

## Dam purchase plan delayed, officials say

By DEAN R. JACOBOWITZ  
Chronicle Staff Writer

LEBANON — Property owners around Lake Williams will vote on a dam purchase/repair project soon, but not until officials iron out a few important details.

The flood and erosion control board had expected to finalize a purchase agreement for the dam last month, but negotiations with the dam's owner, the Gilman Brothers Co. of Bozrah, have hit a snag, board members said Tuesday.

"We are just unable to agree on certain things," said Tim Smith, a member of the board's negotiations committee.

"Until we have a purchase agreement, in a sense we don't have anything," added flood board Chairman Harold Liebman.

As a result of the impasse, lake property owners will have to wait a little longer before they decide the fate of the dam project. The flood board already has prepared a ratification letter to be sent to all property owners in the lake area, but will not send it out until the purchase agreement is ready.

Although the dam project has an estimated price tag of \$1.36 million, lake residents will only be responsible for about \$725,000 of that amount. The remaining \$635,000 or so is expected to be funded by the state.

Lake residents will be able to pay their share of the project over a 20-year period or all at once, whichever they prefer.

Flood board Secretary Alan Seilhammer said the assessment for each property owner in the lake district will be about 8 mills a year, or \$8 for each \$1,000 of assessed property value. A person who owns land assessed at \$50,000, for example, would pay about \$400 a year.

If property owners want to pay the full assessment up front, he continued, the cost would be 80 mills, or \$80 for each \$1,000 of assessed value. In the case of the \$50,000 property, the total cost would be \$4,000.

If lake residents approve the dam project, it will then have to go to a town meeting or referendum for townwide approval. The town as a whole will not contribute any money to the project, but voters will have to approve it because it will involve the agreement between the state, town and Gilman Brothers Co.

Gil Koss, president of the Lake Williams Beach Association, said he is confident that lake property owners will approve the project. A bigger concern, he said, will be to convince everyone else in town that the lake project will be nothing but a benefit.

"It's a positive win-win-win all the way around," he said after Tuesday's meeting.

*Thanks for always being so helpful.  
Dean.*

1-6-95

**THE LAKE WILLIAMS PROBLEM IS ABOUT TO BE SOLVED!**

**THE FUTURE OF THE LAKE IS NOW IN OUR HANDS!**

Within the next 2 days you will be receiving a letter from the Lebanon Flood & Erosion Control Board. This letter will explain the results of the negotiations and arrangements for purchase and repair of the Lake Williams Dam.

Along with this letter will be a ballot asking for your vote to accept or reject the plan outlined in the letter.

**PLEASE READ THE LETTER CAREFULLY!** The arrangement outlined is the only plan offered or likely to be offered for a long time.

If we vote "YES" to accept this plan, the project moves on to a town meeting.

If we vote "NO" .... the project to save the lake ends right here!

**IMPORTANT POINTS**

1. For the many of us who were concerned about the Gilman Company retaining "Water Rights"... the Gilmans WILL NOT have ANY rights at all to Lake Williams!
2. For those of us who want to "renegotiate"... further negotiations will not be done! **THIS IS IT!** (*I wouldn't say this if I didn't believe it was true.*)

The State, the Flood Board, and the Gilman's have come to an agreement and are ready to accept this deal! It is now up to us! If the Lake Area Property Owners do not accept this arrangement by a majority of "YES" votes on this ballot... the whole project comes to an end right now!

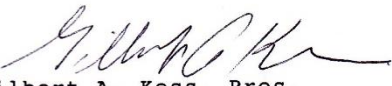
3. Because of the nature of this type of ballot, as outlined in the Flood Board letter, the results of this vote must be a majority of eligible voters AND a majority of the ASSESSED VALUE of the property owners eligible to vote.

This means:

**IF YOU DON'T VOTE, YOU WILL BE CONSIDERED TO HAVE VOTED "NO"!**  
If you ARE in favor of accepting this plan... your "YES" vote must be registered by the deadline mentioned in the letter!

This vote is being taken ONLY from Lake Williams Property Owners. If you don't receive a ballot within 2 days of this letter, or if you have any questions, please contact me!

*If you would like to examine the Purchase Agreement or discuss the arrangement, members of the Board and the LWBA will be available at the Lebanon Town Hall - Saturday, January 23rd, 9am to 12 noon.*

  
Gilbert A. Koss, Pres.  
Lake Williams Beach Association  
(203) 623-9278



Mailed 1/16/93

War Office

# TOWN OF LEBANON



## Flood & Erosion Control Board

Lebanon Town Hall  
579 Exeter Road  
Lebanon, Ct. 06249  
(203) 642-6100  
(203) 642-7716 Fax

TO: Lake Williams Property Owners  
FROM: Flood & Erosion Control Board  
DATE: January 16, 1993  
SUBJECT: Ratification of Purchase Agreement & Ballot

The terms and conditions of the purchase agreement with the Gilman Brothers Company for the Lake Williams dam are essentially complete. At this time, we need a formal ratification vote from the Lake Williams property owners who will be paying the local share of the purchase, before we proceed further with this project.

Ratification will consist of a favorable majority vote of the owners of the individual properties especially benefitting from the purchase and repair of the dam. (Each listed property owner will get one vote). Also, the sum of the Town Grand List assessments of those properties whose owners vote for ratification must exceed 50% of the total assessed value of all the properties being especially benefitted.

It is absolutely essential that every one of you vote by returning the enclosed ballot form. Please complete all the pertinent information, sign the form, and return it to the indicated address by January 30, 1993.

For your information, a summary of the financial terms of the purchase are as follows:

Purchase Price	\$ 780,000
Design Plans	85,000
Repair Estimate	380,000
Miscellaneous	80,000
Total Estimated Cost	<u>\$1,325,000</u>
Less State Grant	- 250,000
Less 1/3 State Reimbursement	- 415,000
Estimated Local Share	<u>\$ 660,000</u>
Plus Construction Interest	35,000
Total	<u>\$ 695,000</u>

Uncertain: Administrative expense, legal expense, bank fees, construction period expenses (i.e., clerk of the works). These items are included in the "miscellaneous" estimate. The repair cost is also an estimate. Until the bids are in we will not have a firm figure. This is a "not to exceed" figure.

Relevant highlights of the proposed purchase agreement with the Gilman Brother Company are enclosed as a separate sheet.

The local share will be raised by the levy of assessments on the properties that will especially benefit from the purchase and repair of the dam. It is our estimate that a property with a Town assessment of \$50,000 will incur a one-time cost of about \$4,200, or if paid for over 20 years, the cost would be about \$425 per year, including interest. According to state statute, this assessment cannot be levied until the repair is complete. Until this money is received, a temporary loan will be needed to finance the purchase and repair. Once the repairs are complete and the assessments are levied on the properties, some long term financing will also be needed, possibly as long as 20 years, until all of the assessments are paid.

Once the ratification vote is in, our next step is to take the question to a Town Meeting and referendum for authorization to enter into the agreements and to borrow the necessary funds.

We expect that the vote on this resolution will not take place at the Town Meeting, but by a referendum vote on the voting machines approximately two weeks after the Town Meeting. At the meeting we will make our presentation and try to answer any questions that may arise. We plan to ask the Town attorney to attend the meeting to help answer questions from the townspeople. At the end of the discussion period the Meeting will be adjourned to referendum for the vote. Absentee voting is possible for those of you who will not be able to vote in person. The procedure is as follows:

Application for absentee ballots must first be obtained from the Town Clerk's office and filled out. These forms will be available on the day following the Town Meeting, not before. The application must be picked up in person, or by some member of their family. The mail cannot be used. Those of you that appear in person can make the application, receive the ballot and then vote at that time, leaving the completed ballot with the Town Clerk. If the application is picked up by a family member, then the application must first be completed by the person voting, before a ballot can be obtained.

Eligibility to vote extends to any person who is an elector in the Town of Lebanon, and to any citizen over the age of 18 who, jointly or severally, is liable to the Town for taxes assessed against him/her on an assessment of not less than one thousand dollars on the last completed Grand List of the town. Campers (motor vehicles on Lebanon tax rolls) can be counted.

You will be notified of the date and time of the Town Meeting and Referendum. Every vote will be needed. If you have any questions, please call any of the members of the Flood and Erosion Control Board, their names and numbers are listed below.

Please complete and return the ratification ballot that is enclosed. We need your vote.

The complete purchase contract and construction plans will be available for your review at the Town Hall on Saturday morning, January 23, 1993 from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon. Members of the Commission will be in attendance to answer your questions.

Very truly yours,  
Flood & Erosion Control Board

Harold Liebman Chairman	642-7018	Alan Seilhammer Secretary	642-6770
Joyce Okonuk	642-6100	Tim Smith	456-7571
Bud Hathaway	642-7834		
Mike Melville Alternate	642-7864	John Meli Alternate	537-3245



HIGHLIGHTS OF PURCHASE AGREEMENT  
BETWEEN THE TOWN OF LEBANON AND GILMAN BROTHERS COMPANY

After several months of negotiations between members of the Flood and Erosion Control Board and The Gilman Brothers Company, all of the terms of the Lake Williams purchase project have been agreed upon, subject to ratification by the Lake residents under the terms outlined in the enclosed letter, and also approval through a Town Meeting and Referendum.

It is important to understand that more is being purchased than just the physical structure itself. The purchase agreement specifies that what is being purchased is "all that certain piece or parcel of land with the building and all other improvements thereon, situated off Route 207 in the Town of Lebanon including Lake Williams dam comprised of the spillway and its southerly embankment thereof, and the pond reservoir and water, water rights and flowage rights pertaining to Lake Williams." Clearly what is being obtained are both resources and water rights which should be considered as substantially more valuable than the actual dam structure.

A most important provision of the proposed purchase is that the seller (Gilman Brothers Company) will retain no affirmative discharge or draw down rights. Because the dam structure, flowage and water rights will be required to be operated as a flood and erosion control system, the only rights to any discharge of waters Gilman Brothers Company will have will be the same rights as all abutting or down stream property owners have, which is to require a sufficient discharge of waters to avoid erosion and/or flooding conditions.

A second important provision will prohibit commercial types of uses of the lake waters by any persons, while assuring lake residents that they will continue to have full use of the lake waters for virtually any recreational and/or domestic activity. The intent of this provision is to provide assurance that the lake continues to provide an adequate supply of water for recreational and domestic use, and for fish and wildlife habitat.

Since these two provisions will be incorporated into the deed or deeds of conveyance, the full text of each provision is set forth below:

a) Operation. The Purchaser will actively utilize and operate the dam structures, flowage and other water rights acquired as a flood and erosion control system. Purchaser agrees to monitor and to regulate the water level in the lake in order to provide storage capacity sufficient to prevent excessive and unnecessary discharge from occurring during a high runoff event or period.



b) The Purchaser will covenant and agree for itself and its successors and assigns to the following: That as has been the case historically, all waters exiting the lake basin, with the exception of such waters as are used for fire protection and normal domestic activities, must discharge into the existing discharge channel and will be allowed to flow undiverted and undiminished to Brewster Pond.

Since the planned purchase encompasses a repair to the dam, the purchase agreement requires that accepted bids for this phase of the project may not exceed \$380,000. Likewise, since the Town will be also reimbursing the seller for documented expenses previously incurred by the seller for engineering studies and plans and drawings in connection with the required repairs, there is also contained in the purchase agreement a provision that these expenses may not exceed \$50,000. These are the same figures as have been in previously outlined cost estimates. Estimated engineering costs during construction are \$35,000, which must be added to the \$50,000 engineering costs incurred in the design phase, for a total of \$85,000 as shown in the ratification letter.

1-21-93

## Lebanon officials back dam purchase

By DEAN R. JACOBOWITZ  
Chronicle Staff Writer

Special forum set for Saturday at town hall

LEBANON — Town officials approved a purchase agreement for the Lake Williams dam Tuesday, a project which must now be voted on by lake district residents and the entire town.

The flood and erosion control board, which will oversee extensive repairs to the dam, will hold a special forum Saturday in town hall to explain the project to townspeople. Everyone is encouraged to attend the 9 a.m.-noon meeting whether they own land in the lake district or not.

Lake residents will vote on the project this month via special ratification ballots sent to their homes. If they approve it, the entire town will vote on the project at a referendum late next month. According to the purchase

agreement, Lebanon will pay the Gilman Brothers Co. of Bozrah \$780,000 for the dam. It will then pay another \$500,000 or so to design construction plans and rebuild the dam, bringing the total project cost to about \$1.3 million.

The town's actual cost, however, is expected to be about \$675,000. The state has already set aside a \$250,000 grant for the project and has agreed to fund another one-third of the project.

Property owners in the lake area, who will fund the town's portion of the cost through special property assessments, will have to return their ratification ballots by next Saturday.

If a majority of residents around the lake OK the project, it will then go to a town meeting, tentatively scheduled for Feb. 9, and then the referendum, tentatively scheduled for Feb. 23.

The town as a whole will not contribute any money for the dam project, but the flood board will need the town's authorization to enter into the purchase agreement with the state and Gilman Brothers Co.

If the project receives all the necessary approvals, the Lake Williams dam will undergo extensive repairs, bringing the 247-acre lake back up to its full glory. The lake has been below the full-water mark for years because the dam has been in need of

repair.

Lake residents will be tapped for the project fund because residents from the entire town rejected a separate purchase plan in 1991. Lake residents will be able to pay their share of the project over a 20-year period or all at once, whichever they prefer.

Flood board Secretary Al Seilhammer said the assessment for each property owner in the lake district will be about 8 mills a year, or \$8 for each \$1,000 of assessed value. A person who owns land assessed at \$50,000, for example, would pay about \$400 a year.

If property owners want to pay the full assessment upfront, he continued, the cost would be 80 mills, or \$80 for each \$1,000 of assessed value. In the case of the \$50,000 property, the total cost would be \$4,000.

## Board approves plan for purchase of dam

1-21-93  
By JENNIFER HELDT  
Norwich Bulletin

LEBANON — The town moved one step closer to saving Lake Williams this week when the Flood and Erosion Control Board approved an agreement to buy the lake's dam from the Gilman Brothers Co.

For weeks, the town has lingered close to finishing the agreement, which could end a controversy started more than a decade ago when the state first ordered the company to repair the dam.

The agreement, which should go to a referendum in February,

who will bear the brunt of the cost. The state bond commission must also approve the state's share of the proposal.

Mr. Gilman said his company's board will most likely pass the agreement because it previously agreed to its terms.

"There are no surprises coming up," he said. "The bulk of the work is in the hands of the town."

The company has applied for a permit from the state Department of Environmental Protection to begin engineering work on the dam.

Mr. Gilman said the company agreed to start the work while the town votes on whether to buy the

dam. It would also lose about \$5,000 in taxes from the company, officials said. Property values near the lake, and consequently the taxes, would increase.



# Meeting today will detail Lake Williams plan

■ **IN BRIEF:** A new proposal to purchase Lake Williams is scheduled to be voted on this month and next.

Regional Standard  
By John Neumuth  
Staff Correspondent  
Jan 23, 1993

**LEBANON** - The Flood and Erosion Control Board voted unanimously Tuesday night to approve the purchase of the Lake Williams dam and water rights for \$1.3 million, drawing the 15-year-old issue closer to an end.

Ballots were sent Jan. 16 to Lake Williams property owners, who will pay for the local share of the purchase, for ratification of the purchase agreement. A majority of the estimated 150 property owners who will benefit from the lake is needed to ratify the purchase agreement. The ballots are due back by Jan. 30.

Upon ratification, the purchase would go to a town meeting, tentatively scheduled for Feb. 9, and a town referendum two weeks later, for authorization to enter into the agreements and to borrow the necessary funds.

A general information meeting will take place today, Jan. 23, at the town hall from 9 a.m. to noon to

discuss details of the Lake Williams project. First Selectwoman Joyce R. Okonuk said members of the flood board will be available to answer questions.

Because of a cost-sharing plan with the state, the town is responsible for \$660,000 of the total cost of buying the water rights, some property, the dam, and repairing the dam. The town's share will be paid for by an assessment of those properties around the lake that will especially benefit from the purchase and repair of the dam, the board said. Which properties benefit was determined by water view capability and access to the waterfront.

For example, the board estimates that the one-time cost to a Lake Williams property owner with a town assessment of \$50,000 would be about \$4,200. That could be paid in a lump sum or spread over a 20-year period, Okonuk said. All affected property owners have been contacted and a list of their names will be available at the general meeting, Okonuk said.

The board stressed that this project, which should be completed a year after its start date, Okonuk said, will not be funded by general taxation. A report issued by the board said once the project is completed the town will only be responsible for \$300 a year in insurance and minimum maintenance.

Past attempts to purchase Lake Williams and repair the dam have been mixed by town residents. Two

separate plans were put before voters, and both times the town rejected it. But unlike the latest plan, those called for the town's taxpayers to fund the project.

In its report the board said it considers the lake a very sound investment that is in the best interest of all Lebanon taxpayers. "A very substantial tax base will be preserved, as well as a wildlife habitat, a fishing and recreational area," the report said.

# State bond panel approves money for dam

By RACHEL GOTTLIEB  
Courant Staff Writer

The State Bond Commission approved a \$456,000 request to buy and repair the Lake Williams Dam in Lebanon and allocated money for a variety of other projects in area towns Friday.

The dam money will help the town buy the dam from owners Lawrence and Charles Gilman of Gilman Bros.,

which owns the Bozrah Light and Power Co.

The Gilman brothers dismantled the dam and drained the 247-acre lake near Route 207 because they were unwilling to repair it about four years ago, said Jim Sullivan, section director for the Office of Policy and Management. The brothers were responding to an order from the state Department of Envi-

ronmental Protection to repair or destroy the dam.

In other action, the commission approved a request to buy a Williamite house at 224 High Street for \$106,000. Eastern Connecticut State University is buying the house as part of its plans to expand along High Street. The two-story wood frame house sits on .15 acres of land and is owned by Louis and Anna

Vertifeuille.

The commission also approved a \$1 million request to pay for vocational education equipment for 11 school systems statewide. The equipment is restricted to the following six areas: trade and industrial education, industrial arts, business and office occupations, health occupations, marketing and distributive courses, and occupational home economics.



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# LEBANON LIFE

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February 1993

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## Flood & Erosion Control Board Report on Lake Williams

Chapter 477 of the Connecticut General Statutes (CGS) provides the statutory authority for the establishment of municipal Flood & Erosion Control Boards, and further provides that these boards are authorized to enter into agreements with the State for the purpose of study, design and construc-

minor repairs, to enable it to withstand a 100 year flood. The owners of the dam, Gilman Brothers Company, was notified of the needed repairs and, as required by statute, were told that the dam must be repaired or removed.

Negotiations took place between the owners of the dam and some of the



tion of flood and erosion control systems (including dams). A formula for cost sharing between the State and the municipality is part of this chapter.

The Town of Lebanon, through action at a Town Meeting, first established a Flood & Erosion Control Board in 1984. This was in response to the need to find a solution to the threatened loss of the Lake Williams Dam and lake.

In 1978 the Army Corps of Engineers, in a routine dam safety inspection, determined that the Lake Williams Dam needed increased spillway capacity, plus some other

Lake Williams property owners. These negotiations were not fruitful, and Gilman Brothers Company petitioned the Department of Environmental Protection for permission to breach the dam. Permission was denied by the DEP, and this matter is now in court.

In more recent years, several plans had been proposed to effect the needed repairs and so preserve the lake. They involved the purchase of the dam and water rights by the State of Connecticut, as well as some additional land for public access. In one of these plans the Town of Lebanon would also have

*continued on pg. 4*



## Lake Williams

continued from pg. 1

purchased land for development of a beach area. All of these plans involved a cost sharing formula where there would be a "local share" coming from Lebanon taxpayers. Two separate plans were put before the voters of the Town for approval and in both cases the proposals were not approved.

At this point the property owners at Lake Williams met and made the decision that if there was not other way, they would raise this local share from their own resources.

After much discussion with representatives of the DEP and with Town officials, it was decided to activate the Flood & Erosion Control Board and have them develop a plan of action. Even though the State had informed the Town that they were in no way interested in the purchase or ownership of the dam and lake, state grants and cost sharing funds would be available through a local Flood & Erosion Control Board. The Board of Selectmen reactivated the Board, and its first meeting was held in June of 1992.

The Flood & Erosion Control Board is an agency of the Town of Lebanon, and whatever action they contemplate must first be presented to a Town Meeting for approval. In recent months the Board has met, as needed, with the Board of Finance, the Town Counsel, and a representative of the Town Auditor, to develop a final plan. The Board presented this plan to a town meeting on February 9th which adjourned to a referendum to be held on February 23rd.

The plan would provide for:  
1) The purchase of the Lake Williams dam and water rights from Gilman Brothers Company.

2) The repairs to the dam and embankments to meet the requirements of the Army Corps of Engineers and the DEP.

3) Receipt of available state grants and other cost sharing funds.

There is available to us an outright grant of \$250,000 for this project, as well as a one-third reimbursement from the state for the total project cost.

The balance, or the local share, of the funds needed will be raised by an assessment, by the Flood & Erosion Control Board, of those properties

around Lake Williams that will be especially benefitted by the purchase and repair of the dam.

The properties especially benefitted and to be assessed are those properties whose residential or commercial value is being increased by said project. The increased value shall be determined by, but not limited to, such relevant factors as water view capability and access to water front property.

The basis for the assessments on these properties being especially benefitted will be the values of these properties established by the Town Assessor in the Grand List of the Town.

The Town of Lebanon will be the owner of the dam and water rights.

The purchase and repair of the dam will require no general taxation of the Town. The only financial participation by the Town will be the approximate yearly cost of \$500 to cover insurance and maintenance. The resolution presented to the Town Meeting will also authorize the Flood & Erosion Control Board to borrow funds necessary to get the project underway. State statutes prohibit the collection of assessments until the project is complete.

A financial breakdown is listed below:

Purchase Price	-----	\$780,000
Design Plans	-----	85,000
Repair Estimate	-----	380,000
Legal, acctg, admin	-----	80,000
Total Est. Cost	-----	1,325,000
Less State Grant	-----	250,000
Less 1/3 State Reimb	-----	415,000
Subtotal	-----	660,000
Plus Construction		
Interest	-----	35,000
Lake Area (Local)		
Share	-----	\$695,000

It is our estimate that the one-time cost to a Lake Williams property owner with a Town assessment of \$50,000 would be about \$4,200, or if paid over 20 years, approximately \$425 per year.

Although the immediate focus of the plan is the purchase and repair of the dam so as to preserve the lake, a thoughtful look at the long-term effects to the Town shows that it will be a very sound investment, with many long-term benefits. A very substantial tax base will be preserved, as well as a wildlife habitat, a fishing and recreational area. A considerable amount of undeveloped land exists around the lake that could be made available in the future for a

recreation area, should the Town choose to take this step.

We believe that it is in the best interests of all Lebanon taxpayers to support this project.

The Town Meeting on Lake Williams was held on Tuesday, February 9, at 8:00 p.m. at the new Lyman High School Auditorium. The actual vote on the lake project will be decided at a Town Referendum scheduled for Tuesday, February 23 from 12:00 noon until 8:00 p.m. at the Fire Safety Complex on Goshen Hill Road.

Members of the Flood and Erosion Control Board are: Harold Liebman, Chairman (642-7018), Alan Seilhammer, Secretary (642-6770), Joyce Okonuk (642-6100), Tim Smith (456-7571), Bud Hathaway (642-7834), Mike Melville (642-7864), and John Meli (537-3245). Call any of them for more information.

## Town Seal/Carving Project

As a result of a suggestion made to the Lebanon Selectmen a fund has been created to purchase a Lebanon Town Seal. A carving of Lebanon's Town Seal will be crafted out of wood with a semi-gloss varnish finish. The cost of the project is approximately \$650.00 and donations are being accepted at this time. For more information or questions please call the Town Hall.

When making donations please note the name and address of the donor. In the event of insufficient funds, monies will be returned to all donors.

## Health Note:

The local school nurses will be holding a blood pressure clinic for Lebanon residents. This service is free and will be held in late spring at the Lebanon Town Hall...any questions please call Jeanne Zuzel at Lyman High School, 642-7567, Darlene Allegro, 642-4702 or Nancy Lack, 642-7593.

Watch the local papers for more information &/or call the local school nurses.



War Office



# TOWN OF LEBANON



## Flood & Erosion Control Board

Lebanon Town Hall  
579 Exeter Road  
Lebanon, Ct. 06249  
(203) 642-6100  
(203) 642-7716 Fax

TO: Lake Property Owners  
FROM: Flood & Erosion Control Board  
DATE: February 3, 1993  
SUBJECT: Scheduled Town Meeting and Referendum for the Lake Williams Purchase and Repair

The ratification vote is in and we are pleased to report that a majority of property owners around Lake Williams voted for the plan. Also, the values of these properties, as determined by the Town Assessor, exceeds the required 50% of the total value of all the listed properties in the especially benefitted area.

The State of Connecticut has approved both the \$250,000 grant and the 1/3 cost sharing of the total project.

The next step is a Town Meeting which is to be held on February 9, 1993 at the new High School gym at 8:00 p.m.

A resolution, prepared by Town Counsel giving us the authority to proceed, will be moved and placed before the Town Meeting. There will be no vote taken at the Town Meeting; a report will be given and questions answered. Representatives of the DEP, the Town Counsel, and a representative of the engineering firm will be there to help in the presentation. At the conclusion of the discussion period the Meeting will be adjourned to referendum, which will take place on February 23, 1993, at the Fire Safety Complex from 12:00 noon to 8:00 p.m. The vote on the referendum is all-important. Whether or not this project goes forward will be determined that day. All of you must vote.

### Voting Procedure

If you can, come and vote at the referendum on February 23rd--that is the best way.

If you live within driving distance, but cannot make it on the 23rd, or are not sure that you can make it that day, then you should vote absentee, as follows:

On any day that the Town Hall is open between February 11 and February 22, you can go to the Town Clerk's office and obtain an application to vote absentee. The Town Clerk will help you in that procedure.

If you will be unable to come to Town to vote, absentee voting is still possible, but more complicated. Absentee ballot applications can be picked up at the Town Clerk's office any time after the February 9th meeting date, but only by a member of your family or a relative. The application is sent to you by that family member to be filled out by you, then returned to your family member who will present it to the Town Clerk and receive a ballot. This ballot must then be sent to you for your vote and returned to the Town Clerk by mail only. The fourteen days available for this procedure is very short. We recommend using Priority Mail which costs \$2.90 and guarantees two-day delivery from any Post Office. Express Mail is faster yet, but considerably more expensive. For your information, the Town Clerk's office will be open the following days during that time: February 11, February 13 until noon, February 16, February 18 and 19, February 20 until noon, February 22, and February 23.

#### Eligibility to Vote

Eligibility to vote extends to any person who is an elector in the Town of Lebanon, and to any citizen over the age of 18 who, jointly or severally, is liable to the Town for taxes assessed against him/her on an assessment of not less than one thousand dollars on the last completed Grand List of the Town. Campers or Motor Vehicles on Lebanon tax roles can be counted. Only owners of property on the Grand List prior to October 1, 1992 will be eligible to vote.



## Letters to the Editor:

### LAKE WILLIAMS AGAIN? ...or FINALLY?

Sometimes it's difficult to determine if our governmental leaders are doing something FOR us...or TO us. With Federal, State, and Local Taxes seeming to grow at uncomfortable rates, it's relatively easy to adopt an attitude against ANY action proposed by a governmental body.

In some cases this philosophy may be correct, especially if we don't have or understand the details of the proposed action. The current plan to conclude the seemingly never-ending matter of Lake Williams, however, is one in which our local leaders propose something that benefits all concerned.

Over 14 years ago the Army Corps of Engineers submitted an inspection report on over 2000 dams in Connecticut. The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), as a matter or course, issued "Remove or Repair" orders to owners of dams that weren't up to current safety regulations. Among these dams was the one at Lake Williams. A small lake when compared to many others, but, none the less, a valuable resource and attraction to the Lebanon area.

It wasn't economically feasible for the owner of the dam to repair it, yet removal of the dam would mean destroying one of the best migratory bird way stations in the world. In addition, destruction of the lake and subsequent decline of property values in the area would lead to increased taxes on the general population of Lebanon.

Since the initial "Remove or Repair" was issued, concerned individuals and groups have tried to put together a viable solution for saving the lake. Several ideas have been proposed. All of them have fallen short of the mark by not appealing to all of the parties concerned. Either the idea was not acceptable to the State or the dam's owners, or it wasn't OK with the Townspeople or lake residents. Trying to find a universally acceptable solution has been a constant drain on the Town's resources, not to mention the resources of the State and private individuals.

In the very near future the current projected solution to the problem will

be brought before the people of the Town of Lebanon for acceptance. The ideal result of any plan is not for one party to win and another to lose. The ideal is for everyone to win. The current proposal for the Town of Lebanon to purchase the Lake Williams Dam is about as close to a win for everyone as is possible under the present complex circumstances. The lake residents will get to keep the lake, even though the Town will own the dam and have access. The Gilman Company, present owners of the dam, will receive a sizable chunk of money for relinquishing that ownership, not to mention relieving themselves of the responsibility of a piece of property that was of extremely limited use. The State saves almost a million dollars over previous plans that the DEP had proposed, while at the same time guaranteeing the future of a valuable wildlife area. The Town of Lebanon will stabilize the Premium Tax Base of the lake area while retaining one of the few recreation areas of this type in Connecticut. The Town also halts the financial bleeding incurred trying to resolve this problem. The Town of

Lebanon will also receive partial reimbursement from the State for expenditures acquired chasing down this solution. A sizable sum that will ONLY be paid upon acquisition of the dam by the Town.

In general, everyone wins to some degree if the Town agrees to authorize their Flood & Erosion Control Board to conclude this deal.

As the local share will be paid for exclusively by the Lake Williams Property Owners through a special assessment on their properties, the question that will be answered at the upcoming referendum vote, is this: "Do we end a 14 year dilemma by allowing the lake people to pay for the dam, or...do we continue to spend valuable time and money looking for yet another answer?"

The State Legislature has allocated funds for this project. The DEP is providing \$250,000 in Grant money for the repair. The Gilman Company is ready to transfer the ownership to the Town. The lake residents are ready to pay the local share, and the Flood & Erosion Control Board completely endorses this project. It only remains for the people of the Town of Lebanon to say "It's Okay...complete the deal."

Gilbert A. Koss, President  
Lake Williams Beach Association

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# Residents approve measure to save lake

By JENNIFER HELDT  
Norwich Bulletin

**LEBANON** — Leah Tanger let out a loud cheer in joining a chorus of happy residents when the results were announced on yesterday's referendum on a plan to save Lake Williams.

Voters approved, 668-299, the \$1.3 million plan to buy and repair the lake's dam, ending a 14-year controversy.

"I'm thrilled," Ms. Tanger said happily. "My kids can swim this year. The fish will be back."

Ms. Tanger lives at the lake with her husband, Dick, and children, Dylan, 8, and Brook, 6. They moved into town the same year the controversy started.

Two years ago, Brook watched her mother burst into tears when voters rejected a proposal to save the lake.

The decision will end a contro-

versy that began when the state Department of Environmental Protection ordered the dam's owners, The Gilman Brothers Co., to fix or repair the dam.

Voters twice rejected proposals to buy and repair the dam and save the lake. Last night was different, many said, because the lake residents will pay for most of the project. The state will give the town a \$250,000 grant and pay for one-third of the project.

The proposal will cost an estimated \$1,325,000. Residents living near the lake will pay \$695,000. They will be charged through a benefit assessment. A resident with \$50,000 of assessed property will pay about \$4,200 or, if paid over 20 years, about \$425 a year.

The town will own the dam and water rights. It will lose about \$5,000 in taxes on the dam and pay about \$300 more for insurance.

Nearly 25 percent of the town's

eligible voters turned out for the referendum last night and 50 voters sent in absentee ballots. Election officials said they were surprised by the large turnout.

"I think it was a better plan," said Harold Liebman, chairman of the Flood and Erosion Control Board, which negotiated the deal and will manage the project for the town.

The company got a "gentleman's price," Mr. Liebman said. Residents living near the lake know it will stay there and the state gets the dam repaired.

Residents will, for the first time, have access to one of the three lakes in town.

The 270-acre lake is used for small boats, fishing and swimming. The town could later buy some of the undeveloped land around the lake for a recreation area.

"After 14 years, I'm obviously pleased," said Evan Gilman,

spokesman for the company. "It's good because, really, everybody does win in this deal."

Lake Association President Gilbert Koss attributed last night's victory to the large amount of information the town boards gave to voters.

"It shows what an informed public can do," he said.

The company and town officials said they are getting ready for more work to make the deal final.

The company has already asked for bids on the project.

They will be opened March 5. The lake will be filled for the summer, but drained in the fall so repairs can start after Labor Day.

The Flood and Erosion Control Board may clean up the lake, removing some of the muck and weeds at the bottom, Mr. Liebman said. He said weeds have grown at an unusual rate because the lake has been drained several times.

# the Chronicle

YOUR HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER SINCE 1877 ★ PUBLISHED DAILY IN WILLIMANTIC, CONN.

Wednesday, February 24, 1993

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## Lebanon passes plan to save Lake Williams

By DEAN R. JACOBOWITZ  
Chronicle Staff Writer

**LEBANON** — Ear-piercing screams and applause shook the fire safety complex Tuesday night when town officials announced the strong approval of a Lake Williams dam purchase plan.

Residents voted 668-299 to allow the town to buy the dam and have it repaired, ending nearly 15 years of leakage problems. The dam repair project will bring Lake Williams back to its full water level good, saving the 247-acre lake from ex-

inction.

"There's just no way to describe how I feel," lake property owner Valerie Dinardi said after she stopped screaming and jumping for joy. She was just one of many who erupted in noise when the voting results were announced a few minutes after 8 p.m.

"It's a joy — a celebration," said Gloria Atkins, another lake property owner who couldn't stop smiling. "When we purchased our cottage, there was not a drop of water in the lake. We took a chance."

Atkins and Dinardi said they could only

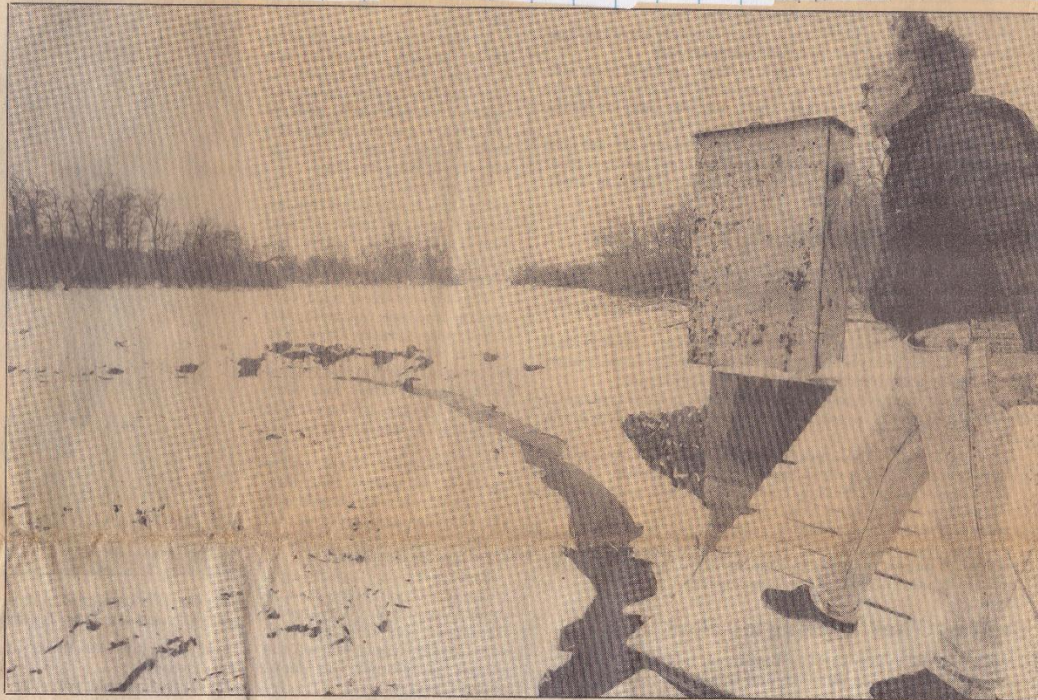
afford their lake property in the 1980s because the lake didn't have a solid future. After buying the land, they resolved themselves to work the problem out and get the dam fixed.

Townpeople voted on a dam repair plan in 1988 and again in 1991, but both projects failed.

That's when Dinardi, vice president of the Lake Williams Beach Association, wrote to the dam's owner, Gilman Brothers Co. of Bozrah, to ask if something else

(Lake Williams, Page 14)





Fran Funk

Gilbert Koss of Broadbook pauses by Lake Williams Tuesday morning. Koss, who owns property on the lake and is president of the

Lake Williams Beach Association, was in Lebanon to vote on the lake referendum.

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## Lake Williams vote may

(Continued from Page 1)

could be worked out. That led to the latest project.

The approved plan carries an estimated price tag of \$1.36 million, but the town as a whole will not contribute a penny to the project. Rather, lake-area property owners will shoulder the town's share of the cost — about \$695,000 — and the state will pay the rest — about \$665,000.

Lake area property owners agreed to fund the project by a vote of 109-11 in a special ratification ballot last month. Townwide approval also was needed, however, because the town will have to borrow money for it and will have to enter into a purchase agreement with the state and the Gilmans.

Lake-area residents will pay the town back through special 20-year assessments on their land. The annual cost will be about \$8 in taxes for every \$1,000 in assessed property a person owns. Land assessed at \$35,000, for example, would require an annual lake project bill of \$280.

Gilbert Koss, president of the beach association, said the dam's gate will now be closed so the lake can fill up for the summer. After Labor Day, the lake will be drained again and the dam repair project will get under way.

He said the project should be completed and the lake refilled by the spring of 1994.

"Then, hopefully, it'll never be drained again," he said.

Many officials have lauded this ver-

## end longstanding issue

sion of the lake project as the best, mainly because the town will own the dam and water rights and because town residents will have access to the lake through a small piece of town-owned land. The town wouldn't have gained ownership of the dam in either of the first two proposals.

Of the 967 people who cast a ballot Tuesday, 865 were registered voters, representing 21.7 percent of the total 3,988 registered. The other 102 voters cast a ballot by property ownership.

"All right!" said Dinardi as she and her neighbors filed out of the fire safety complex. "Let's go party!"



# Lebanon residents approve lake buy

■ **IN BRIEF:** By better than a two-to-one margin Tuesday, Lebanon voters OK a plan to buy Lake Williams and repair its dam, ending 15 years of controversy over the issue.

By Jon Neumuth  
Staff Correspondent

**LEBANON** - Going into Tuesday's referendum on the purchase of Lake Williams, there were two old adages that would apply to the result of the vote. Either the third time would be the charm, or the third strike would mean the purchase would be out.

After turning down the purchase in 1988 and 1991, residents voted by a charming two-to-one margin Tuesday to appropriate \$1.36 million for the town to buy the Lake Williams dam and water rights and to repair the dam, ending a 15-year-old struggle to acquire the lake.

The final results of the referendum showed that 668 residents voted in favor of the purchase, and 299 voted against it.

■ Continued on page 35



## Lake Williams...

■ Continued from page 1

When the results were announced shortly after 8 p.m., a crowd of about 35 people, mostly from the lake area, let out a tremendous roar of approval, clapping, hugging, and shaking hands.

"It works out great. Everybody wins a little bit on this thing," said Gilbert Koss, president of the Lake Williams Beach Association.

The state will pay for almost half of the project through a grant and reimbursement, leaving the town responsible for \$695,000 of the project. That local share will come from an assessment levied against properties whose residential or commercial value is being increased by the project. The project will require no general taxation of the town.

That, First Selectwoman Joyce R. Okonuk said, is what made this plan different from the two others that did not make it past a referendum. "This time the information was well researched, not that it wasn't prior, but I think it was a combination of research being done on the flood board, and also the people of the lake decided they were going to be a little broader minded about the options," Okonuk said. "I think the town of Lebanon has supported the project all along, they just didn't feel that they wanted to be financially responsible."

Harold Liebman, chairman of the Flood and Erosion Control Board, agreed, saying the plan worked out well for everyone involved. "In this plan everyone benefitted. The Gilmans

(owners of the dam) got a generous price; the town, at virtually no cost, got access to the lake and the preservation of the tax base; and the Lake Williams property owners have a guaranteed lake," Liebman said.

Liebman said future projects of the Flood and Erosion Control Board may include cleaning the weeds and muck off the bottom of the lake.

But first, the board will begin what Okonuk called "the real work." She said among the board's tasks in the next two weeks is to officially borrow the money for the project, send the bids out and award a bid, and sign the purchase agreement.

The lake is currently dry, Koss said, so potential contractors can see the bottom of the lake and dam and see what they have to work with. When the bidding process is completed, the lake will be refilled and will remain that way until September, when the project starts. After that it will be dry until its expected completion date in March of 1994.

Selectman Ray Milvae credited the outcome of the vote to the flood and erosion board. "I feel elated that it did go through," Milvae said. "I feel it's about time. I have to hand a lot of credit to the flood and erosion board. They did a lot of work and spent a lot of hours on this."

Milvae added that he was pleased with the turnout for the referendum. Out of slightly more than 4,000 residents and property owners eligible to vote, 967 actually voted.



# LEBANON LIFE

Volume 2 Issue 2

May 1993

## !!Hallelujah!! The Lake Williams Ordeal Is Over

by Harold Liebman, Chairman, Flood & Erosion Board

On February 23rd a referendum vote by Lebanon Townspeople approved the purchase of the Lake Williams Dam and authorized the Flood and Erosion Control Board to take the steps necessary to have the dam repaired and to apply for and procure the State of Connecticut Grant-in-Aid money and other cost-sharing funds. The purchase was finalized on April 8th, with the closing taking place at the office of Juri Taalman, Legal Counsel for the Town, at 11:00 AM.

The Gilman Brothers Company had solicited bids for the repairs to the dam early



in February, with the bid openings taking place on March 5th at the Gilman Brothers Company office. Thirteen bids were submitted, three of which fell below the target figure of \$380,000. Since that time, one of the low bidders has withdrawn, and the next lowest bidder, Carrier Enterprises of Southington, has been approved as a qualified contractor, and has been awarded the project. The purchase package agreement with the Gilman Brothers Company includes the successful bid for the repair work.

The bidding procedure just outlined was pre-approved by Town Counsel and the Department of Environmental Protection. I should also add that the DEP approved all facets of this process, including, but not limited to, the repair design and the qualifications of the successful bidder, and will also monitor the future management of the dam as a flood and erosion control structure.

The Flood & Erosion Control Board worked very hard in putting together the final plan. We had wonderful cooperation from the DEP, Town officials were available for consultation and advice, and the Lake Williams property owners who will be paying for the project gave us their unwavering support. The grand finale was the referendum, which approved the project by a vote of 699 to 298.

None of this could have happened without the efforts of many people, serving on many committees, starting in 1978 when the Army Corps of Engineers first determined that the Lake Williams Dam needed repairs, and the dam owners were notified to "repair or remove" the dam.

Too many people were involved to mention all the names, but let me say that members of the Lake Williams Beach Association were always in the forefront of the effort, as well as property owners on the west side of the Lake. Our own Town officials were always ready to cooperate, and our State Representatives and Senators played an invaluable role in establishing a relationship with the DEP officials, and, I am sure, played a key role in obtaining the \$250,000 grant-in-aid.

A lot of work remains, but we can now look forward with confidence. The Lake will be preserved, giving the Lake Williams property owners their guaranteed access to a full lake, and the Town will be the owner of a beautiful 270 acre lake with access for all townspeople.



## *Lebanon digest*

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### **Repair work to dam to start in the fall**

LEBANON - First Selectwoman Joyce R. Okonuk has announced the town closed on the purchase of the Lake Williams dam from the Gilman Brothers Company April 8. The town has awarded the construction bid on the dam repair to Carrier Enterprises of Southington.

Repairs, which are scheduled to begin in early September, include the draining of the lake and all construction necessary to repair the dam and associated property, to comply with the state Department of Environmental Protection's consent order.

The project is scheduled to be completed in February 1994. At that time, the lake will be refilled, and town-owned property on Route 207 will be available for recreational use by town residents.