



Vintage vehicle

The Jamestown Historical Society Museum made the perfect backdrop for Bob Sutton's vintage truck parked on Narragansett Avenue.

Photo by Ellen House

School committee hears proposed business office transition plan

By Michaela Kennedy

Implementing a new Uniform Chart of Accounts required by the Rhode Island Department of Education, installing new accounting software and the upcoming retirement of Business Manager Maria Alfred will require changes at the School Department's business office. At the Sep. 4 School Committee meeting, the committee listened to the school department's business office transition plan before viewing a film about the nation's most successful schools.

Business manager Maria Alfred presented procedures for the transition plan. The plan calls for a September appointment of Human Resources Director Jane Littlefield as finance director and the hiring of an accounting, payroll and benefit coordinator to take over Littlefield's responsibilities. Littlefield is scheduled to help Alfred during the transition period to implement the Unified Chart of Accounts program. Simultaneously, the business office will be installing and converting to new accounting software to accommodate the chart of accounts. "It's an astronomical task," Alfred added. "I think it's going to be good once we get used to using it."

Superintendent Marcia Lukon said that many things must be

done while building the system. She added that she has used a uniform chart of accounts. "Once it's in place, it will provide a standard financial reporting format for all schools." This will make comparisons more accurate and reliable.

The business office manager outlined how costs were staying low for the transition. Since grant money will be used to help defray the cost of implementing the UCOA plan, the administration will be able to move successfully and within budget, Alfred and Littlefield explained. Additionally, the new structure is expected to reduce business office expenses going forward.

Lukon reported on a recent meeting of school administrators and town officials to discuss the possibility of combined business services. Town Administrator Bruce Keiser and Finance Director Tina Collins joined the school department team. The group concluded that consolidation of services would not save money or improve efficiency at present. Hiring a consultant to analyze job responsibilities and staffing in town and school departments, and identify potential improvements in efficiency might be considered. The idea was raised last month at the School Committee-Town

Council retreat.

School committee member Julie Kallfelz expressed appreciation for a clear and comprehensive explanation of the transition.

The committee viewed a video, "The Nations' Most Successful Schools - Lessons Learned," with speaker Willard Daggett. The presentation was the keynote address at the 2008 Model Schools Conference and was shown to the entire school department staff on its staff orientation day prior to the start of school.

In personnel, the committee approved appointments of: Sean McAdam to boys' soccer coach for the 2008-09 school year.

Deborah Gaucher and Laurie Pike to bus monitors.

Paint the scenery at Watson Farm art class

The Watson Farm will offer a Watercolor Workshop on Saturday, Sept. 13, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. A rain date is set for Sunday, Sept. 14.

Artists have enjoyed the scenic landscapes of the historic Watson Farm for over 100 years. This all-day workshop will enable participants to experience and capture the farm landscape and architecture through the medium of watercolor.

Artist Natalie Pfanstiehl, who has taught at the Newport Art Museum for nearly 20 years, leads the workshop. Her work has been shown in national, regional and local juried shows and received numerous awards. She will give a one-hour demonstration of landscape painting and spend the rest of the day assisting students with composition and painting techniques. Students should bring their own painting materials and a bag lunch.

All levels of experience with painting are welcome. The workshop is \$20 for Historic New England Garden & Landscape members, \$25 for Historic New England members and \$35 for non-members.

To register and request more information, contact Heather Minto at 423-0005.

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10am-2pm ~ Tickets \$20/each

Tickets available for purchase at Baker's Pharmacy and at the Houses on September 13
For more info, visit: www.JamestownHistoricalSociety.org