Hartford mayor gives interim leader the job full time. **CONNECTICUT, PAGE 3**

Presidential Fitness test

Trump announces plan to revive program for schoolchildren. NEWS, PAGE 6

Trade deadline frenzy

Yankees, Red Sox, Mets all add key pieces in flurry of deals. SPORTS, PAGE 1

Cooler



Occasional morning rain: high of 73. LIVING, PAGE 12





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Details sought on nonprofit funding

Fed prosecutors serve subpoenas associated with grand jury probe

By Edmund H. Mahony Hartford Courant

Federal authorities have opened a wide-ranging investigation into how tens of millions of dollars are being distributed among and spent by an array of nonprofit social service organizations operating in Hartford.

Federal prosecutors served

subpoenas associated with the grand jury investigation last week, resulting in a flurry of calls to defense lawyers late in the week and over the weekend.

Among those believed to be targets of the investigation, according to subpoenas and other sources, is state Sen. Douglas McCrory, a Bloomfield Democrat whose district includes north Hartford. McCrory declined in a text message earlier this week to discuss the matter.

Also named in subpoenas is McCrory associate Sonserae Cicero Hamlin, who runs a wide ranging consulting business offering advice to clients on subjects as disparate as human resources and legalized marijuana sales. Cicero Hamlin declined to discuss the matter, but her company is said to have provided consulting services to at least three Hartford nonprofits named in subpoenas, according to people active in the city's charitable giving circles.

According to people familiar with the early stages of the investigation, FBI agents also have asked questions about the highly

competitive and expensive application process for obtaining state licenses to operate legalized marijuana cultivation and retail sales businesses.

A subpoena is a request for information and not an accusation or charge.

The U.S. Attorney's office in New Haven, which issued the grand jury subpoenas, refused to discuss the investigation. The subpoenas are signed by Assistant U.S. Attorney Jonathan Francis, who leads the office's financial fraud and public corruption unit. A dozen calls to people and nonprofit organizations mentioned in subpoenas were not returned.

A flood of government grant money — in addition to millions more from private charitable and business groups — has poured into state capitols like Hartford and from there to nonprofits since Congress enacted the American Rescue Plan Act, or ARPA, in 2021, which sent \$350 billion to state and local governments to support

Turn to Investigation, Page 2



The Essex Steam Train departs on a scenic 60-minute ride through the Connecticut River Valley on Thursday. For schedules and more, visit www. essexsteamtrain.com. AARON FLAUM/HARTFORD COURANT

Quintessentially Connecticut

You could call the Essex Steam Train the big engine that could as it chugs merrily along bringing state residents and visitors for a ride through the Connecticut River Valley. It stays its course despite the abysmal heat and humidity we've had lately. It should be cooler today, but we could see some rain.

West Hartford preps for speed cameras

Other cities already raking in hundreds of thousands from motorists

By Don Stacom Hartford Courant

Even though speed-management cameras are still about a year away in West Hartford, the town is advising motorists to start slowing down now before the system begins issuing \$50 fines to owners of vehicles photographed speeding.

Based on results in other states and the early results from a couple of Connecticut communities, the town anticipates a hefty number of fines will go out to residents and out-of-towners alike starting in mid-2026.

In just its first two weeks using automated speed cameras, the small community of Marlborough has issued 1,094 citations, with fines totalling nearly \$55,000. Middletown reported Monday that its first three weeks using automated speed cameras resulted in 9,819 citations with a hefty \$606,000 in fines issued. That includes some repeat offenders: The first-time \$50 fine rises to \$75 for each citation afterward.

Turn to Cameras, Page 2



West Hartford Police Chief Vernon Riddick speaks at a forum Wednesday about automated speed enforcement. **DON STACOM**/ HARTFORD COURANT

An arts group aiming to grow

Commission expected to approve \$4.5M loan for Real Art Ways

By Kenneth R. Gosselin Hartford Courant

An ambitious expansion plan for Hartford's Real Art Ways that has been percolating for years could break ground later this year, with a key piece of financing all but assured to fall into place Friday when the commission that oversees state borrowing is expected to approve \$4.5 million for the project.

The State Bond Commission will convene Friday to consider funding RAW's expansion, which is one of a half-dozen projects in Hartford backed by the Capital Region Development Authority. They are among 56 projects statewide seeking a share in nearly \$950 million.

Once projects make it onto the bond commission agenda, they are virtually assured of approval.

The projects represent about one-third of the \$3.4 billion that will be considered by the bond commission, including state Department of Transportation projects adding up to \$1.5 billion, and \$125 million to offset the public benefits charge on electric bills.

RAW-the contemporary artscenter that has been a fixture in Hartford's Parkville neighborhood for three decades — plans the expansion as part of a larger, \$24 million vision for its building on Arbor Street.

The expansion calls for a major addition that will increase the size of the arts venue by 50%. The project also includes the addition of three movie screens, bringing the organization's total to four. The project also will add a dedicated area for the performing arts, a new café, and more space for educational programs.

Will K. Wilkins, RAW's executive director, said Wednesday the arts organization is in the final stages of raising the last \$2 million for the project, which could start construction in the fall.

"It is on a forward trajectory, and we've been doing great with it," Wilkins said. "And that's why we're getting some of this support

Turn to Expansion, Page 2

A Palestinian girl looks out a doorway at a burnt car after an attack that torched a house and nearby cars in Silwad town northeast of Ramallah in the occupied West Bank on Thursday. ZAIN JAAFAR/GETTY

Father of man killed in West Bank pushes

for US investigation

By Livi Stanford Hartford Courant

Palestinian Americans in Connecticut are calling for justice for a young man reportedly killed by settlers in the West Bank earlier this month and a prohibition on sending U.S. rifles that have armed those settlers.

On Wednesday, Kemal Musallet, the father of Sayfollah Musallet, a 20-year old Florida man who was killed when he was beaten to death by Israeli settlers on July 11,

pendent investigation.

urged U.S. Sen. Chris Murphy to continue to push for a U.S. inde-



Palestinian Americans in Connecticut seeking help

Murphy

"This isn't just about Sayfollah," said Musallet in a meeting with Murphy's senior foreign policy adviser, according to a transcript from the meeting. "I can't get my son back. But I want to make sure no other father has to bury his

child. I want this settler violence to stop completely. These are our lands. We have the right to be here. And we have the right to live without fear of being killed

for simply existing."
Further, Musallet and the Connecticut Council on American and Islamic Relations, asked the senator to publicly support two joint resolutions introduced by U.S. Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-VT. which would block "the transfer of thousands of U.S.

Turn to Palestinians, Page 5

Pizza, barbecue, tacos, pasta — all at one spot

Wayback Franchising has officially opened a kitchen in Wallingford where customers can order typically unrelated fare under newly developed brands. Connecticut, Page 3

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Hartford Courant

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