

In the mid-1800s, students and teachers posed for a photograph in front of the Modern Times Schoolhouse in Brentwood.

# City to vote on water purifier

BY DAVID OLSON  
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The Glen Cove City Council is scheduled to vote Tuesday on buying and installing equipment to remove a contaminant that has kept two city water wells closed for months.

Council members will vote whether to spend an estimated \$285,000 to buy the shell of a used air stripper to remove Freon 22 from wells that the Nassau County Department of Health ordered closed — one in November, the other in January — after elevated levels of the refrigerant were detected in the water. The dollar amount will be finalized before Tuesday's meeting, city spokeswoman Lisa Travatello said.

Officials want to buy the used air stripper, a tool used for the purification of groundwater and wastewater containing volatile compounds, because the planned installation of a new, custom-built air stripper at another, now-shuttered well — which in the past also had Freon 22 problems — wouldn't be complete until next year. That would



Foreman Mike Colangelo takes a sample on Jan. 25 from a drinking-water well at a water facility control room in Glen Cove.

be too late for the surge in water use that occurs each summer. Not buying the used equipment would risk leaving the city without enough water this summer, Mayor Timothy Tenke said.

"We don't really have a lot of options here," Councilwoman Pamela Panzenbeck said during a discussion of the air stripper at Tuesday's council work session. "We

have to provide water."

The city hopes to have the air stripper on line by June, city water operator John Ingram said.

Meanwhile, city officials asked the health department on March 16 for permission to reactivate one of the recently closed wells because Freon levels have dropped far below the state maximum level for the refrigerant for more than

two months, Travatello said. The reactivation would only be while Freon 22 levels remain low, she said. The health department is reviewing the request, agency spokeswoman Mary Ellen Laurain said.

The neighboring Locust Valley Water District has agreed to sell the city 1 million gallons of water a day this summer, if needed, Ingram said. Once the air stripper is operating, the city would only need that extra water if water use is unusually high on particular days, he said.

The total cost to install the air stripper is estimated at about \$860,000, including up to \$107,000 for design and construction oversight for Woodbury-based D&B Engineers and Architects PC that will be voted on Tuesday, Travatello said. The council meeting begins at 7:30 p.m. at City Hall.

Glen Cove eventually will need a new air stripper for the three Duck Pond Road wells, the two that are closed and a third well at the site, Tenke said. That, plus the other custom-built air stripper, may cost more than \$12 million, officials said.

THE BRENTWOOD HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## Software helps SUNY grad rates

BY KESHIA CLUKEY  
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Nassau Community College is boosting efforts to increase student retention and on-time graduation through a new software program called DegreeWorks.

The web-based auditing software allows students to see what courses they need, what order to take them in, and if they're on track for an on-time graduation.

"The more user-friendly a tool is for students, the more we are able to help them be successful. And that is really the goal, that they succeed, that we retain them and then ultimately they graduate," said Amanda Fox, director of academic advisement at Nassau Community College.

Nassau launched the program earlier this month, becoming one of 43 campuses across the State University of New York system to implement DegreeWorks as part of SUNY's Completion Agenda. The system's

goal is to award 150,000 degrees per year by 2025.

Farmingdale State College was one of the first to implement the software. Stony Brook University and SUNY Old Westbury have been using the program for more than a year, according to SUNY. And Suffolk County Community College is getting ready for a soft launch over the next few weeks with full implementation for students in the fall, officials said.

Eventually all 64 SUNY campuses will use DegreeWorks, creating a network that will make it easier for students to compare programs offered at various state schools, SUNY officials said at a board of trustees meeting last week. This will make it easier for students who are cross-registering at more than one campus, or planning on transferring between SUNY campuses, officials said.

It's particularly helpful for community college students who may be looking to move to a four-year college after earning

### Improving rates of graduation

Officials at Farmingdale State, which has had DegreeWorks in place since 2014, say the program has helped improve graduation rates.

- The four-year graduation rate for full-time, first-time baccalaureate degree students rose from 21.3 percent in August 2013 to 29 percent in August 2017.
- The six-year graduation rate increased from 42.6 percent in 2013 to 53.3 percent in 2017.

Source: Farmingdale State College

their associate degree, said Fox of Nassau Community College.

The software also warns students if they make course selections that would adversely impact their financial aid, Fox said, such as those receiving state tu-

ition assistance and the Excelsior Scholarship. The scholarship starting this fall provides tuition dollars for eligible middle-class students attending the state's two- and four-year public institutions. Its requirements include taking 30 credits per year.

Gone are the days of dog-earing and highlighting the course catalog in preparation for meeting with your adviser, Old Westbury registrar Patricia Smith joked. "This takes it to the next level, particularly for students who are so used to technology."

The colleges still require students to meet with an adviser, but the program helps better prepare them for the meeting and allows advisers to include notes to students within the system, said Erwin Cabrera, associate director of Farmingdale State's Research-Aligned Mentoring program.

For first-generation and low-income students in particular, understanding the pipeline to graduation can be an overwhelming task, Cabrera said.

"It's never a quick process."

The historical society has secured about \$144,000 in grants for the project, and spent about \$72,000 of it — prior to the school controversy — on repairing the roof, waterproofing and rotating the building, and other repairs.

Officials expect to select a contractor in the next few weeks. The historical society at that point must obtain a permit in order to release grant funds for the remaining work, which Edelstein said could take some time, though she is optimistic that work will resume later this year.

"The whole concept of Modern Times was exactly what this community is fighting for now: Equity, fairness, openness and neighbors helping neighbors," Edelstein said. "It's very much who we are still as a community."