



An online community at  
WarehamWeekToday.com

## ► This week:



### Spooktacular!

The YMCA hosted its annual Halloween extravaganza on Friday night.

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### No more waste district?

The committee governing the Waste District discussed disbanding at its most recent meeting.

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### Police open house

Ahead of Monday's Town Meeting vote on funding for a new station, the police invited the public to take a tour.

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# Wareham Week

ABOUT WAREHAM, FOR WAREHAM, BY WAREHAM RESIDENTS

VOL. 10, NO. 40 • TWENTY PAGES • THURSDAY, OCTOBER 31, 2019

FREE



### Pitching in

Gibbs Roofing and Remodeling contributed to the Lopes Field Playground improvements on Saturday by renovating the pavilion roof in just a matter of hours. See the story on Page 11. Photo by: Nadya Korytnikova

## Playground, sewer, safety upgrades

### Town Meeting approves all articles

By Chloe Shelford and Nadya Korytnikova

Monday night's Town Meeting was smooth sailing as voters approved improvements to the sewer treatment plant, funding for a new playground and new soccer fields, and a \$1,281,500 capital plan.

New electronic voting allowed attendees to vote privately and immediately see a vote's results without the need for hand counts.

Here are some of the major decisions of the evening.

Voters approved spending \$165,000 on the first steps toward building a new Public Safety Complex at Town Meeting.

The complex would be home to the Police Department and Wareham Emergency Medical Services and could also

**Town Meeting** *Page 10*

## Speaking out on maternity ward closure

By Nadya Korytnikova  
reporter@warehamweek.com

Local nurses, obstetricians, midwives, elected officials and women's advocates gathered at the Rosebrook Event Center on Oct. 23 to fight against Southcoast Hospitals Group's decision to close the maternity unit

at Tobey Hospital.

Southcoast, which also owns and operates St. Luke's Hospital in New Bedford and Charlton Memorial Hospital in Fall River, plans to close Tobey's maternity unit on December 31 of this year. Following that closure, Tobey patients requiring maternity care will be directed to St. Luke's Hospital.

The Department of Public Health held the public hearing to provide the members of the community with an opportunity to share comments or concerns on the proposed changes. DPH licensure manager Steve Davis said the department will use all of the submitted comments and testimonies

**Maternity ward** *Page 12*


Grumpy's 5K  
is November 2

Nov. 3 Storywalk  
at Friends Academy

Fall cleaning  
with Clean Right

BB's now booking  
Christmas functions

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### LEADING YOU HOME

**OPEN HOUSE! SAT 12-2**




**Wareham - 330 Main St. \$599,900.** A rare opportunity to own one of Wareham's most iconic properties! Agent: Julie Johnson




**Wareham - 45 Leisure Ln. \$314,900.** Immaculate remodeled home! Every detail has been thought of. Agent: Julie Johnson


**OPEN HOUSE! SAT 3-5**



**Bourne - 40 Nightingale Pond Rd. \$349,900.** Location is everything! Home sits atop a quiet hill on tree-filled dead end street. Agent: Gena Gomes




**Wareham - 28 Weaver St. \$299,900.** Farmhouse charm! Very quiet neighborhood, yet close to everything. Agent: Sam Corbett



**Wareham - 115 Hathaway St. \$449,900.** This stunning, brand new ranch is currently being built and awaits you! Agent: Christine LaCava

**OPEN HOUSE! SUN 12:30-2**



**Mashpee - 17 Drew Ln. \$385,000.** Ready to be your oasis! This 3 bedroom, 2 bath home sits on over half a wooded acre. Agent: Daniela Tolle

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### Maternity ward *continued*

to determine “whether the service at the Tobey Hospital maternity unit should be discontinued.”

The proposal was prompted by the declining birth rate at Tobey, which now sees about 375 babies born each year. According to the Executive Vice President and chief operating officer at Southcoast Health Renee Clark, the number of births at Tobey Hospital has declined by 22 percent over the last five years. By comparison, St. Luke’s staff delivers about 1,500 babies each year.

“It was a very difficult decision but we really cannot ignore what the numbers have been telling us,” said Clark.

Clark also mentioned the corporation’s plans to dedicate the entire third floor at St. Luke’s Hospital to mothers, newborns and children. The change will allow babies who need special care to stay in their mothers’ rooms, the way other babies do.

Tonya Johnson, the vice president of operations and the associate chief nursing officer of St. Luke’s Hospital, pointed out that despite the debate surrounding the maternity ward closure, Southcoast Health puts their staff and patients first.

“We want the residents of Wareham and the surrounding towns to know that every decision we make at Southcoast is because our patients are our top priority,” said Johnson. “We also want them to know that the spirit of the Tobey Hospital community is not in the walls of the building. It is in the people who deliver care there and we are making an effort for that spirit to remain alive at Southcoast by transitioning these staff members in a respectful and thoughtful way.”

One of the nurses who worked at the Tobey Hospital maternity unit for over 24 years said the unit has “a long history of providing not good care, but providing exceptional care.”

“At Tobey, we have a bar. And the bar is really high. We not only reach that bar but we often extend above it,” said Joyce Hyslipikella. “This community desperately needs and deserves the services that we provide.”

According to Amy Marshall, who has been a maternity nurse for almost 32 years, the Tobey Hospital maternity unit has one of the lowest c-section rates in the state of Massachusetts while having the highest patient satisfaction rate in all the Southcoast facilities for many years.

One of the opponents of the maternity unit closure, Jacqueline Ramsey, recalled the time when she had been admitted to Tobey Hospital while being 30 weeks pregnant. She ended up having an emergency c-section



Tonya Johnson, vice president of operations and associate chief nursing officer at St. Luke's Hospital. Photo by: Nadya Korytnikova

and she remembered nurses “holding [her] and calmly talking to [her] and walking [her] through it.”

“Those women over here were with me when I was in the hospital and each one of them I remember. They were so kind, they were so nice. I wasn't just a number; I was important. Anytime I needed help, everybody came and helped me out,” said Ramsey.

While most of those who spoke came to oppose the closure of the Tobey maternity ward, one mother of two spoke in favor of decision. Although one of her children was born in Tobey, Kerry McWilliams preferred to give birth to her second child in St. Luke's to avoid possible birth complications.

“At the age of 39, my pregnancy was already at high risk. Given the complications of my first delivery, having my baby at St. Luke's was the best decision for both myself and my child,” said McWilliams.

The Department of Public Health will make a determination as to whether maternity services should be discontinued within 15 days of the hearing on Wednesday.