors to the program. Next month are having our winter gathering for mentors and families on Thursday January 25 from 5:30 to 7 at AHM. Happy 2024 to all!

**Health Matters: Shamane Shepard**

I am thrilled to announce that our Health Matters winter/spring schedule has been posted, and classes are currently open for enrollment! Over the past few months, I've worked closely with instructors to prepare a variety of fun and engaging workshops, and I am excited about our upcoming projects and activities. Upcoming workshops include Charcuterie Boards, Art with Audrey, Pottery Painting, Mandala Painting, Kids Yoga, Cookie Decorating, Beginners Crochet, Paint and Plant, Picture Perfect Art, Birdhouse Painting, spring and winter Wreath Making Workshops, and last, but not least, Family Movie Night!

As we enter the New Year, the goal is to recruit new instructors, offer new classes, and welcome new participants. The feedback provided from those who completed the year-end survey will be utilized for future programming; responses not only included praises about our HM program, but also provided suggestions for desired workshops.

Last but not least, the Health Matters link, along with AHM's winter/spring brochure, were emailed to past participants. Within the first week of enrollment, a good number of registrations were processed. However, we strongly encourage AHM staff to continue to share brochures with family, friends, and our community!

**CHOREs and TASKs Program Coordinator: Kristina Smith**

It's the most wonderful time of the year! With the holidays upon us, the Chores and Tasks program has slowed down, just in time for us all to take a short winter's nap!

Some of the students have expressed interest in helping the seniors over the holiday break, depending on the weather and if we will have a white Christmas. I am hoping the start of the New Year will bring more happy seniors and students to the program. Wishing everyone a HAPPY, HEALTHY, HOLIDAY SEASON!!!!



**Prevention, JRB, & Project Graduation Coordinator: Jennifer Boehler**

**Prevention Programming**

The AHM Coalition for a Healthy & Empowered Community hosted SCREENAGERS: Growing up in the Digital Age and 18 adults and youth attended. For more information about these films please visit [www.thescreenagersproject.com](http://www.thescreenagersproject.com).

AHM will be in attendance at the 2024 CADCA Conference in Maryland! Megan Aldridge, Tressa Giordano, Carol Rusch (RHAM HS School Psychologist), and Jenn Boehler will spend time attending prevention-related sessions from January 30 to February 1, 2024. The goal is to learn from these sessions, network with prevention specialists/coalition members from around the country, and bring back ideas that may fit with AHM's prevention plan going forward.

**SOAR Youth Group**

SOAR Youth Leadership Group had 14 students from all grades on the RHAM campus at the December 19th meeting. Each member was able to bring a friend which increased our number from previous months which yielded a robust group to make ornaments/gift tags. Students learned about SOAR, our mission, and our upcoming January Mental Wellness Awareness Event. This event is open to all students, staff, and faculty on the RHAM Campus and will include a Meditative Art Class led by AHM's Ann Marie Drury, a Zumba!® Class led by Tressa and an Introduction to Meditation and Sound led by Shelly Ohm. Lastly, SOAR's Kindness Matters Campaign wraps up this month with a hair under 300 students/staff being nominated for being kind to another person! Lastly, students created social norms fliers to post at the middle and high school with positive data from the 2022 Youth Voices Count Survey.





### **Project Graduation**

RHAM High School was closed on December 18, 2023, so Project Graduation will be moved from June 11 to June 12, 2024!

### **Intervention/JRB**

AHM received three police referrals this month and all three youths were accepted into the Juvenile Review Board Diversionary Program for the next six months. Currently, there are a total of four youths in this program.