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NORTHPORT

Hearing on budget scheduled for Jan. 5

Northport residents will have the opportunity to comment on the village's proposed \$20.4 million budget at a Jan. 5 public hearing.

The hearing, which starts at 6 p.m. at Village Hall at 100 Main St. in Huntington, will allow residents to weigh in on the proposal, which would bust the tax cap with a levy increase of 3.27 percent.

Village officials said the final budget must pass by Jan. 31. Three out of the five village trustees would need to vote in favor of the budget to bust the state tax cap, which is about 0.45 percent, officials said.

The tentative budget would increase the local tax rate by 2.93 percent, raising taxes to \$65.14 per \$100 of assessed property value — \$1.86 more than the current fiscal year.

The biggest proportion of spending would be \$5.8 million in Home and Community Services, with \$4 million of that resulting from ongoing sewer treatment-plant upgrades, officials said. The village would be reimbursed for much of that by the New York State Environmental Facilities Corp.

Northport's fiscal year runs March 1, 2016, to Feb. 28, 2017.

— VALERIE BAUMAN

BROOKHAVEN

Vacant home items donated to charity

Brookhaven Town has removed appliances and other household items from 14 vacant Mastic Beach homes and donated the goods to Suffolk County's Habitat for Humanity Restore.

"Many of the household items and appliances in these homes are in good, working condition, and if they can help Habitat for Humanity raise money, there's no point in throwing them away," Town Supervisor Edward P. Romaine said in a press release yesterday.

Refrigerators, stoves, air conditioners, appliances, boilers and oil burners were taken

from the vacant homes and given to the Habitat for Humanity Restore warehouse in Ronkonkoma.

"We removed salvageable materials and appliances from homes that will be torn down. This donation will not only support our mission of creating a place to call home for hard-working families in Suffolk County, but will also help the environment by recycling these goods," Habitat for Humanity of Suffolk executive director Diane Burke said in a statement.

Brookhaven Town acquired the village homes, which will eventually be demolished and the lots used for open space because the properties are in a flood zone.

The Restore warehouse, which sells quality donated building supplies and home furnishings at a discounted price, is a retail outlet open to the public.

All revenue goes back into supporting Habitat for Humanity Suffolk.

"Nothing showcases the spirit of Christmas more than the work Habitat for Humanity does for families and our village," Mastic Beach Mayor Maura Sperry said in a statement.

The donations will help people in need and the environment, added Town Councilman Dan Panico.

For more information, log onto habitatsuffolk.org.

NASSAU/SUFFOLK

Shelter nonprofit, retailer aid homeless

A Long Island homeless shelter provider is teaming up with retailer Bed Bath & Beyond to provide gift certificates to homeless families transitioning to permanent housing.

Community Housing Innovations, an affordable-housing nonprofit with offices in Patchogue and Hempstead, has launched the "CHI Fresh Start Program" where interested donors can call a toll-free number to purchase tax-deductible gift certificates for homeless families in Nassau and Suffolk.

CHI provides housing to about 1,000 homeless residents throughout Long Island and the Hudson Valley, and works with those residents to secure permanent affordable housing through grants and home-buyer workshops.

The gift certificates would be given to families that have



BAY SHORE. Outside the WillyNilly store on West Main Street yesterday, Lee Wimbush — who has been dressing as Santa for years during the holiday season, walks Keri O'Connor of East Islip across the street to keep her dry.

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secured permanent housing, to help them to buy essentials they typically abandoned when entering the shelter system, said CHI executive director Alexander Roberts.

"No family should have to spend the holidays in a homeless shelter, yet thousands of low-income New York individuals and families find themselves in that situation," Roberts said. "Our goal is to provide a \$100 gift card to each family when they find permanent housing, but the public may donate whatever amount they like, starting at as little as \$5."

Roberts joined Suffolk County Executive Steve Bel-

lone last week to launch the program in Bellport. Bellone presented a \$100 gift card he purchased to a family of five who had recently secured permanent housing after being homeless for 14 months due to a job loss and rent increases.

Bellone, in a statement, applauded the program, saying it would help provide "much needed assistance" and enable these families to make their "house a home."

Those interested in donating a gift card can call 844-524-2273 and will receive a notice of their tax-deductible purchase for tax filing purposes.

— LAURA FIGUEROA

SUFFOLK COUNTY

Free classes to help stop tobacco use

Suffolk County is running several classes in Bay Shore and other communities to teach residents how to quit smoking and using tobacco or nicotine products.

The "Learn to Be... Tobacco Free" programs are free to all Suffolk residents, though there may be fees for medication for eligible participants.

"We are promoting good health to all residents in Suffolk County," County Executive Steve Bellone said in a news release. "For those who are addicted to tobacco or nicotine products, we urge them to get the support they need to prevent illnesses that are caused by tobacco."

"Breaking an addiction to nicotine can be very difficult," Suffolk County Health Commissioner James Tomarken said. "Studies have shown that smokers who try to quit smoking using a combination of behavioral support and medicine are three times more likely to be successful than those who try to stop smoking without support."

In Bay Shore, classes will be held at Good Samaritan Hospital's Long Island Help and Wellness Center at 32 Park Ave. from 6 to 7 p.m. Tuesdays from Jan. 5 through Feb. 9, with a follow-up class March 1. To sign up, call 631-376-4444.

In Port Jefferson, classes will be held at Mather Memorial Hospital at 75 North Country Rd. from 6 to 7 p.m. Thursdays from Jan. 7 through Feb. 11, with a follow-up class March 3. To sign up, call 631-476-2723.

In Riverhead, classes will be held at the Peconic Bay Medical Center at 1300 Roanoke Ave. from 6 to 7 p.m. Thursdays from Jan. 14 through Feb. 18, with a follow-up class March 10. To sign up, call 631-548-6827.

In Hauppauge, classes will be held at the Suffolk County Department of Health at 725 Veterans Memorial Hwy., Building C-928, from 6 to 7 p.m. Tuesdays from Jan. 19 through Feb. 23, with a follow-up class March 15. To sign up, call 631-853-2928.

In Patchogue, classes will be held at the Swezey Medical Pavilion at 103 West Main St. from 6 to 7 p.m. Mondays from Jan. 25 through March 7, with a follow-up class March 28. To sign up, call 631-654-7168.

— SOPHIA CHANG