

VALLEY

BRIEFS

County School Board Hosts Budget Hearing

DAYTON — No one spoke at the Rockingham County School Board's budget hearing Monday night.

The board hosted a hearing during its regularly scheduled meeting in Wilbur S. Pence Middle School's auditorium.

Monday's hearing was a chance for staff, parents and community members to voice any suggestions or concerns for the fiscal 2018 budget, which takes effect July 1. It was the first of two hearings that will be held this budget season.

The next hearing will occur after Superintendent Carol Fenn has submitted her proposed budget on March 27. After the board adopts a spending plan, it will be presented to the Rockingham County Board of Supervisors, which must approve the division's local contribution request.

The current fiscal year's budget is \$131.4 million.

Although the state is experiencing a budget shortfall, Gov. Terry McAuliffe, in his proposed budget, asked for a \$1 billion investment in kindergarten through 12th-grade and higher education.

— **Erin Flynn**

Bridgewater Rink Usage Outpaces 2015-16

BRIDGEWATER — Business is booming at Bridgewater's ice rink in its sophomore year.

Megan Byler, parks and recreation coordinator, provided Town Council with an update on rink usage at Tuesday's meeting.

In December, the rink hosted 5,684 skate sessions, which the town defines as admission to one of the two-hour blocks the rink is open, Byler said. That's a 45 percent increase over December 2015, which saw 3,914 sessions.

The rink at Generations Park opened in November 2015 and generated \$53,633 in revenue through more than 13,000 two-hour sessions and 12,000 skate rentals in the 98 days it was open last winter.

Most users so far this season haven't been town residents or **Bridgewater College** students, both of whom skate for free with a B-Rec card. For December, 72 percent of sessions were out-of-towners.

The increase in usage has prompted officials to set aside time for residents. Mondays and Wednesdays from 5 to 7 p.m. will now be for Bridgewater residents only. From 7 to 9 p.m., anyone will be allowed to use the rink.

— **Nolan Stout**