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THURSDAY,
SEPTEMBER 17, 2020

A TURLEY PUBLICATION | www.turley.com

Volume 105 • Number 24

www.sentinelturley.com

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BELCHERTOWN

BOS vote to cancel Club House license

MELINA BOURDEAU
Staff Writer

BELCHERTOWN – The Belchertown Selectboard unanimously approved the cancellation of the liquor license for the Club House, the former restaurant at Cold Spring Country Club after an hour-long public hearing on Monday night.

Town Attorney Gregg Corbo gave a timeline of events to the board and the owner of the Club House, Chris Brunelle, read a statement and answered questions presented by the selectboard members.

In his presentation of facts, Corbo said the board could cancel a license if the license holder has ceased operating the licensed business.

“In this matter, on Dec. 9, 2019 the board issued a license to an entity known as West Mass Rest Group LLC DBA the Club House, to operate a restaurant and bar at 330 Chauncey Walker Street for 2020. The licensee’s lease for the premises... expired on March 31, 2020 and we have been presented with information that that lease has not been extended or renewed,” Corbo said.

On May 19, 2020, the license holder filed a certificate of cancellation with the Secretary of State’s office – which happens when an LLC has been dissolved,

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Belchertown Day School opens its doors



After three years of construction of the new building Belchertown Day School opened its doors on Monday.

PHOTOS BY MELINA BOURDEAU

New building is ‘forever home’

BY MELINA BOURDEAU
Staff Writer

BELCHERTOWN – After a three-year wait, the Belchertown Day School has opened its doors to children and their families, with some restrictions due to COVID-19.

Belchertown Day School Executive Director Pat Bruni and School Age Director Heidi Gutekenst said they are “excited to be in (their) forever home.”

The project which included construction of a new building on the previous Belchertown

State School property took about three years from start to finish.

In December of 2019, the Belchertown Day School bought the land and construction of the new facility at 90 Front St. in Carriage Grove was completed last week.

Gutekenst said there are many perks of having the new building including two pre-k rooms, two toddler rooms and one school-age room, which will also function as a multi-purpose

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The school age room in the Belchertown Day School is now located in the same building as other age groups.

ARTS AND FEATURES



Aspiring artist starts with cartoons on social media

MELINA BOURDEAU
Staff writer

BELCHERTOWN – It’s not difficult to spot a cartoon by Kevin Higgins – his drawings include a self-portrait, and something related to Belchertown.

His art includes pictures of ice cream, apple picking at Cold Spring Orchard or taking pictures of fish at the Quabbin.

“The themes I draw about are usually things that just pop into my head - something I see in town triggers a funny thought and it automatically creates the desire to express it on paper,” he said. “Anything humorous, be it people on the street or even something that has happened to me in life or something my kids say to me can trigger an idea. It’s usually about making someone laugh or smile at my creation. As

far as my self portraits, I guess I just know my own face better than anyone, so it’s a natural.”

Including a “band of Kevins” rocking out together, Higgins said he doesn’t mind poking fun at himself.

“I can put a humorous tone into the art with my expressions, and I only have to look no further than a mirror!” he said. “A little self-deprecation doesn’t hurt either. Not

so much in a negative or shameful sense, but more just poking fun at yourself. My selfies tend to be put in painful or embarrassing situations. That’s funny to me! I mean, if you can’t laugh at yourself, right?”

Higgins said he only recently got into making these drawings he posts online.

See ARTIST, page 10 •



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DAY SCHOOL • from page 1

gymnasium. Each classroom will have its own bathroom facility and a door that leads directly to an outside playground area.

“We now have two stalls and two sinks in each bathroom, which is really helpful because we’re washing our hands a lot more now,” she said. “We also have changing tables with a half wall, so staff can see the room.”

Additionally, the new facility brings all the programs the center has to offer under one roof. Bruni said they were previously using space at some of the public school and because of that, had to follow the school calendar, which didn’t allow them to serve their families every day of the year.

“We’re all under one roof now from the children 15 months old to 14 years old,” Bruni said. “The kids don’t have to cross the parking lot to get to the playground, because it’s connected to each classroom. It’s a really kid-friendly building – we built it with them in mind.”

Bruni said the day school has had previous locations on State St. and East Walnut St., prior to the new permanent location.

Both Bruni and Gutekenst said while COVID-19 has posed some challenges, the day school was able to open on time and looks forward to a future date to host open houses and a ribbon-cutting ceremony.

“We’re definitely thrilled to be here,” Gutekenst said. “This has been a long time coming and it’s a beautiful building to be in and see its potential for the future.”

The project was aided by grant funding from the Children’s Investment Fund’s Early Education and Out of School Time Capital Fund with additional financing from Blue Hub Capital, the Children’s Investment Fund and the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Community Facilities Program.

The EEOST Capital Fund Grant Awards support tax-exempt non-profits that operate an early education and care program that



There is a playground directly attached to the Belchertown Day School with two sections for each age group.

PHOTOS BY MELINA BOURDEAU

enroll children from low-income families who are eligible to receive a public subsidy – at least 25% of the total program enrollment – which the day school meets.

Belchertown Day School, Inc. was founded in 1977 as a non-profit that provides early childhood education for more than 100 children between the ages of 15 months and 12 years of age, offering toddler, preschool and school-age programs.

Both Bruni and Gutekenst said they wanted to thank volunteers who helped the day school along the way. They are also accepting new enrollment.

“COVID has changed our capacity, but it’s also changed people’s needs,” Gutekenst said. “We’re still accepting enrollment. Right now we’re helping some students do remote learning and we will be helping when they transition to hybrid.”



One of the toddler rooms at the Belchertown Day School.

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