

## Jean M. Hutton

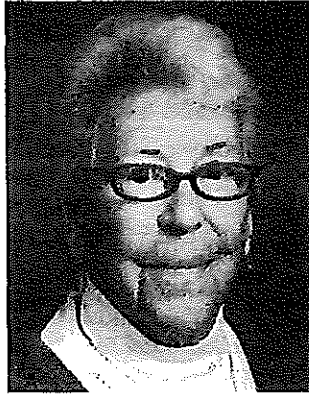
Jean M. (Bastarache) Hutton, 89, of Somers, beloved wife of Richard "Dick" Hutton passed away July 27th, 2023, surrounded by family in the comfort of her home. She was born in Stafford, the daughter of Tilman and Alice (Bourque) Bastarache. Besides her husband she is survived by her seven children Judy Cooley and her husband Wayne, Dennis and his wife Sheryl, Cheryl Lastrina and her husband Joe, Sue Dow and her husband Glenn, Tom and his wife Sue, Jim and his wife Gretchen, and Nancy Barrett and her husband Andy.

Jean's whole world revolved around her and Dick's large family with their 7 children, 28 grandchildren, 38 great-grandchildren, and many nieces and nephews. They were her pride and joy.

Besides her loving husband and children, she is survived by her siblings Leatrice Niemann, Laurie Bastarache (Elaine), Irma Krasinski (Ben), Frances Fortini and Roger Bastarache (Marie).

She was predeceased by her granddaughter Andrea Cooley, and brothers-in-law William Niemann and Norman Fortini.

Jean was a faithful communicant at All Saints Church and a member of The Catholic Daughters of America. For many years Jean enjoyed hunting antiques and refinishing projects, knitting blankets for her expanding family, and traveling all over the states with Dick in their motorhome. Her fierce passion above all was



family. She cherished spending as much time as possible with them and would travel near and far for parties, sacraments, and sporting events. We will be forever grateful for her generous love that brought us together and her legacy will live on in all of us.

Relatives and friends may join the family on Tuesday, August 1, 2023, from 4:00 pm - 7:00 pm at Somers Funeral Home, 354 Main St., Somers. A Mass of Christian Burial will take place at 10:30 am on Wednesday, August 2, 2023, at All Saints Church, 25 School St., Somersville, CT 06072 (Please meet directly at church). Burial will follow at Somers Center Cemetery. Memorial donations may be made to the Somers Rotary Club Scholarship Fund, P.O. Box 2, Somers, CT 06071 or Connecticut Children's Medical Center in memory of Andrea Cooley either online at give.connecticutchildrens.org or mail to 282 Washington Street, Hartford, CT 06106. For online condolences please visit somersfuneralhome.com

# Stafford passes \$45.4M budget in third referendum

By Susan Danseyar  
STAFF WRITER

**STAFFORD** — After rejecting the proposed budget at referendums in May and June, voters last week approved a \$45.4 spending plan for fiscal year 2023-24.

Residents passed the \$45.4 million budget, as recommended by the Board of Finance, by a vote of 639-542 at the third referendum this year. The tax rate on real estate and personal property is 36.76 mills, an increase of 0.98 over last year. The motor vehicle tax will be 32.46 mills due to the statewide cap.

One mill represents \$1 of taxes for each \$1,000 of assessed property value. The town has calculated that the median assessed value of a home in Stafford is about \$36,000. In 2022, the average homeowner would have paid about \$4,860 in taxes.

Selectman Richard Hartenstein, who is also chairman of the American Rescue Plan Act Committee, said the two unsuccessful referendums were likely a result of people feeling that the proposed tax increases were more than they could afford.

Voters in May rejected a proposed \$47.2 million budget by a vote of 119-426,

requiring an increase in the tax rate from 35.78 mills to 39.22 mills to fund it. In June, they rejected a \$45.8 million proposed budget two weeks later in a vote of 992-743, requiring an increase in the tax rate to 36.77 mills.

Hartenstein said in the past 10 years or so, voters have been willing to pass a tax increase if it's less than one mill. When the proposed tax increase is higher than that, he said it's harder to pass a proposed budget.

For this fiscal year, which began July 1, Hartenstein said the town will run on a minimal budget.

"Unfortunately, we won't be able to do infrastructure projects like repairing roads, which is a big concern for officials and the taxpayers," he said. "We will need to come up with a plan for road work."

Hartenstein said, the budget should be looked at on a monthly basis.

"In reality, budget planning needs to start now," Hartenstein said.

Town Clerk Karen Troiano said the turnout for Wednesday's referendum was a little lighter than in May and June.

"Considering it's late in the summer and some of the 7,521 eligible voters may be out of town, it was comparatively a good showing," Troiano said.

# Cannabis trailblazer Theraplant sold in foreclosure

