

Judge: Utility regulators broke law

PURA ordered to conduct new rate hearings

By Ken Dixon
STAFF WRITER

The utility industry scored a victory in court in its battle against state regulators as a judge chastised the Public Utility Regulatory Authority for actions by its former chairwoman that broke Connecticut state law and violated the rights of the Connecticut Natural Gas

Corp. and the Southern Connecticut Gas Co. Orange-based Avangrid, parent company of the two utilities and a subsidiary of Spain-based Iberdrola, hailed the lawsuit's decision Friday and said it was vindicated by the judge's findings. In a 22-page decision, Superior Court Judge Matthew Budzik noted that on Oct. 27, PURA ad-

mitted that Marissa Gillett, the former PURA chairwoman had appointed herself as the presiding officer of the PURA panel that issued a rate decision for the gas companies without the participation of other commissioners. "Because there is no statutory authorization for Ms. Gillett unilaterally appointing herself as presiding officer of the panel deciding CNG's and SCG's applications, Ms. Gillett's actions

are contrary to Connecticut law," Budzik wrote in his Wednesday decision on the civil lawsuit. PURA did not immediately respond to a request for comment Friday morning. Rob Blanchard, Lamont's communications director, declined comment on Friday. The judge also remanded the rate case back to PURA for new hearings. Budzik referred two PURA

attorneys, general counsel Scott Muska and Assistant Attorney General Seth Hollander, for investigation by the Statewide Grievance Committee and possible discipline after misleading the court in a battle over proposed rate increases and a controversial opinion article that Gillett was alleged to have helped two state lawmakers write in December 2024. "What an attorney says mat-

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Old Route 7, looking toward Federal Road. Phase 3 of the Brookfield streetscape project extended the sidewalk down Federal Road.

Brookfield wins state grant to restart \$12.4M downtown streetscape project

By Sandra Diamond Fox
STAFF WRITER

BROOKFIELD — After being stalled for about three years, Brookfield's \$12.4 million downtown street enhancement project can proceed full speed ahead due to a state grant. Through the state's Community Connectivity Grant Program award, the town received \$659,600 to develop the Still River Greenway Trail Connector. "This is a huge grant," said Greg Dembowski, Brookfield community development specialist. "The grant is the final piece of the puzzle that will connect the Still River Greenway and Brookfield's streetscape design north from the Four Corners to Newbury Village." The distance is 1,900 feet.

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The Brookfield streetscape project includes sidewalks and street lamps like the ones pictured in this file photo, north of the four corners.

15 charged in \$190K DraftKings scheme

By Kendra Baker
STAFF WRITER

A total of 15 Connecticut residents have now been charged in a nearly \$200,000 DraftKings scheme, documents show. Three Danbury residents and a New Britain man are among the latest arrests. State Department of Consumer Protection spokesperson Kaitlyn Krasselt confirmed the five individuals are Yuniar Bonifacio, Gabriela Diaz, Keven Machado, Orlando Medrano and Allickson Germosen. Diaz, Machado and Medrano are Danbury residents and Bonifacio is a New Britain resident, according to court documents. Germosen's place of residence is unclear because his case file is sealed. Their arrests follow a DraftKings Sports investigation into "potentially suspicious activity," according to warrants the department's Gaming Division filed at state Superior Courts in Danbury and New Britain. The warrants say the investigation uncovered an alleged scheme involving various DraftKings ac-

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Firearms board faces 1,200-case backlog

By Bill Cummings
STAFF WRITER

The state Board of Firearms Permit Examiners is struggling to a clear a backlog of more than 1,200 appeals of denied or revoked state pistol permits, a new state audit found. "BFPE receives more annual appeals than it can reasonably review," auditors said. "Appellants may be denied their right to a timely hearing."

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Bethel school board hires CABE to lead superintendent search



Outgoing Bethel Superintendent of Schools Christine Carver during a tour of Rockwell School in 2016. She will retire at the end of the school year, and a group has been hired to help search for her successor.

By Michael Gagne
STAFF WRITER

BETHEL — The Board of Education hired the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education to lead its search for a successor to longtime Bethel school Superintendent Christine Carver, who is retiring at the end of the current school year. School board President Scott Clayton said the board, which appointed itself as the executive search committee for a new superintendent, received numerous proposals from poten-

tial search consultant firms. After interviewing finalists, the board decided on CABE. "The board felt that CABE's track record best suited our needs," Clayton said, noting the firm has conducted 40 successful superintendent searches to date. The school board's contract with CABE will cost \$17,800, he said. Clayton, who was on the school board in 2014 when Carver was hired, described the process of selecting a new district leader as "time consuming — but

it's time worth spending." "You learn a great deal about what it takes to be an educational leader," he said. The process involves developing a candidate profile, defining the attributes the next leader of the Bethel schools should have, and "narrowing down who you think will be an effective leader," Clayton said. The board would like to select a new superintendent in early spring 2026, with a start date of July 1 in the job, he said. Also, new school board members will be joining in

early December and will need to be debriefed on the superintendent search process, Clayton said. The Nov. 4 election saw Democrats prevail, taking a new 6-3 majority. The search will formally start in early January, with CABE consultants meeting with the board as well as different school district constituent groups, Clayton said. In a previous memo to Bethel schools staff, Clayton said the search firm "will play a crucial role" in identifying the school dis-

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