

# The Willington Wire



January—March  
2024



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Cover Photo: Courtesy of James Callaghan



The Town Office Building will be closed on the following holidays:

New Year's Day	Monday, January 1st
Martin Luther King Jr. Day	Monday, January 15th
President's Day	Monday, February 19th
Good Friday	Friday, March 29th



# Town of Willington Office Building Contacts

40 Old Farms Road, Willington, CT 06279—[www.willingtonct.gov](http://www.willingtonct.gov)

Business Hours—Monday 8:00 a.m.—6:00 p.m. / Tuesday—Thursday 8:00 a.m.—4:00 p.m.

First Selectman	Peter Tanaka	860-487-3100
Animal Control Officer	Jennifer Miller	860-428-4422
Assessor	Kara Fishman	860-487-3122
Building Inspector	Jim Quish	860-918-3386
	Rich McKinnon	860-377-3508
Business Manager	Donna Latincsics	860-487-3134
Elections Department	Christine Psathas & Suzanne Chapman	860-487-3120
Fire Marshal	Trevor Gantick	860-429-4181
Human Services	Karen Cote	860-487-3118
Land Use	Michael D'Amato	860-487-3123
Parks & Recreation	James Callaghan	860-487-3108
Public Works	Troy Sposato	860-684-9313
Senior Center	Nan King	860-429-8321
Tax Collector	Janice Clauson	860-487-3111
Town Clerk	Robin Campbell	860-487-3121
Treasurer	Doug Roberts	860-487-3136

## Willington's Vision Statement

Willington is a community that seeks to preserve its rural character and protect its natural, historic and agricultural resources. At the same time, the community recognizes the need to balance the conservation of these resources with residential and business development to meet the needs of its citizens and promote long-term fiscal stability.

To achieve this vision and enhance the quality of life in the community, Willington will strive to:

- preserve and protect our environment,
- create social, educational, recreational, agricultural, economic and housing opportunities,
- balance conservation and development; and
- encourage civic involvement and interaction at the local and regional level.



# Town of Willington Office Building

## Holiday Schedule 2024

New Year's Day 2024	Monday, January 1, 2024
Martin Luther King Jr. Day	Monday, January 15, 2024
President's Day	Monday, February 19, 2024
Good Friday	Friday, March 29, 2024
Memorial Day	Monday, May 27, 2024
Juneteenth Day	Wednesday, June 19, 2024 <b>TRANSFER STATION CLOSED</b>
Independence Day	Thursday, July 4, 2024
Labor Day	Monday, September 2, 2024
Columbus Day	Monday, October 14, 2024
Veteran's Day	Monday, November 11, 2024
Thanksgiving Day	Thursday, November 28, 2024
Day after Thanksgiving	Friday, November 29, 2024
Christmas Day	Wednesday, December 25, 2024 <b>TRANSFER STATION CLOSED</b>
Selectman's Day	Thursday, December 26, 2024
New Year's Day 2025	Wednesday, January 1, 2025 <b>TRANSFER STATION CLOSED</b>





# Boards & Commissions—Meeting Calendar—Jan, Feb & March

Board/Commission	Day	Date	Time
Board of Education	Tuesday	January 9th	7:00 p.m.
Board of Education	Tuesday	February 13th	7:00 p.m.
Board of Education	Tuesday	March 12th	7:00 p.m.
Board of Finance	Thursday	January 21st	7:00 p.m.
Board of Finance	Thursday	February 18th	7:00 p.m.
Board of Finance	Thursday	March 18th	7:00 p.m.
Board of Selectmen	Tuesday	January 2nd	6:00 p.m.
Board of Selectmen	Tuesday	January 16th	6:00 p.m.
Board of Selectmen	Monday	February 5th	6:00 p.m.
Board of Selectmen	Monday	March 4th	6:00 p.m.
Board of Selectmen	Monday	March 18th	6:00 p.m.
Conservation Commission	Wednesday	January 17th	7:00 p.m.
Conservation Commission	Wednesday	February 21st	7:00 p.m.
Conservation Commission	Wednesday	March 20th	7:00 p.m.
Historical Society	Tuesday	January 19th	7:00 p.m.
Historical Society	Tuesday	February 16th	7:00 p.m.
Historical Society	Tuesday	March 16th	7:00 p.m.
Inland Wetlands/Watercourses	Monday	January 22nd	7:30 p.m.
Inland Wetlands/Watercourses	Monday	February 26th	7:30 p.m.
Inland Wetlands/Watercourses	Monday	March 25th	7:30 p.m.
Library Board of Directors	Wednesday	January 10th	7:00 p.m.
Library Board of Directors	Wednesday	January 24th	7:00 p.m.
Library Board of Directors	Wednesday	February 14th	7:00 p.m.
Library Board of Directors	Wednesday	February 28th	7:00 p.m.
Library Board of Directors	Wednesday	March 13th	7:00 p.m.
Library Board of Directors	Wednesday	March 27th	7:00 p.m.
Parks & Recreation	Monday	January 8th	7:00 p.m.
Parks & Recreation	Monday	January 22nd	7:00 p.m.
Parks & Recreation	Monday	February 22nd	7:00 p.m.
Parks & Recreation	Monday	March 29th	7:00 p.m.
Planning & Zoning	Tuesday	January 2nd	7:30 p.m.
Planning & Zoning	Tuesday	January 16th	7:30 p.m.
Planning & Zoning	Tuesday	February 6th	7:30 p.m.
Planning & Zoning	Tuesday	February 20th	7:30 p.m.
Planning & Zoning	Tuesday	March 5th	7:30 p.m.
Planning & Zoning	Tuesday	March 19th	7:30 p.m.
Zoning Board of Appeals	Thursday	January 11th	7:30 p.m.
Zoning Board of Appeals	Thursday	February 8th	7:30 p.m.
Zoning Board of Appeals	Thursday	March 14th	7:30 p.m.



# WELCOME!

Please welcome the Town of Willington's Newest Employees!

**Shannon Rittner, Selectmen's Office Administrative Assistant**  
**Heather Alexson, Public Works Administrative Assistant**

Welcome Shannon and Heather!

We wish you both a long and happy career with the Town of Willington!



The Willington PTA's annual "Trunk or Treat" took place at the River Road Athletic Complex on October 27th. *Photo credit: Melissa McKinnon.*

## First Selectman's Corner

Dear Willington Citizens

On behalf of Andrew Marco, Matt Clark, and I, we would like to wish you a joyous Holiday Season and a Happy New Year. Being your new Board of Selectmen, we are experiencing the feelings of newness and anticipation that this season brings. Our first meeting is December 4<sup>th</sup>, 2023 and we will be setting future meeting dates.

As well as the holidays, Budget Season is here. The Towns Board of Finance and Capital Improvement Projects Committees will be busy in the next few months preparing the 2024-2025 budget and setting the tax rate. The town has many needs and those will be balanced that against tax increases. Hard decisions will need to be made and the citizens who have been elected to represent you will be making those decisions. All of the meetings are public, the agendas and minutes are on the town's website <https://www.willingtonct.gov/>

As much as some of us enjoy winter and snow and all the recreation opportunities that provides, our public works crews work hard to keep the roads safe and passable. Please check the website and WFSB for town building closures and parking bans.

The town office building hours were changed a few weeks ago. The offices will be open from 8am to 6pm on Mondays and 8am to 4pm Tuesday through Thursday. Please note that we are closed on Fridays.

Peter Tanaka

1<sup>st</sup> Selectman

Town of Willington

**Did you know the Town of Willington has a YouTube Channel? Stay connected and join meetings right from your living room!**

**Click the link below to view all recent meetings.**

**[Town of Willington CT Official](#)**

STAY  
CONNECTED



On behalf of the Town of Willington, we would like to thank Walt and Linda West for their commitment and dedication for decorating and lighting the Evergreen Memorial Tree on our Town Green each and every holiday season for over 30 years.

**Thank you, Walt, Linda & Family!**



## From the Assessor's Office

### EXEMPTION PROGRAMS

The Assessor's Office administers exemption programs which benefit the elderly, disabled, blind, and veterans.

### **Homeowner's Program for the Low-Income Elderly and Totally Disabled:**

Starting February 1, 2024, the Assessor's Office will be accepting NEW and RENEWAL applications for the homeowner program for the low-income elderly and totally disabled. This program is income based. Depending on income and household size, the tax savings reduction can range from \$150 - \$1,250. Renewal applications will be sent to participants already enrolled in the program. Applications are also available on the town's website, at the Assessor's Office and by mail. Call 860-487-3122 to be sent an application packet. Applications can be mailed, with supporting documentation, to the Assessor's Office, and must be received in the office no later than 6:00 pm on Monday, April 15, 2024. Applications submitted between April 16, 2024 and May 15, 2024 must be filed in person at the Assessor's Office. The application DEADLINE IS 4:00 pm, Wednesday, May 15th, 2024.

This is a two-year program, with renewal applications every other year. Taxpayers who were approved last year do NOT NEED TO REFILE THIS YEAR, unless your income is lower, making you eligible for a higher abatement amount. To be eligible for the tax credit:

- You or your spouse must be at least 65 years of age as of Dec 31, 2023, or over 18 and permanently and totally disabled per Social Security or similar government program.
- You must be a permanent resident of the State of Connecticut. You must own the property or hold a tenancy for life or for a term of years, which makes you liable for payment of taxes (CGS Sec. 12-48) as of October 1, 2023. The property must be the applicant's primary residence (domicile).
- Your 2023 income cannot exceed \$43,800 (single) or \$53,400 (married). Qualifying income is defined as adjusted gross income for IRS purposes plus any other income not included in such adjusted gross income. The application packet will include a handout on What is Considered Income?
- A copy of your current (2023) income tax return must be presented at the time of application if one is filed with the IRS, along with statements of any untaxable interest and a copy of your Social Security SSA-1099. If an income tax return is not filed, statements of all income must be presented. These include statements of wages, lottery winnings, taxable pensions, IRA's, interest, dividends, rental income, Social Security SSA 1099, railroad retirement, veteran's payments, etc.
- If you are under the age of 65, proof of permanent total disability benefits under Social Security, or, if not qualified under Social Security proof of disability benefits under any federal, state or local government retirement or disability plan.

**Totally Disabled:** Any individual who is less than 65 years of age and is receiving Social Security disability payments may be eligible for a 1,000 reduction in your assessment. To qualify you must file an application and proof of 100% disability from Social Security (form TPQY) or a copy of your "Award Letter" that states disability. This application only needs to be filed once. The filing deadline is October 1, 2024 for the 2024 Grand List. There is also a program to exempt a specially equipped and modified motor vehicle used to transport a disabled person for no cost. Details are available in the Assessor's Office.

**Blind:** Any individual that presents a Certification of Legal Blindness from the Board of Education and Services for the Blind, BESB, that states he/she is considered to be legally blind may be eligible for a 3,000 reduction of their assessment. The filing deadline is October 1, 2024 for the 2024 Grand List.

**Veterans:** If you are a veteran that was on active duty during a period of war or are still serving during a period of war you may be entitled to an exemption. An original or certified copy of your honorable discharge (DD-214) must be filed with the Town Clerk in the Willington Land Records prior to October 1, 2024 for the 2024 Grand List. There is no fee for this service. If your household income for 2023 was less than \$43,800 (single) or \$53,400 (married) you may be eligible for a doubling of the basic exemption amount of 1,500.

If the veteran is currently serving in an active theater of war or hostilities, a parent, guardian, spouse, or legal representative of such person may file a notarized statement that the service member is currently serving and is unable to appear in person by reason of such service. Such statement shall be received before October 1, 2024. If you are a disabled veteran with a disability rating from the VA of at least 10%, you may be entitled to an increased exemption. Excluding VA disability payments, if your 2023 household income was less than \$18,000 (single person households) or \$21,000 (married households), you are eligible for a higher exemption amount. The filing deadline is October 1.





## From the Assessor's Office

**Active-duty members** of the United States armed forces (including reserves and National Guard) are eligible for the exemption from taxes of one motor vehicle upon application and may also be eligible for the veteran's assessment reduction. If the claimant is currently serving in and is unable to appear in person to establish such right, he or she may establish such right, until such time as he or she appears personally to exhibit his discharge or copy, by forwarding to the town clerk annually a written statement, signed by the commanding officer of his unit, ship or station or by some other appropriate officer. Applications for all programs can be obtained at the Assessor's Office and can be sent to you by mail or by email. Please call the office at 860-487-3122 during our regular business office hours for further information.

Assessor's Office hours: Monday 8:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. and Tuesday – Thursday 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Fridays: Closed.

## 2024 REVALUATION

The 10/1/2024 Grand List is a revaluation year for the Town of Willington. CT General Statute Section 12-62 requires the revaluation of all real estate in CT town every five years. The last revaluation in Willington was for the 10/1/2018 Grand List. Willington approved a one-year extension to conduct a revaluation because the town was without an Assessor. The 2023 values will be used to determine taxes payable in the summer of 2024.

**New 490 Values will take effect for the 2024 revaluation.** Many property owners in Willington have land classified as farm, forest and open space under the PA 490 program, the use value assessment program in CT (CGS Sec. 12-107a – 12-107f). Every 5 years, the Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management and the Commissioner of Agriculture are required to develop per acre values for use in setting the use assessments for farm and forest land. Farmland values are based on agricultural rents. Forest land values are based on characteristics such as the type and density of trees, saw-log prices and tree growth rates. Open space values are set by each town and cannot be lower than the value of the land as a component of farmland.

### PA 490 100% VALUE\* Per acre value

Land Classification	Old Value, 2015	New Value, 2020
Tillable A	1,960	1,880
Tillable B	1,390	1,280
Tillable C	670	1,110
Tillable D	460	850
Orchard E	1,390	990
Pasture F	140	280
Swamp, Ledge, Scrub Lands	40	40
Woodland as Part of Farm Unit	240	390
Forest Land	240	390
Open Space	480	

*\*Your assessment is based on 70% of the table figures.*

*More information will be available once the vendor contract has been awarded.*

Kara Fishman CCMA II, MAI ~ Assessor Kfishman@willingtonct.gov

Nicole Snyder ~ Assistant Assessor Nsnyder@willingtonct.gov



# Tax Collector



**Motor Vehicle Supplemental Bills have been mailed**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Installment RE & MVS Due by: Thursday, February 1st, 2024**

Greetings Willington Residents:

We are strongly encouraging everyone to continuing making payments by mail, by use of our drop box located outside the front entrance or online at [www.willingtonct.gov](http://www.willingtonct.gov). Please note that there is a convenience fee of 2.50% for credit cards, flat fee of \$3.95 for debit cards and \$0.95 for EFT for online payments. As a reminder interest cannot be waived per CT State Statute 12-146.

## **How can I pay My Bill?**

The Revenue Office accepts cash, money orders or personal checks for payment at the office. If our office is closed, you can leave a check in our Drop Box outside the front of the building. Our mailing address is 40 Old Farms Rd, Willington CT 06279 if you want to mail in a payment, please include a current phone number in the event of any questions. Please enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope, if you would like a receipt mailed back to you. You may also pay online at [www.willingtonct.gov](http://www.willingtonct.gov) and click on "OnLine Payments" under the "Citizen Action Center".

## **Why did I get a motor vehicle tax bill in December?**

This is your motor vehicle supplemental bill. This bill was generated because you were issued a new motor vehicle registration, or have transferred an existing registration, at some time after Oct. 1, 2022, but before Sept. 30, 2023. You are being billed only for the number of months from your registration date until the end of the assessment year.

## **When is my Payment Due? When is it considered Late?**

Payments due January 1, 2024 must be received, or postmarked, no later than Thursday February 1, 2024.

Interest is charged at a rate of 1 ½% per month from the due date, with a minimum interest charge of \$2.00.

Failure to receive a bill does not invalidate the tax or interest per CT State Statute.

**WISHING EVERYONE A HEALTHY, HAPPY AND PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR!**

Janice C. Clauson  
Revenue Collector, 860-487-3111, [jclauson@willingtonct.gov](mailto:jclauson@willingtonct.gov)

# Town Clerk

Happy New Year!

The Town Clerks office processes hunting & fishing and dog licenses. We also offer certified vital copies and notary services, with the exception of documents being recorded into the land records. (There are other notaries in the TOB).

Probate Court for Willington is located at the Hicks Memorial Building in Tolland.

Barbara Gardner Riordan, Probate Judge

21 Tolland Green- Tolland, CT 06084

Monday thru Friday 8:30am-4:30pm, 860-871-3640

Passports are now being processed through the Storrs Post Office by appointment at the Storrs Post Office - 9 Charles Smith Way – Storrs CT 06268 phone : 800-275-8777

If you have any questions, please stop in or call us at 860- 487-3121.

Robin Campbell, CCTC

Ivan Ruhnke

Town Clerk

Assistant Town Clerk



# Elections Department



**PRESIDENTIAL PREFERENCE PRIMARY**

**EARLY VOTING**

YOUR VOTE IS YOUR VOICE

MARCH 2024  
**26**  
TUESDAY

MARCH 2024  
**27**  
WEDNESDAY

MARCH 2024  
**28**  
THURS-

MARCH 2024  
**30**  
FRIDAY

**10:00 AM TO 6:00 PM**  
**TOWN OFFICE BUILDING, 40 OLD FARMS ROAD**

**PRESIDENTIAL PREFERENCE PRIMARY**  
**TUESDAY, APRIL 2**

**2024**  
UNITED STATE OF AMERICA  
YOUR VOTE IS YOUR VOICE

**PRESIDENTIAL PREFERENCE PRIMARY**

**FOR NEW VOTERS  
THE MAIL IN AND  
ONLINE VOTER REGIS-  
TRATION DEADLINE IS  
FRIDAY, MARCH 15,  
2024**

voterregistration.ct.gov

[willingtonct.gov/elections-department](https://willingtonct.gov/elections-department)



Scan the QR Code to be taken to  
our Website!



# Parks & Recreation



Our local parks, trails and open spaces have always served as places where people can find respite and seek peace and restoration.

**PLEASE USE OUR PARKS AND TRAILS RESPONSIBLY**

WPRD is excited to announce a monthly e-mail newsletter! We'll be sending you updates you on new programs, exciting events, and more!! To sign-up for the newsletter, follow the link below to our Google Form:

<https://forms.gle/Wdk4ZC7aQVMqWE1RA>

WPRD is always looking for new program ideas! To make it easier to suggest a program, we created a Google Form for suggestions! Follow the link below to be taken to the form!

<https://forms.gle/gCz48o52pbwwLuaW8>

## WEDNESDAYS *IN THE* PARK

*Willington's Summer Concert Series*

It's only January **BUT** we are already preparing a great concert line-up for you!! In order to make this happen, we need your help. Please consider sponsoring a concert... every dollar counts!

**\*\*Contact WPRD at:**

[jcallaghan@willingtonct.gov](mailto:jcallaghan@willingtonct.gov) if interested\*\*

## Annual Holiday Tree Giveaway

Thank you to the following groups for your kindness and generosity and for sharing the true meaning of **Community**...

Willington Boy Scouts

The Willington PTA

Willington Democrat Town Committee

Willington Girl Scouts (2)

Willington Republican Town Committee





### 2023 Community Tree Lighting

The annual Community Tree Lighting took place this year on December 8th, and we would like to give a huge thank you to everyone who helped make the night so special! We are truly blessed to have such amazing members of our community!

- Thank you to the Hall Memorial School Chorus for bringing the Holiday cheer!
- The West family, who has decorated the tree for over 30 years!
- The Willington Fire Department, for making sure that parking went smoothly, and that the event was safe!
- The Willington Boy Scouts for collecting food donations, decorating a tree, and keeping us warm with a bonfire!
- The Willington Girl Scouts for handing out Candy Canes and decorating a tree!
- The Willington PTA, Willington Democrats, Willington Republicans for decorating a tree!
- The Willington Historical Society for opening the Glazier Tavern and showcasing Willington's history!
- The Willington Willing Workers 4-H Club for the amazing Hot Chocolate and Cookies!
- Mr. and Mrs. Claus for making the trip from the North Pole!

We can't wait to do it all again next December!! Check out some pictures below from the amazing night!



# WPRD Year-in-Review

WPRD would like to thank all of our coaches, volunteers, camp counselors, lifeguards, instructors, community partners and participants for a great year! We have big plans for 2024! Make sure to follow us on Facebook for up-to-date program information, and subscribe to our new monthly e-mail newsletter! Check out some pictures from all the fun we had in 2023!



A beautiful evening at the Wednesdays in the Park Summer Concert Series!



Michael Pippin and Boy Scout Troop 82 constructing the new Bocce Court at the River Road Athletic Complex!



Fun at Summer Camp!



Getting the crowd involved at the Broken Roads concert!

# Human Services

40 Old Farms Road

Tel. (860) 487-3118

## THANK YOU!

The Department of Human Services wants to extend a heartfelt thank you to all have donated to our Thanksgiving and Holiday programs! We couldn't have done this without your support, and you make a HUGE difference in our community!

## FOOD PANTRY

The Willington Food Pantry offers canned and dry goods, seasonal vegetables, and sometimes eggs to Willington residents in need. Located at the Town Office Building, our pantry is open Mondays from 4:00pm to 6:00pm and Thursdays from 10:00am to 12:00pm. We always accept unexpired food donations.

## ENERGY ASSISTANCE

For more information on Fuel Assistance, please contact the Human Services Department at: [kcote@willingtonct.gov](mailto:kcote@willingtonct.gov) or call our office at (860) 487-3118.

## FOODSHARE MOBILE PANTRY

Bringing produce, breads, and on occasion, meats to Willington residents. The Foodshare truck comes every other Wednesday from 11:00am-11:30am sharp at the Town Office Building, 40 Old Farms Road. Walk-through only. All are welcome!

## WE ARE SOCIAL!



Be sure to "Like" Willington Human Services on Facebook! Keep up with our events, programs, and happenings. Thanks for your interest and support!

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Have a question about what we do? Take a look at our website for frequently asked questions and answers: [Frequently Asked Questions | Willington CT](#)

## PROGRAMS

Spring Camp will be taking place from April 15th to April 19th! Stay tuned for more information.

**LIFE IS BETTER WITH A FRIENDLY NEIGHBOR**

**ADOPT A GRANDPARENT**

**Sign Up To VOLUNTEER**  
860-430-4557  
[URCommunityCares.org](http://URCommunityCares.org)





# Senior Center

## Willington Senior Center News

Hello everyone! I hope you had a wonderful and relaxing holiday. January is the month I usually hole up at home; I enjoy sitting on the sofa with tea or cocoa and looking outside. Hygge (hoogə or hoo-ga) is the Danish concept of taking time away from the daily rush to be together with people you care about—or even by yourself—to relax and enjoy life's quieter pleasures. It's a year-round thing in Denmark, but the short, cold days of January are the optimal time to relax, gather with friends and family, and get cozy. Of course, January isn't the only month for hygge—you can be cozy any time! Our programming schedule is getting busy again after the holidays! Come join us for one or a few of the programs we offer.

### January Programs:

**Line Dancing** and **Cornhole** will resume in January at **1 & 2:15 PM on Mondays** starting 1/8.

**Tai Chi** will continue as usual on **Tuesdays and Fridays at 10 am**. Come join Leslie and Bob Letendre for some gentle stretches followed by Tai Chi forms. All are welcome!

The **Craft Workshop** is on **Tuesdays at 12:30 PM**. All are welcome and all materials are provided! In January, we'll be crafting Lavender Vanilla Salt Scrub (1/2), Shrinky Dink Jewelry (1/9), and Paper Beads (1/16), then practicing Zentangle art (1/23) and continuing our Scrapbooking (1/30).

The return of **Setback!** Love playing cards? Hate driving in the dark? Come join us for Setback, **Thursdays at 1 PM**. Don't know how to play? We are a very friendly group, and we are willing to teach you!

Also on **Thursdays at 1 pm**, the **Craft Social** is a great time to practice your *hygge* — come by, have a cup of tea or cocoa, and enjoy the company of friends while you do the craft of your choice.

This month, I'm also asking that **if you'd like to discuss programming at the Center**, join us at the Craft Social on 1/18 to bring your ideas! If you can't make it, a phone call or note works too!

**Interested in reviving a program?** If there is interest but the timing is off, we can switch a program around to a different day or time so that more people may join.

**Do you have expertise in a game, craft, or other activity?** We need volunteers to run more programming! Only a few people are needed to run a program, so grab a group of friends and give me a call. We will find time in the schedule for you!

**If you're 55 or older**, you can become a member of the Willington Seniors, Inc.! For just \$10 per person, you get our monthly newsletter, ***The Button Shop Bugle***, our free Ice Cream Social, and an annual Members' Barbecue. You can pick up a membership form here at the Center, or give us a call and we'll send one out to you by email or mail.

Have a wonderful winter and stay safe and cozy!

Nan King  
Senior Center Coordinator  
Willington Senior Center  
20 Senior Way  
Willington, CT 06279  
860-429-8321  
nking@willingtonct.gov





# Button Hill Senior Apartments

*Affordable, One-Level Living*



- Your Private Front Door is at Ground Level
- Ample Parking Right at Your Front Door
- Heating, Cooling & Electricity Included
- Washer & Dryer in Every Apartment
- Recreation Area and Pet Friendly
- Easy Access to the Senior Center

**10-16 Senior Way, Willington, CT**

**Applicants must be 62 or older and  
meet certain income eligibility requirements**

For more information call our leasing office at:

**860-498-0268**



Visit us at **[www.buttonhill.com](http://www.buttonhill.com)**



***Call Us Now to Schedule Your Tour***



**WILLINGTON SENIORS, INC.**  
**VALENTINE BREAKFAST**

**SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2024**

**8:30 AM-10:30 AM**

**WILLINGTON SENIOR CENTER, 20 SENIOR WAY, WILLINGTON**

***YOUR CHOICE OF THE FOLLOWING  
FOR THE LOW PRICE OF \$7!!***

- **BACON OR HAM OMELET WITH CHEDDAR CHEESE, PEPPERS, ONIONS**
- **SCRAMBLED EGGS**
- **BLUEBERRY OR PLAIN PANCAKES**
- **TEXAS TOAST OR RAISIN BREAD FRENCH TOAST**
- **HASH BROWN POTATO PATTIES**
- **SAUSAGE LINKS**
- **REGULAR COFFEE, DECAF COFFEE, HOT TEA, ORANGE JUICE, BOTTLED WATER.**



**Featuring our  
VALENTINE GIFT BASKET DRAWING!**



Hall Memorial School is running a recyclable plastic bottle and can drive on Saturday, January 20th, 2024 to offset the cost of the Washington, DC trip for 8th grade students. Plastic bottles and cans will be collected at the back of the school beginning at 9:00 am and ending at 1:00 pm.

If you have redeemable bottles (plastic) and cans and are busy on January 20th, you will be able to drop those off at the school or you can drop them at the transfer station and we will pick them up.

If you have any questions or can volunteer to help us transport the redeemable containers, please call Mary Kay Tshonas (Principal of Hall Memorial) at (860)429-9391 X 2307.

Attention Parents,

All children residing in Willington who turn 5 years old on or before September 1, 2024 are eligible for kindergarten in the 2024-2025 school year. This is a change from the previous kindergarten cutoff date of January 1, 2025. Based on the new Connecticut legislation, if your child's 5th birthday falls on September 2, 2024 through August 31, 2025, your child will enter kindergarten in the 2025-2026 school year. Please complete our form using the link below to begin the registration process.

If you are unable to complete the form, call our main office at 860-429-9367 or email [CESRegistration@willingtonct.org](mailto:CESRegistration@willingtonct.org).

<https://forms.gle/1AvcbPrtGZfMcqUy7>



## School Building Committee

### Willington School Building Committee: Final Report

The Willington School Building Committee submitted its final report to the Board of Selectmen and Board of Education in November 2023. Despite the failed referendum, the School Building Committee believes:

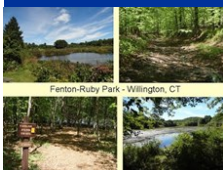
- The existing school facilities at Hall and Center are in need of significant and very costly improvements to maintain their integrity for continued use and to support the advancement of a contemporary educational model into the future. The SBC's efforts support the recommendation that new school construction is anticipated to have the most advantageous cost-benefit analysis in the long term.
- The most effective and efficient means of implementing a combined PK-8 school is through new construction on a new site.
- The property identified by the SBC as the proposed site of the new school is an excellent site candidate for the proposed use, and of the properties examined at the time of the study it remains the most advantageous available.
- The Town should consider its land inventory, if not open space, and perhaps sell the unneeded parcels to purchase a more suitable lot for a future school.
- The Town should actively plan for a significant financial investment in school infrastructure improvements (either new construction or renovations) within the next few years. It is important for taxpayers to understand that the state will not provide reimbursement for the majority of school improvement projects when done through the CIP process.
- The Town may consider connecting with their local elected officials (senator, state representative) to determine if they would support special legislation to get Willington a higher reimbursement rate for a renovation project or a new school.

The final report can be found on the Willington Public Schools website by clicking School Building Committee from the district homepage ([www.willingtonpublicschools.org](http://www.willingtonpublicschools.org)). Thank you to the following members who spent numerous hours doing the work of the committee: Mike Makuch, Ralph Tulis, Peter Latincsics, Justin Niderno, Katherine Viveiros, Ann Grosjean, James Marshall, Chris Tillona, Briana Ross, Erika Wiczenski, Gary Anderson, and Phil Stevens.





# Town Parks & Amenities



## Fenton-Ruby Park and Wildlife Preserve:

Moose Meadow Road and Burma Road; hiking/walking trails, bird watching, fishing, non-motorized boating, cross country skiing, snow shoeing and picnic area.

## Knowlton Property:

Mason Road – Hiking Trails

Willington's Public Works Department constructed a parking lot for hiking trail access on Mason Road. This lot will allow safe parking for access to the Talmadge Spur Trail and the Knowlton Spur Trail. Both trails connect to the Nipmuck Trail, part of the Connecticut Blue Trail System.

## Talmadge Tract:

Mason Road – Hiking Trails (adjacent to the Knowlton Property)

## Chenes Roches Preserve:

Chenes Roches (transl. oaks rocks) is a 56-acre wooded preserve in northeast Willington and owned by Joshua's Tract Conservation and Historic Trust. Trails wind through a varied terrain of hardwood forests, stands of pines and along a hemlock-shaded stream in a steep-sided valley. A round trip of 1.8 miles will take you across several small spring-fed streams and an altitude change of about 250 feet from the parking lot to the valley stream. A trail map and additional information about the preserve, including directions, can be found on the Joshua's Trust website, [joshuastrust.org](http://joshuastrust.org). There is a kiosk with trail maps at the small parking area 500 feet past the south end of Laurel Drive.

**Please stay on the trail and respect boundaries where the trail passes near private property.**

Note: The parking area is not plowed in the winter and parking on the road is not advisable.

## Kevin Legare Memorial Fields - 40 Old Farms Road:

Baseball and Softball fields

## The Park on Village Hill Road:

Overlooking the Roaring Brook, a popular fishing spot during fishing season.

## River Road Athletic Complex - 511 River Road:

Randy Lerner Memorial Baseball Field, basketball court, pavilion, playscape, swings, multi-sport field, volleyball sand court, walking path (one lap = .33 miles) and outdoor fitness equipment. No golfing allowed.

**Dogs are welcome but must be leashed and cleaned up after.** Doggie poo bags are available.

Complex is **CARRY IN-CARRY OUT**. Dogs are not allowed on the baseball field. **\*\*State Statute 22-364 states that dogs must be under the direct control of their owners at all times when using town parks. It is the dog owner's responsibility to clean up all dog waste.**

**NOTE: All activities at River Road Athletic Complex are monitored under 24-hour video surveillance.**

## Facility Rentals:

River Road Athletic Complex has a pavilion, fields and courts available for rent for your next birthday party or family gathering!

## Pavilion Rental Fee:

Residents:	\$75.00 for 5 hours or \$20/hour
Non-Residents:	\$100.00 for 5 hours or \$30/hour
Town Non-Profits:	\$55.00 for 5 hours

## Fields/Courts Rental:

**Fee:** \$30.00/2 hours

## Community Sports Equipment Shed



The River Road Athletic Complex has a Community Sports Equipment Shed! All of the equipment inside has been donated; basketballs, soccer balls, bats, balls, etc. and may be borrowed and returned by anyone at the park. Feel free to donate unused equipment to the shed!





## Historical Society

Willington Historical Society enjoyed an active and ambitious 2023. Members of the public joined us for a tour of the old Willington Game Farm, and we received a treasure trove of old items from the Game Farm.

One of the Historical Society's longtime volunteers, Betty Robertson, donated many items of memorabilia from her years as a Willington teacher and resident. Many stopped by to wish her well in her new adventures during a Sunday afternoon reception. Betty also received a citation from Dr. Jeff Gordon honoring her many contributions to the community. WHS welcomed State Archeologist Sarah Sportman, presenting on two occasions and sharing fascinating archeological details about ancient New England.

During our annual meeting, Bob Shabot discussed the history and timeline of how WHS came to acquire the Glazier Tavern, sharing many details of the timeline and history of the tavern.

Our most valuable asset is our dedicated group of volunteers including those that baked and helped during the open Glazier Tavern on December 8th during the Tree Lighting. We were joined by the Hall School Choir and dozens of curious folks taking a short tour of the Tavern and ongoing renovations.

Our next meetings will be held at the Willington Library, lower level, to accommodate possible winter parking and accessibility. Please join us on Tuesday, January 16th and Tuesday, February 20th at 3 pm for our monthly meetings. You can find Willington Historical Society online at: <https://willingtonhistoricalsocietyct.org/> Donations of memorabilia and other items are always welcomed.

## Conservation Commission

Winter is a wonderful time to be outdoors! You can breathe fresh air without pollen worries, see the unique trunk and branch structure of the trees and find many animal tracks in the snow.

There are a variety of town-maintained trails to wander, including four at Fenton-Ruby Park off Burma Road and several on the Talmadge Conservation Tract and the Royal Knowlton Preserve properties off Mason Road. See the Conservation Commission webpage link below for more information.

Also make sure you add Chenes Roches Preserve (translation: "oaks rocks") to your hiking list. This is a 56-acre wooded preserve in northeast Willington owned by Joshua Tract Conservation and Historic Trust. Trails wind through a varied terrain of hardwood forests, stands of pines and along a hemlock-shaded stream in a steep-sided valley. A round trip of 1.8 miles will take you across several small spring-fed streams via bridges and an altitude change of about 250 feet from the parking lot to the valley stream. A trail map and additional information about the Preserve, including directions, can be found on the Joshua's Trust website: [www.joshuastrust.org](http://www.joshuastrust.org). There is a kiosk with trail maps in the small parking area at 71 Blair Road. Please stay on the trail and respect boundaries where the trail passes near private property.

The next time you are at Fenton Ruby park wander down to the pond and settle on a bench to view the beaver pond. Be still and you may see a beaver. Here are some fun beaver facts

- Beaver teeth are orange.
- Beavers are one of the few animals that modify their habitat.
- Beavers don't just build dams, Beavers slap their tails on the water to indicate danger. ...
- Beavers eat wood! Beavers are the largest rodents in North America. Beavers eat bark and cambium. Their favorites include willow, maple, poplar, beech, birch, alder, and aspen trees.
- Beavers usually have one mate for life, just like people do! Once a beaver is two-years-old, it leaves the family. In beaver years, being two is a lot like being old enough to go to college.
- Beaver families are territorial and defend against other families. >> In order to warn family members of danger, beavers slap their tails against the water, creating a powerful noise.
- Beavers eat bark and cambium (the softer growing tissue under the bark of trees). Their favorites include willow, maple, poplar, beech, birch, alder, and aspen trees. They also eat water vegetation as well as buds and roots

The Conservation Commission is recruiting interested townspeople to help manage our environmental resources and serve on the commission. The commission meets on the 3rd Wednesday of each month at 7 pm. Meetings may be virtual at this time. For more information contact Kathy Demers, Commission Chair at 860-377-6416 or visit the commission's webpage at: <https://www.willingtonct.gov/conservation-commission>.



# Willington Veterans

## Willington Veterans Memorial Foundation

The next meeting of the Foundation will be **January 9, 2024**, at the Willington Senior Center at 6:30 pm. There will be refreshments before the meeting. The meeting is open to all. We will be making plans for Memorial Day, recap the Veterans Day ceremony and updating the Willington veteran's lists. Membership in the Foundation is a \$5 donation for a lifetime membership.

The Willington Veterans Memorial Foundation and Veterans of Foreign Wars would like to thank everyone who came out Veterans Day to help honor all veterans but especially those who gave their lives in defense of our country. The Ceremony was held at the Willington Veterans Memorial, 20 Senior Way on Saturday November 11<sup>th</sup>. We honored the living WWII Veterans from Ashford, Mansfield and Willington. Three of the remaining five WWII veterans were present and honored at the ceremony. Fourteen pavers honor the 14 service members from Willington who died in WWII were dedicated. There were 40 Willington veterans who gave their lives in service of our country starting with four in 1754 – French and Indian War to 14 who gave their live in World War 2. We have memorial paver for 16 of the brave individuals at present. We are looking to get all 40 veterans honored. If you would like to sponsor a memorial paver for one of these veterans or a veteran from your family, please pick up a paver form at the Senior Center, town library or town clerk's office. The cost of a paver is \$50.

## Willington Veterans Memorial Foundation Membership Application

Members Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Telephone: (       ) \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone #: (       ) \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

Military Service:    ☐ Active Duty    ☐ Veteran    ☐ Nat. Guard/Reserve    ☐ General Public

I give the Willington Veterans Memorial Foundation permission to contact me by email or text to make me aware of information pertaining to this organization.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Membership Type: -    ☐ Veteran    ☐ Public    ☐ Other        Membership Donation \$5

Drop the Application off at the Senior Center or turn it in to any Foundation Officer: Joe Rondeau, Ed Dagata or Phil Monty

The purpose and goal of the foundation is to help maintain the Veteran's Memorial & Veterans Memorial Honor Roll; support the patriotic display of flags; to coordinate with the Town and VFW to get flags and markers on graves of Veterans buried in Willington; to maintain a list of Veterans Memorial pavers and to help coordinate the ceremonies for Veterans Day and other patriotic days.



# Corporal Henry Toberman Post No. 938



There are two qualifiers for membership in the VFW, as set out in our National Bylaws.

An individual must meet both in order to become a member. They are as follows:

1: **Honorable Service** – must have served in the Armed Forces of the United States and either received a discharge of Honorable or General (Under Honorable Conditions) or be currently serving.

2: **Service in a war, campaign, or expedition on foreign soil or in hostile waters\***. This can be proven by any of the following:

- An authorized campaign medal
- Receipt of Hostile Fire Pay or Imminent Danger Pay (verified by a military pay statement)
- Service in Korea for 30 consecutive or 60 non-consecutive days

\*This information is usually available through a veteran's DD-214. If other information is needed or if a veteran's DD-214 is not complete, they can contact the National Personnel Records Center online or at 314.801.0800 to request more information.

**Want to Join? EMAIL THE POST : [vfw938@gmail.com](mailto:vfw938@gmail.com)**

**Join today first year's dues are on us!**



# Willington Public Library



**Willington Public Library**

**7 Ruby Road, Willington**

**860-429-3854, [www.willingtonpubliclibrary.org](http://www.willingtonpubliclibrary.org)**

**Find us on the WPL E-Blast, Facebook, Instagram, X, YouTube, & Burbio.com**

## Great libraries create community!

**2023 was a Year of Celebration for the Willington Public Library.** As a community, we celebrated with each other and participated in and enjoyed four wonderful programming events. In the Spring, a Dinner Dance; in the Summer, a Community Picnic; in the Fall, a Celebratory Reception; and this Winter, a Family Party. It's been a busy and exciting year, and everyone here at the library has greatly appreciated the many who have helped to make all of these 100th-Birthday events a great success. Thank you one and all!

To the Town of Willington,

On behalf of the Willington Public Library Board and the Co-Directors, we would like to thank everyone for their support in celebrating the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Library. While we have only been in the current building 17 years, the history dates back much longer than that, and we appreciate all the stories that locals had to tell about their experiences in the Library, whether here or at Hall School. We at the Library have enjoyed the interaction with the community and hope to continue this through 2024 and beyond.

Again, thank you for all your support.

KarenAnn Caldwell, Library Board Chair

JoAnne Taraskiewicz, Library Board Vice Chair

Just a reminder, the library has some outstanding Museum and Attraction Passes, which are funded by the Friends of WPL (thank you!). We hope you will take advantage of these passes and the many programs they offer through their establishments. There are a variety of fun activities during the dreary winter months.

**Children's Museum, West Hartford, CT & Roaring Brook Nature Center, Canton, CT**

**Connecticut Historical Society Museum and Library, Hartford, CT**

**Connecticut Old State House, Hartford, CT**

**Florence Griswold Museum, Old Lyme, CT**

**Lutz Children's Museum, Manchester, CT**

**New Britain Museum of American Art, New Britain, CT**

**Old Sturbridge Village, Sturbridge, MA**

**Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, Hartford, CT**

The CT State Parks & Forests - No Child Left Inside - 3 in 1 pass, which consists of the Dinosaur State Park (Rocky Hill), Gillette Castle (East Haddam), and Fort Trumbull (New London). This pass is not available during the Winter season.

## Two Library Fundraisers to support!

For the first time ever, the library is now selling its very own T-Shirt! The shirt is a deep purple with dark yellow lettering. It reads on the front "Great Libraries Create Community". Shirts are available for both adults (\$22) and children (\$18) and come in all sizes. If we do not have your size available, we can special-order it for you. These pending purchase orders will need to be paid for before the order is placed. We will contact you when your order arrives. Thank you in advance for your support!

Another great money-maker for the library includes our WPL Tote Bags, which are 13" x 14" heavyweight canvas, in a beautiful deep evergreen color, touting our logo and selling for \$20.00.





# Willington Public Library Continued...

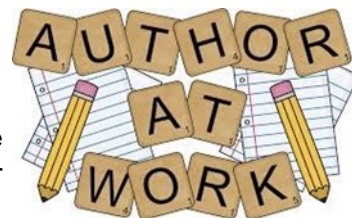
## NEW UnPlug Zone at WPL

In a world where information and technology are omnipresent, opportunities to unplug are becoming more essential. The availability of technology and the constant connectedness that it provides, coupled with an immense amount of information (news, email, social media, etc.), place many individuals in danger of cognitive overload. People want control of their technology instead of their technology controlling them. The library is now offering its Becker & Patton Family Reading Room as a **DEVICE FREE-NO TECH ZONE** to help meet this growing need to take a break, turn off, and disconnect. This area will be designated for the WPL community to relax and destress.

## NEW to our library...a Little Local Author section

A special section now for our newest and youngest authors!

We have children who have shown a special interest in creating their own stories and putting them into book form. If you are or would like to be one of these Little Local Authors, we will be happy to put your books into circulation in the library, so that others may enjoy reading your works of art as well. Come and see what children have written so far; check the books out to read at home or enjoy reading them while you visit the library. We encourage other children to create and write their own stories and submit their finished work to us, for our own "in-house" publishing process. They will love seeing their names as authors.



## Sound Healing Meditation

Classes meet on **Tuesdays and Thursdays, 6:30 - 7:30 p.m.** in the **Community Room**. These classes are for adults. Instructor Edie Jemiola uses crystal alchemy bowls and voice to bring patrons on a stress-reducing and rejuvenating guided meditation journey. You may bring a yoga mat, pillows, blanket, and/or lounging chair. Regular chairs are available for those who prefer. You may use whatever makes you feel most comfortable.

Please call the library to register for the dates you would like to attend. Walk-ins also welcome. There is a \$10.00 suggested donation but all are welcome and encouraged to attend.

Upcoming scheduled dates...

**January: Tuesday the 9th and Thursday the 25th**

**February: Tuesday the 6th and Thursday the 22nd**

**March: Tuesday the 5th and Thursday the 21st**

## Thursday, January 18th at 6:00 p.m. - U. S. A. Financial "Social Security Strategies and Your Retirement Future" Educational Workshop

Retirement is one of the most important life events many of us will ever experience. Social Security changes can affect YOUR retirement. Learn about when to collect Social Security. Laws and regulations have changed, and you need to be informed of these issues.

Topics discussed in the Workshop...

- Social Security regulation changes impacting the filing timing options available to you.
- How S. S. benefits are calculated and the advanced planning required to increase them.
- Why married couples as well as divorced and widowed individuals can miss out on significant lifetime sums.
- How S. S. sums may be integrated into a retirement analysis projecting future monthly income.
- The "three-legged stool" approach to retirement planning and how to support your needs in the future.
- Learn how your S. S. benefit may be taxed and how that can change your outlook.
- If you elect S. S. and continue to work, will your benefits be reduced or eliminated?

## Ongoing Programs:

Every Tuesday, 1:00 - 3:00 p.m., the **Yarn & Thread Group** meets in the Reading Room. Come and sit a spell while you enjoy some time working on your own project in the company of fellow crafters. This is a great opportunity to set aside time to work on or complete a project while sharing with others your ideas and talents.

**Adult Book Club:** Every first Thursday of the month at 6:30 p.m. Everyone is welcome to participate. Books are available in advance at the library. There are plenty of books to go around and available a month or more in advance.

Upcoming books for discussion are for...

**January 4: The Messy Lives of Book People by Phaedra Patrick**

**February 1: The First Ladies by Marie Benedict and Victoria Christopher Murray**

**March 7: The Tiffany Girls by Shelley Noble**





## Willington Public Library Continued...

**Family Movie Time:** On the last Saturday of every month at 12:30 p.m. unless otherwise stated, in the Community Room on the BIG SCREEN! Complimentary popcorn is served. You may bring your own snacks or enjoy your lunch as you watch. The following showings are planned for the coming months...

**January 27: Ruby Gilman: Teenage Kraken**

**February 24: Big Hero 6 - 10th Anniversary**

**March 23: TMNT: Mutant Mayhem (TMNT Day is March 19th)**

You may "borrow" the BIG SCREEN for your own personal viewing. Let us know what date and time you would like, and we will reserve the room for you. The movie's starting time will be dependent upon how long the movie is and consider how long we are open for on the day or evening of your choice. Watch alone or bring a crowd!

**Storytime & Craft:** Join us every first Saturday of each month at 10:00 a.m. for a themed story and craft. This program is more for the youngest children but all ages are welcome!

**January 6:** National Bean Day - "Cool Bean" Story Reading with bean-based mosaic artwork.

**February 3rd** is, Take Your Child to the Library Day, with SPECIAL Programs...

11:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. : Take Me To Your Reader - Sing Along Story Time with Judy Pencoast (in the Community Room) 1:00 - 2:30 p.m. : "Tails of Joy" - Reading with Sophie the Therapy Dog (in the Children's Craft/Reading Room) REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED. Call the library to sign up for a 10-minute session.

**March 2:** Read Across America Day (Special guest reader TBD)

**Pokemon Club:** Drop in on the second Tuesday of the month from 6:00 - 7:00 p.m. Come and play the Pokemon Card Game! Trade cards! No experience required. Limited library decks will be available to borrow if you don't have your own, or you can bring your own. Ages 7+. No registration needed. Snacks are provided.

The Willington Public Library hosts a "Lunch and A Good Book Club" at the **Willington Senior Center** every second Tuesday of the month at 11:00 a.m. Check to see what they are reading next. Books can be borrowed from the library. Members are asked to bring their lunch and something to share. Drinks are provided.

### Connecticut Pieces for Peace

We have had the pleasure and enjoyment of having the Connecticut Pieces for Peace Traveling Exhibition here at the library over the last month. Connecticut Pieces for Peace is a traveling exhibition sponsored by the Curriculum of Hope for a Peaceful World, which is a standing committee of the Connecticut State organization of DKG (Delta Kappa Gamma), an international organization of Key Women Educators.

The CT Pieces for Peace was inspired by CITYarts Pieces for Peace projects of New York City. CITYarts, Inc is a global-arts organization connecting youth in 120 COUNTRIES on 6 CONTINENTS and who, to date, has received more than 11,000 ARTWORKS from over 1,500 SCHOOLS and community organizations.

Through the "PIECES FOR PEACE" project, youth from across Connecticut have voiced their hopes for peace through their artwork in workshops where they create artwork in response to the question "WHAT DOES PEACE LOOK LIKE TO ME?" Artwork was submitted using any medium in a 6" X 6" format. Thirty pieces were framed and became the traveling exhibition. All students who participated in this project had the opportunity to display their artwork on the Alpha Kappa State website where they can be viewed.

We are fortunate to have some of this artwork now on display throughout the Willington Public Library. We hope you will take this opportunity to see through the eyes of our young people what peace looks like to them and perhaps join, creating your own image of "What PEACE looks like to YOU!"

We have now made this same opportunity available to all who would like to participate in this beautiful and creative idea. We hope you will take this opportunity to ask yourself the same question and then create what PEACE looks like to you, adding your own image on a 6" X 6" card stock, using the many different media we've made available. Supplies are in the Children's Library Craft Room. ALL AGES are welcome and encouraged to participate. We hope you get to come and see if you haven't already.

**This exhibit will be at the library until Saturday, January 14, 2024.**



## Willington Public Library Continued...

The Library now offers TWO Writers' Groups!

Our original Eastern CT Writers meets on the second and fourth Saturday of each month from 12:30 - 2:30 p.m. This group is for aspiring and advanced writers working on a novel, novella, or collection of short stories or poetry. Submissions are limited to no more than 10 pages. Critiques and commentary constructive to each writer's work and goals will be encouraged. If you are interested in attending or have any questions, you may contact [easternctwriters@gmail.com](mailto:easternctwriters@gmail.com).

**NEW...Writers' Group Course! Presented by Red Road Publishers. This program will meet every Tuesday beginning in January from 6:00pm-7:50pm.**

This year-long course is for those who have previous writing experience. It will and the focus will be on short story writing, novels, and novellas. We will use The Iowa Writing Workshop approach to facilitate critiques and commentary constructive to the writer's work and goals. The intent of this course is for dedicated writers to become published on Amazon's KDP platform. will be used to advance participants' work and goals. The intent is for dedicated writers to achieve publication on Amazon's KDP platform. Attendance is flexible and participants may join throughout the year. **REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED.** Please contact the library for your initial sign-up.

Modeled after 6-week courses that were offered at Manchester Community College 3x per year at \$145 per student per course, the comparative value of this **FREE** course exceeds \$1,000 per student.

Writers should bring enough copies (at least 6) of their writing project (no more than 10 double-spaced pages) with them to the first each class. Other writers will receive these copies, critique them, and bring them home for critique, where they will then be the subject for group discussion at to the next class for group discussion. This will be the weekly class format.

Finding and recognizing your voice, outlining, structuring the plot, establishing the story arc, giving your characters depth and roundness, evoking the scene through description and detail, experimenting with points of view, and rewriting beginnings and endings are ongoing issues for exploration throughout the course as will any other pertinent topics that may evolve during class time.

**Writers are not required to attend every week and may join throughout the year. REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED. Please call the library to sign-up for your first time attending for whenever that may be.**

**January 1 through November 28, 2024 - Smokey Bear Reading Challenge** (The challenge is geared for ages 4 to 10, but all ages are welcome.)

**Celebrate Smokey the Bear's 80th Birthday!** Join Smokey in learning about wildfires and the environment. Read books, take action, and have fun! And remember: **Only you can prevent wildfires.**

**Saturday, February 10th at 12:30 p.m. - "Pearls from Carol". Author talk and musical performance/sing-along with Al Ruggiero.** This is a multigenerational event for all ages. Valentine-themed. When Carol Ann Ruggiero passed away, her husband Al wanted the world to know about her written works and honor her legacy. Her works are short, funny, and thought-provoking. Al will share several of Carol's works with music and group sing-alongs included. Refreshments will be served. There is a reschedule date of Saturday, February 17th if needed due to a cancelation.

**Thursday, February 29th Time TBD - Join us for a SPECIAL Leap-Year Program and Craft...Make a "Leap-Year Time Capsule" - for ALL Ages.** Store it safe at home until the next Leap Year comes again in 2028. We will come together once again and look back to check out what was put inside and see how we have grown and changed.

**Saturday, March 3rd from 11 a.m. - 2 p.m. - Mario Day.** Celebrate Mario Day early with a day of competitive games and crafts! Take part in a Mario-Kart racing contest. Play a round of Mario Party. Do Mario-themed crafts and more!

**Saturday, March 16th - St. Patrick's Day Take-Home Craft...TBD**

Please contact the Library if there is a program you would like to see, or if you have a program you would like us to consider presenting. We do our best to offer all of our programs at no cost to our community, thanks to the Friends of WPL.

The library hosts many outside organizations and their programs. The views and opinions expressed in these programs are those of the speakers and do not necessarily reflect the views or positions of any entities they represent nor do they reflect the views, opinions, official policy or position of the Willington Public Library. Any information needed or asked for regarding such events, is done by these groups or its individuals, and not by or through the library. What information we are given will be shared and you will see their flyer posted.



## Willington Public Library Continued...

**The WPL Community Room is available to rent. If interested, please notify us.**

Sign up for our library e-blast. It's the best way to keep informed. Get connected to what's happening here at your library. For all Library related things, join our library E-Blast, where we come to you! Join by calling us at 860-429-3854, by coming in person to the library and signing up, or on our website link at [www.willingtonpubliclibrary.org](http://www.willingtonpubliclibrary.org). You can also find us on Facebook, Instagram, X, YouTube, & burbio.com

**Notice of cancellations:** With winter approaching, look for cancellation of programs due to inclement weather or conditions beyond our control by checking out our website at [www.willingtonpubliclibrary.org](http://www.willingtonpubliclibrary.org) or watching WFSB Channel 3 (or WFSB.com) and NBC 30 WVIT (NBC30.com). Updates can also be found on Facebook.

### **Friends of the Willington Public Library**

ALL programs are sponsored and made possible due to the hard and dedicated work of the Friends of the Willington Public Library. Thank you to one and all for all that you do.

#### **Membership**

Friends of the WPL is always looking for new members to join our group to support the library. To join, email us at [willingtonfriendsofthelibrary@gmail.com](mailto:willingtonfriendsofthelibrary@gmail.com), fill out a paper membership form in the library, or register online here: Online Membership Form

#### **Meetings**

The Friends group meets on the second Tuesday of every "odd" numbered month at 7:00 p.m. The next scheduled meeting of the Friends of WPL will be on Tuesday, January 9th, at 7:00 p.m.

#### **Library CLOSINGS:**

**Monday, January 1, in observance of New Year's Day**

**Monday, January 15, in observance of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day**

**Monday, February 19, in observance of Presidents' Day**

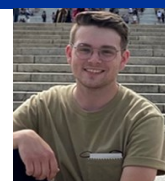
**Friday, March 29, in observance of Good Friday**

**We would like to welcome the new members of our Library Board and thank our exiting members who have served us so well.**

**A reminder: The Willington Library Board meets on the second AND fourth Wednesday of the month at 7:00 p.m.**

**We wish you a HAPPY and HEALTHY 2024!**





## The Newly Reopened Gardiner Hall Jr. History Museum

The Eastern Connecticut Center for History, Art, and Performance (EC-CHAP) nonprofit organization is happy to announce that the Gardiner Hall Jr. History Museum had its Grand Reopening on December 2nd, 2023, after months of planning, renovations, and upgrades. The local museum is housed at The Mill Works facility, formerly the Gardiner Hall Jr. Company thread mill (1860-1954) located at 156 River Road, Willington CT. Back in late February of 2023, EC-CHAP was selected as one of twelve organizations in the state to be awarded the Museum Makeover grant offered by Conservation ConneCTion and supported through a partnership with the Connecticut League of History Organizations with a grant from the CT Cultural Fund by CT Humanities and funding provided by the Connecticut Office of the Arts from the Connecticut State Legislature. The grant provided funds to upgrade the museum space along with expert advice from a team of museum curators.

After an initial visit by traveling curator Stephen Bartkus in March, planning began on a new museum exhibition layout. The “before” images of the museum with the blue flooring show that while there was an array of historical objects on display, the space certainly could benefit from a makeover. The priorities for the project would be focused on providing a more informative and enjoyable experience for guests while also improving the facility in order to optimize the preservation of historical artifacts.

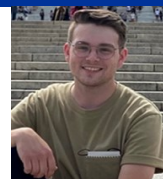


*Before & After: A view of one part of the Gardiner Hall Jr. History Museum before the makeover (left) and after the makeover (right).*

The first step was to create six larger, professional text panels to tell the story of the mill, employees, the Hall family, and South Willington. Many weeks were spent on historical research followed by creating, editing, and designing the text panels now seen in the museum. In addition to the new text panels, one of our favorite photos of company employees was chosen to be enlarged into a 10-foot hanging fabric photograph, bringing a still image of 1920 work conditions to life. To enhance the presentation of historical objects, modern display cases were graciously donated to the cause from the Fairfield Museum & History Center and the Seymour Historical Society. The museum space now hosts multiple display cases featuring products of the Gardiner Hall Jr. Company and future businesses that occupied the mill, personal items of the Hall family, and relics from employees. More is to come as new pieces are put on display and the museum expands.

One of the most visually pleasing facility upgrades to the Gardiner Hall Jr. History Museum was changing the flooring. Previously, the blue tile floor was showing its age. Every piece of the museum was removed and put into storage so commercial carpeting could be installed. The carpet also extends into a newly created presentation room to be used for historical lectures and demonstrations. Lastly, the large early-20th century mill windows on the West wall of the museum received UV treatment. Upgraded blinds now span both windows and fully block the harmful effects of sunlight to sensitive museum artifacts.





## The Newly Reopened Gardiner Hall Jr. History Museum

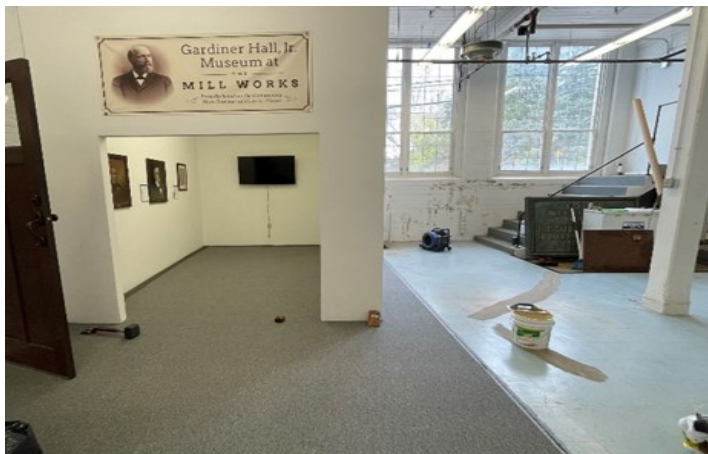
After nine months of progress thanks to the Museum Makeover program, members of EC-CHAP along with traveling curators Stephen Bartkus, Ben Gammell, and Rich Malley completed the installation of the permanent exhibition *Threads in Time* in November, 2023. *Threads in Time* explores Willington's history, the impact of the Gardiner Hall Jr. Thread Company, the contributions of South Willington residents and employees, and the Hall family. EC-CHAP invites everyone to stop by the Gardiner Hall Jr. History Museum to see the renovated space and take in a part of Connecticut's rich local history.

*Ryan Elgin serves as EC-CHAP Assistant Director, Curator of the Gardiner Hall Jr History Museum, and Volunteer Coordinator. He may be contacted directly at [ryan@ec-chap.org](mailto:ryan@ec-chap.org).*

*The Gardiner Hall Jr Museum is open to the public Saturdays from 10:00am to 12:00pm. For more information, please call 518-791-9474.*



*After: The enlarged, high-resolution image of Gardiner Hall Jr. Company dressing room employees circa 1920.*



*Carpet being installed after the museum was cleared out and artifacts placed in storage.*



*Museum pieces being moved back into the museum after carpeting installation. A final day of planning and layout decisions.*



### Theresa MacNaughton: An Artist Interview

Theresa MacNaughton resides in Wethersfield, Connecticut with her husband and two rescue dogs. She has been creating art since she was a young child, when she would spend hours drawing imaginary characters with a ballpoint pen in lined notebooks. She studied art throughout high school and into college, receiving a bachelor's degree in fine arts and journalism from Southern Connecticut State University in New Haven, Connecticut. After dabbling in recreational painting for many years, Theresa opened Whimsy & Enchantment Art on Etsy, where she currently sells original art, as well as prints, note cards, journals, and other functional items featuring reproductions of her work. Collectors are drawn to her introspective and whimsical portraits of women, beautiful woodland creatures, and majestic birds of prey.



#### What type of work do you create? What materials do you use?

I specialize in mixed media art - combining paint, colored pencils, watercolor crayons, collage elements, antique book pages, inspirational quotes and poetry into one-of-a-kind pieces inspired by nature, magic, everyday whimsy, and deep reflection of the soul.

#### When and how did you begin making art?

I have always loved art and have been drawing for as long as I can remember. I was enrolled in art enrichment classes in grade school and had fun exhibiting all types of creations in art shows at my school. This love for art following me into high school and beyond.

#### How did you find your unique style?

After a period where I had stopped making art, I discovered the work of mixed media artist Suzi Blu online. Suzi's work was unlike any I had ever seen. I was fascinated by her work, mostly portraiture that was both whimsical and realistic, and began taking her classes to learn how to incorporate all these unexpected elements into composed paintings. From there, the online art community began to boom, and I networked and took classes from other well-known contemporary artists in the mixed media field.

#### Much of your work is female figures: are these people you know or imaginary people? Or facets of yourself?

They are all figments of my imagination. I like to explore the many facets of the soul, emotions, and mythology in my paintings. They come alive organically for me on the canvas. Sometimes, even I'm surprised with the results. Any facet of myself is purely coincidental. For animals and birds, I will use a source photo to capture their true essence.

#### Can you tell us about your creation process?

I create the backgrounds of my paintings first. Oftentimes, I will infuse the piece with affirmations before laying down any paint. I'll create depth and texture with collage papers, book pages, crayon marks and other tools, which I then cover with paint. I'll then distress it, allowing some of the background to poke through. At that time, I will begin to create the imagery onto the page - a goddess, a bird, an owl - whatever speaks to me at the time. I'll finish the piece with paint splatters, doodles, embellishments, and an inspirational quote that speaks to the theme of the painting I'm working on.

## EC-CHAP Continued...



### Which artists do you appreciate and admire?

I've always loved Pierre-Auguste Renoir. I was a big fan of impressionist art in my teen years. I also like Arthur Rackham, John Anster Fitzgerald, Margaret Keane, Sulamith Wülfing, Edward Gorey, and Tasha Tudor.

### What do you hope for viewers to experience in looking at your work?

I want them to experience joy, reflection, peace, and playfulness. Mostly, I want them to feel the heart that I've put into every piece.

*Sarah Moon is an Artist-In-Residence (Theater discipline) at EC-CHAP; Director of the Dye & Bleach House Community Gallery; and Assistant Professor of Humanities at Massachusetts Maritime Academy. Sarah can be reached at: [communitygallery@ec-chap.org](mailto:communitygallery@ec-chap.org).*





## EC-CHAP Continued...



# THE PACKING HOUSE

1870

HISTORIC VENUE FOR PERFORMANCE & EVENTS

# EC-CHAP

Eastern Connecticut Center for  
History, Art, and Performance, Inc.

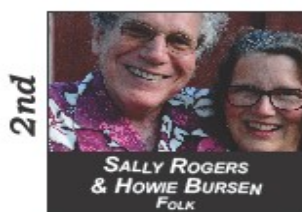
## January 2024 Performance



## February 2024 Performance



## March 2024 Performance



## April 2024 Performance



## Recurring Monthly Events

### "TALENT SHOWCASE"



2nd  
Wednesday

7:00 - 10:00pm  
Call to Schedule: 518.791.9474

### "EC-CHAP FILM SERIES"

Curated by WECS "Musical Myriad" Host, Arthur Rovozzo

January 19: "Don't Look Back" - Bob Dylan  
February 2: "A Bigger Bang Tour" (Brazil) - Rolling Stones  
March 1: "Stevie Ray Vaughn and Friends"  
March 22: "Jamming the Blues with Eric Clapton"  
April 12: "British Invasion"

### "THE PACKING HOUSE POETRY SERIES"



3rd  
Thursday

6:30 - 8:30pm  
Sign-In at the Door

156 River Road, Willington, CT 06279 | [WWW.THEPACKINGHOUSE.US](http://WWW.THEPACKINGHOUSE.US) | 518.791.9474



# Willington Scholarship Foundation Dollars for Scholars



## Willington High School Seniors: Would YOU like to be a Class of 2024 Scholarship Recipient?

### Willington Scholarship Foundation Dollars for Scholars (WSFDFS)

- Seniors be on the lookout for letters with information on how to apply!
- The application window on our website opens Jan. 15, 2024—closes March 15, 2024.
- Willington Seniors graduating high school in 2024 and who intend to further their post-secondary education whether at a Trade or Technical School, College or University should apply.
- As 2023 comes to a close, we would like to send a special thank you to our donors for your generosity throughout the year. Thank you!



Emma Pierce, 2023 Scholarship Recipient

## Look for our Annual Appeal! It will be in mailboxes this Spring.

Every dollar you give will help fund scholarships for our Willington students. To send a contribution, mail a check to: The Willington Scholarship Foundation Dollars for Scholars; P.O. Box 194; Willington, CT, 06279

Text: **WILLINGTONFORSCHOLARS** to 44321

Donate Online: Click "Donate Now" on our website at [www.Willington.DollarsforScholars.org](http://www.Willington.DollarsforScholars.org)

Want to learn more about WSFDFS?

Check us out on our website at [www.Willington.DollarsforScholars.org](http://www.Willington.DollarsforScholars.org)

or follow us on Facebook and Instagram

