



The Littleton Weekly Record

THURSDAY, AUG. 1, 2024

LOCAL NEWS

Community
Honors Ernsbergers

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FREE



Cyan Magenta Yellow Black



Ruff Day. Hiking Hound Injures Paws,
Rescued From Rockpile. **Page 6**

FEMA Assesses Damage In Lancaster, Estimated At \$2.9M

BY PAUL HAYES
Staff Writer

LANCASTER—Two weeks after the remnants of Hurricane Beryl battered the area, the Federal Emergency Management Agency is on the ground assessing the damage.

On July 24, FEMA officials toured Lancaster to conduct a preliminary damage assessment to help determine if the state is eligible for a major disaster declaration.

A declaration would deliver federal funds to offset storm recovery costs.

“[Federal funds] would be huge,” said Selectman Shane Beattie, the town’s Emergency Management Director. “There’s no town in the North Country that is flush enough to absorb this type of disaster.”

Prior to the tour, town officials laid out Beryl’s impacts.

The storm damaged 15 town-maintained roads, flooded four municipal buildings (town hall, library, police department, and wastewater department), and put critical water and wastewater infrastructure at risk of catastrophic failure.

The rough estimate for road and water system repairs is approximately \$2.98 million.

“There was a lot of significant damage,” said Highway Department foreman Tim Brown. “It’s the biggest event we’ve ever had. It’s going to

take a long time to recovery.”

During their day-long visit, FEMA officials inspected the damage to roads, bridges, culverts and other public infrastructure.

Damage must exceed \$2.5 million statewide and \$143,833 in Coos County to qualify for a major disaster declaration.

If the federal government issues a major disaster declaration, public assistance funds would cover 75 percent of those costs.

Once all information is collected, it will take FEMA 30 to 45 days to generate a final estimate for Lancaster storm damage.

RUNNING START

Town Manager Jessica Cyr joked that she got her feet wet, literally, during severe storms on July 11.

Four days before her scheduled start date, Cyr assisted with the town’s immediate response to the extreme weather event.

Still living in Maine, Cyr saw the weather alerts for Coos County, and before dawn, she contacted Selectman Shane Beattie.

“It was totally awesome,” Beattie said. “She texted at 3 o’clock in the morning and said ‘Do you guys have a problem?’ At 6 o’clock I finally noticed [the text] and said ‘Yes we do.’ She said ‘Would you be opposed to me coming up and giving a hand?’ I said ‘No, come on up.’”

Cyr arrived at 9:30 a.m. and immediately got

to work.

“I went along with [Beattie] to capture as much damage as possible, knowing this would be a long road ahead for the community,” Cyr said “This is going to be something that’s going to impact a lot of residents and be a lot of work for multiple departments. We need to get this buttoned up as best we can before the snow falls, knowing that there’s only so much money in the bank.”

Beattie said that Cyr possessed the administrative skillset to properly (and thoroughly) document the storm damage and town response, which are vital components in seeking federal aid.

In addition, she was familiar with the FEMA reporting process, having been through it as a town councilor in South Berwick, Maine.

“Documentation is everything today,” Beattie said. “She brings that ability to the town now, where we would have been struggling [otherwise].”

Meanwhile, Cyr said she was impressed with the practical, historical and technical knowledge that Beattie and other town officials and employees brought to the table.

For instance, Highway Department foreman Tim Brown said his six-person department, including himself, worked from 5 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. on Thursday to make roads passable.

“Having these dedicated employees and effective elected officials going above and beyond the

call of duty at the end of the day is amazing,” she said. “I was really impressed because they have a ‘roll up the sleeves, get it done’ attitude.”

Cyr seamlessly stepped into a chaotic situation.

Upon her arrival on July 11, Cyr immediately contacted New Hampshire Homeland Security Emergency Management to confirm what information they required. Then she photographed the damage and kept track of workers’ hours, machinery used, amounts of material delivered, and more.

On her first official day, July 15, she delivered a comprehensive update on the situation to the Select Board.

The next day, she met with the budget committee and discussed the possible need to withdraw cash from the unrestricted fund to pay for some road repairs.

And on July 24 she prepared a slideshow and remarks to give FEMA officials a brief overview of the town’s situation.

“We were being proactive, so that we’re not behind the eight ball,” she said.

Beattie was appreciative of her efforts.

“She was a huge help, she’s an asset to the town,” he said, adding with a laugh that Cyr was better equipped to handle the documentation and administrative duties. “It’s all Jessica, it’s not Shane. I have a yellow lined tablet, she has a laptop.”

Cyan Magenta Yellow Black

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Excerpt from Michigan State University: www.canr.msu.edu/news/7_benefits_of_eating_local_food

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Community Honors Ernsbergers

BY ROBERT BLECHL
Staff Writer

LITTLETON — He was an Indiana boy who made a successful career in international sales.

She was an Illinois girl who made her mark as a teacher.

In their retirement, Nancy and Dave Ernsberger, who never lived in one place for more than a few years during their nearly 60 years of marriage, made a home in Littleton, where, for two decades, they inspired generations of community members with their volunteerism and their vision to make the town that they came to love into an even better place.

On Saturday, July 27, some 100 community leaders and residents, as well as the Ernsbergers' three children, grandchildren and family members, turned out to Harmony Park for the unveiling of a plaque dedicated to Dave, who passed away on July 2, and to Nancy, who passed away on April 26.

"Nancy and Dave were vital contributors to our town and our Main Street and river district," said Greg Eastman, owner of Hunkins and Eaton Insurance and a friend. "Littleton really doesn't throw up a lot of plaques for many people, unless they're very, very special. And the Ernsbergers, Nancy and Dave, were very, very special people to this town."

Linda MacNeil, chair of the Select Board, met Dave at a charrette, or visioning session, in 2017.

"The one thing I remember about Dave is he always smiled," she said. "I never saw him without a smile."

At 5 p.m. Friday, Aug. 2, the covered footbridge will be dedicated to all of the town's volunteers.

"Dave was the epitome of a volunteer that took on his new hometown and got things done, and we so much appreciate everything that he did for Littleton," said MacNeil.

Littleton business owner Jack Eames said it is fitting that Harmony Park, which features outdoor musical instruments and was Dave's brainchild, be the home for the plaque.

"There really aren't enough superlatives to describe Dave and Nancy," said Eames. "Smart, kind, giving, genuine, to name a few. Everything they did, they made better, and always with an eye to-

wards community. They were ardent supporters of Pollyanna and the arts. From Harmony Park, to The Loading Dock, to First Fridays, to Pollyanna Alley with all the umbrellas, Pollyanna Outlook the the Pollyanna Gateway, and the Be Glad Make Music pianos."

For their contributions, Dave and Nancy were honored with the Pollyanna Signature Award.

"My parents [Jere and Yvonne] considered Dave and Nancy great friends," said Eames. "They were kindred spirits. My dad said Dave and Nancy were a B-12 shot to Littleton. And if you look back at the past 20-plus years, they certainly caught lighting in a bottle."

At the heart of both Nancy and Dave was family, he said.

Eames thanked Dave's brother, Jack Ernsberger, who lives in Bethlehem with his wife, Karen.

Jack was the first to make the move to the North Country.

"Without you, I don't think that Dave and Nancy would moved to Littleton and we wouldn't be where we are today," said Eames.

Jere Eames could not attend Saturday's unveiling but gave a statement read by his son: "Dave and Nancy, you were fabulous. We miss you. We'll never forget you, and your legacy will live on."

For a decade, John Hennessey, chairman of the volunteer River District Redevelopment Commission, worked closely with Ernsberger, one of the commission's founding members, until the commission was dissolved in 2022 after accomplishing its objectives.

"He played an absolutely huge role in all the work that's been done down here," said Hennessey. "To be fair, Littleton has always had a lot of dedicated volunteers, and I'm looking at 100 of you out here in the audience that have given a lot of time. Dave is among us, but I'm confident that over the last ten years there's not a single person who worked harder than Dave to redevelop Littleton and make it a better place. Dave showed up from Austin, Texas. This is small town northern New Hampshire and it can take a generation to get embraced by a small community here, but not for Dave."

See Ernsbergers, Page 5

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Ernsbergers

Continued from Page 4

Ernsberger “had an immediate and lasting impact,” said Hennessey.

“It was obvious from the first time any of us met him that he had a genuine love for the community, he had a vision for how to make things better, he worked as hard as anyone to get it done, and there was absolutely no personal gain in it for him,” said Hennessey. “It was all just for love of community and all of you.”

The piano project was the first example of what could be, followed by the umbrellas (Ernsberger found the inspiration when saw the same in Portugal) and the Pollyanna Gateway, which remains a magnet for those snapping photos, said Hennessey.

His Friday art nights were the precursor to today’s First Friday summer events.

“Then things got serious and the IBM sales executive Dave came out,” said Hennessey.

In 2013, Ernsberger spent six months raising \$250,000 from more than 30 businesses and individuals for a demonstration project involving new lighting, a stone overlook and more to show everyone, including potential future funders, that those involved in redeveloping the riverfront were serious.

“He got us all to up our game just by setting an example of what he was willing to put in and make things happen,” said Hennessey. “So he charged ahead with a vision ... Then he realized we needed some big money. He spent the next two years meeting with every government official on the planet. The result was the same every single time. He got a yes at the end of the meeting and someone was willing to pitch in and help move the project forward. By 2016, after all those meetings, Dave was a key part in raising \$5 million for the town of Littleton to help redevelop everything you see down here today.”

At the unveiling were the Ernsbergers’ three children, Marci Goolsby, Stacey Kydd, and Eric Erns-

berger.

“It’s an incredible honor,” said Goolsby. “In my dad’s last days, he got to hear how appreciated he was for his contributions to Littleton, and we’re very grateful for that. My parents had the gift of bringing people together and had true passion for making a difference. It was easy for Littleton to become a place that they wanted to contribute to. They loved this town and all the special people in it. After moving 22 times in 57 years of marriage, they found a town that they never wanted to leave. This was the only place they lived longer than a few years ... Littleton brought the best out of my parents and I like to think that they brought the best out of Littleton as well.”

The Ernsbergers’ grandchildren — Avery, Harper, Penny, and Nolan — unveiled the plaque.

Giving the closing remarks was Veronica Francis, owner of the Go Littleton Glad Shop, who said when Dave Ernsberger read the “Pollyanna” novel he embraced the story and took it to a whole other level.

“He really did believe in us, believed in the story, and it really did make all of us believe in it a little more,” she said.

In his art gallery at The Nest, Ernsberger displayed the works of local artisans, she said.

“He made us feel special,” said Francis. “That’s what he did for all of us, he touched our hearts, he touched our town, and really made us feel a little more confident. When we see tourists taking pictures or making music, he’s going to touch the lives of many people for many years forward.”

Saturday’s unveiling was also the day Dave would have turned 79. A birthday cake was brought in honor of Dave and Nancy.

State Rep. David Rochefort, R-Littleton, read a commendation from Gov. Chris Sununu, who recognized the Ernsbergers “for offering their time, resources, and unwavering support to numerous

See **Ernsbergers**, Page 6

Introducing

Dr. Carla Nordstrom, Pulmonologist

Littleton Regional Healthcare is pleased to announce Carla Nordstrom, MD has joined our Medical Staff and is actively seeing patients in Littleton.

Dr. Nordstrom is board-certified in Pulmonary Disease, Critical Care Medicine, Internal Medicine, and Sleep Medicine. She completed her fellowship in Pulmonary and Critical Care at Thomas Jefferson University Hospital in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Dr. Nordstrom brings over 30 years of academic and community healthcare setting experience. She also holds Master of Public Health and Master of Businesses Administration degrees.

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Hiking Hound Injures Paws, Rescued From Rockpile

BY PAUL HAYES
Staff Writer

MT. WASHINGTON — A very good boy survived a very ruff day.

A 100-pound dog named Fuji, suffering from cut paws and fatigue, was rescued from the side of Mt. Washington on Saturday, July 27.

N.H. Paw Rescue, a volunteer organization that aids dogs in distress, carried the poor pup down the Cog Railway.

Fuji was treated for injuries and released to his owner.

According to Paw Rescue, Fuji, his owner, and another person had set out that morning for a multi-day Presidential Traverse, an approximate 19- to 23-mile hike across the Presidential Ridge.

However, after reaching 5,716-foot Mount Jefferson, Fuji started to show signs of paw damage.

Paw Rescue published an incident report on social media that reveals what happened next.

After consulting a Randolph Mountain Club caretaker, Fuji's group decided to bail out and descend Mt. Washington along the Cog Railway tracks.

According to the incident report, "Fuji was able to continue on his own from Mt. Jefferson until the tracks, where he stopped walking due to torn pads and exhaustion."

Fuji's owner contacted N.H. Paw Rescue at 6:50 p.m., then the owner and his hiking companion slowly carried Fuji down from 5,000 feet to 3,700 feet.

Just after 9:30 p.m., they were met by N.H. Paw Rescue team members and other volunteers.

"After accepting some water, Fuji was placed on a foam pad in a QuikLitter and slowly carried down towards the Cog Railway base station," said N.H. Paw

Rescue.

The group arrived at the base station at 11:10 p.m., where Fuji's paws were cleaned and wrapped for further transport.

Fuji's owner was planning to seek veterinary care once home.

In a statement, N.H. Paw Rescue cautioned dog owners that the Presidential Range (especially the northern peaks) have very rough terrain and sharp rocks that can easily damage dog paws.

"Consider leaving your dog at home when hiking these peaks, especially if the dog is large and/or older," the statement said. "If you do bring along a fit and conditioned dog: use extreme caution, pack dog first aid supplies, and bring a rescue sling or soft litter that you or your group are capable of using to evacuate the dog."

If you do bring your dog on a hike, N.H. Paw Rescue advised the following:

— When hiking in the White Mountains, make sure to take appropriate equipment and supplies (learn more at hikesafe.com). In particular, make sure you have warm/protective clothing, a headlamp, a map, extra food/water, and a 1st aid kit.

— Be conservative with your dog's hiking ability, especially with larger and older dogs. Stay on easy/moderate terrain until you and your dog have more experience.

— Frequently check dog paws for soft tissue damage, especially when hiking on the abrasive rocks found in the Presidential Range and Franconia Ridge.

— Be cautious in warm weather. While this is very dog dependent, use care above 70 F and consider avoiding any strenuous activities above 80 F.

— Include 1st aid supplies for your dog including bandaging material and booties.

— Pack a dog rescue harness (and practice using it) so you have the ability to evacuate your dog. This is critical and can mean the difference between evacuating your dog quickly or waiting many hours (or even overnight) for volunteer help.

N.H. Paw Rescue is an informal group of volunteers available to assist with dog rescue incidents in the mountains of New Hampshire.

They are not affiliated with N.H. Fish & Game or with human search and rescue teams.

Ernsbergers

Continued from Page 5

causes that have enriched the lives of [Littleton] residents," for "embracing the town's heritage and promoting the positive values it represents, and "for their many years of dedicated and exceptional service to the town of Littleton."

After the ceremony, interim town manager and Littleton Po-

lice Chief Paul Smith said Dave Ernsberger also played a pivotal role after the 2011 town budget cuts brought tensions to a high point in town.

To help smooth the waters, Ernsberger brought in a mediator and he should also be remembered for his "positiveness and foresight" that placed the town on a positive path forward, he said,

"That's an important part of who he was and what he did," said Smith.

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Obituaries

Rachel Ball Moulton

Rachel Ball Moulton, age 98, of Franconia, N.H., died peacefully on July 21, 2024.

Rachel was born in Franconia, attending grades 1-12 and graduating from the Dow Academy in Franconia. Rachel was married to James Moulton in 1944 for 63 years. They had two sons, Larry and Perry.

During her life, Rachel taught skiing at Canon Mountain for 11 years until 1968. She was proud of being one of only 11 certified professional instructors in New England for nine of those years.

When her two sons were in high school, her career turned to the family retail business with the Gifts by Rae store on Littleton Main Street, which grew satellite stores bearing her name. The stores were in business in some form for 63 years. The stores were operated by her sons in later years.

Rachel enjoyed a brief social intervention when her husband worked in the Concord, N.H. state house for Governor Thompson in the mid-1970s. She followed politics ever since that time. In her own quiet way, she got along with everyone.

She was predeceased by her son, Perry, in 2019 and is survived by her son, Larry. She had no grandchildren.

There will be no formal services per Rachel's wishes.

To view Rachel's online tribute, or to send condolences to her family, please visit: <https://csnh.com/obituaries/>.

Francese A. (Chamberlain) Powers

Francese A. (Chamberlain) Powers, 87, Woodsville, N.H., passed away at her home with family by her side, on Wednesday, July 24, 2024. She was born on Dec. 31, 1936, in Barre, Vt., to Eula (Boardman) and Herbert Chamberlain, Sr.

She spent her childhood in Wells River in the apartment house beside St. Johnsbury Trucking, where her father worked as a manager. She graduated from Wells River High School in 1956. She married Dale Powers on Jan. 27, 1956, and was soon blessed with twins with three more little ones to follow giving her "five under five" as she would often say.

Francese devoted herself to keeping a loving home for her family but had plenty of hobbies to occupy her as well. She was an avid reader, especially of Danielle Steel novels. She liked to crochet, bake, work on her puzzle books, antiquing, and was always on the lookout for nesting hens to add to her collection. She enjoyed snowmobiling in the winter and working in her vegetable garden in the summer.

She and Dale loved to travel. Together they roamed the countryside in their motorhome and managed to make it to 49 states, and all of the Canadian providences. They liked to visit casinos whenever they could. There were several years they spent winters together in the sunny warmth of Florida.

Francese was predeceased by Dale on June 22, 2018, after 62 years of marriage; her son Alan Powers on June 3, 1978; her parents, Eula and Herbert Chamberlain, Sr.; her siblings, Herbert Chamberlain, Jr., Marion Darby, Irene Chamberlain, and Merlene Chamberlain.

Her memory will be cherished by her children, Gary Powers of



North Haverhill, Debra Millay and Roger of Union, Maine, Anita Locke of Newbury, and Mary Fitchett and Christopher of Grafton; seven grandchildren, nine great-grandchildren, and two great-great-grandchildren; her sister, E. Ida Colburn of Mississippi, as well as many nieces, nephews, cousins and close friends.

To offer the family an online condolence on the life of Francese, please visit www.rickerfh.com

Ricker Funeral Home & Cremation Care of Woodsville is assisting the family with arrangements.

Vic(tor) St Cyr

Vic(tor) St Cyr of Dalton, N.H. passed away suddenly at his home on July 18, 2024. Vic was born on June 3, 1956 to Leo and Dorothy (Stevens) St Cyr.

He was a graduate of WMRHS. Shortly after graduating he worked for the Town of Dalton with his Uncle. He then worked at the Gilman Mill (23) until it closed, from there he worked for the many cable companies; Adelphia, Time Warner and Spectrum until he retired in 2018.

Vic was a loving husband, father, grandfather and friend. He was a Great White Hunter, fisherman and a vintage snow machine enthusiast. Vic shared his love for hunting, fishing and racing with his sons and then his grandchildren. He took great pride in everything his sons and grandchildren did. He could often be seen driving the grandkids or at one of their many sporting or school events.

Vic loved his town and took great pride in being a lifelong resident of Dalton. He had a vast knowledge of town history and was on the Town Planning Board and a Town Selectman for 19+ years.

Vic married his high school sweetheart, Tammy (Coulter) St. Cyr, of 47 years. He and Tammy enjoyed many trips together and most recently to Old Orchard Beach with his entire family.

Vic was predeceased by his father, Leo; mother, Dorothy and father-in-law, Larry Coulter Sr. In addition to his loving wife he is survived by his sons Corey St Cyr (Haley), Shawn St Cyr (Emily Thompson); Grandchildren; Alan Smith, Tara St Cyr, Ian St Cyr, Antwan Alba, Lia St Cyr, Mick St Cyr, many nieces, nephews, cousins and many great friends.



Calling hours will be held at Bailey Funeral Home from 6-9 p.m. on Friday, Aug. 2, 2024. A Funeral Mass will be held at 2 p.m. on Saturday Aug. 3, 2024 at St. Matthew Church in Whitefield. Burial will follow at Cushman Cemetery in Dalton. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions can be made to the Dalton Food Bank.

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Thelma Esther Tower

April 16, 1930 - July 21, 2024.

Thelma Esther Tower, loving mother, grandmother and great-grandmother was called to be with our Lord in Heaven on July 21, 2024, at the age of 94.

She was born in Northumberland, N.H. to Roveal and Dorothy Brockney. She lived a long and beautiful life. Thelma first married Howard Sargent and they were blessed with two children, Linda (Sargent) Harran of Mary Esther, Fla. and Larry Sargent, Sr. of East Burke. After the tragic loss of Howard, Thelma went on to marry David Tower and they were blessed with two children, David Tower Jr. of East Burke and Kimberley Tower Downing of Kirby.

Thelma attended and graduated from Cosmetology School (with her daughter Linda) in St Johnsbury and did the bookkeeping for her husband David Tower's construction business for many years. She loved to sew, crochet, bake, read and write her special poems. She loved spending time with her family, of whom she was so incredibly proud. She loved her home and community, East Burke village, where she raised her family and resided for over 70 years. She was a true icon, known for her fancy hair, her high-heeled shoes and her put-together style. She is loved deeply and will be missed by so many.

Thelma is survived by her children Larry Sargent Sr (Theresa) Linda Harran (Frank) and Kim Downing, daughter-in-law Patsy Tower, grandchildren, Larry Sargent Jr, (Karen) Melyssa Whitcomb (Eddy), Eric Sargent (Danielle), Julie Tower, Christopher Tower (Elizabeth), Krystal Amidon (Justin), Kelly Lemieux (Jake), Kathryn Mello (Gabe) and Kara Downing, several great-grandchildren nieces, nephews, family members and her special friends, Elaine Laferriere, Julie Pandora, Victoria Singer and her best dog friend Suzie.

She was predeceased by Howard Sargent, David Tower Sr., David Tower Jr., Paul Downing, Elaine Sargent and Melynda Miller.

Memories and condolences may be shared with family at CaledoniaLifeServices.com.

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News Briefs

Littleton Bonds Two Big Projects, Renews EMS Contract With Franconia

LITTLETON—The Select Board, during its July 22 meeting, approved bond borrowing for two big projects and authorized a new one-year EMS/ambulance contract between the towns of Littleton and Franconia.

Bonds And Concerns About Rates

The discussion about bonding also prompted board members to say they needed to move on to finding new town office space.

Town finance director Lori Bolasevich requested the bond borrowing of \$602,200 for improvements to Dells Dam and \$610,000 for roadway culverts, approved by town meeting voters in the last few years.

Engineering work has been ongoing, and the town has since invested more than \$125,000. The projects are underway, and it's time to move forward with the borrowing process, she said.

Payments will begin in January 2025 and go through 2031.

Bank of New Hampshire, from which the town rents second-floor municipal office space at 125 Main St., has a fixed interest rate of 5.5 percent monthly.

Selectman Roger Emerson asked Bolasevich if she checked to see if

there are better rates elsewhere.

Bolasevich said the town's lease agreement with BNH requires it to do banking with BNH, or the base rent will increase.

"That's what I was afraid of," said Emerson.

Bolasevich read the provision in the agreement, which states if the tenant obtains financing from any other financial institution other than the landlord the base rent would be changed.

"We're over a barrel," said Emerson.

"That's why we're looking to move the town offices," said Linda MacNeil, board chair.

"It's about \$8,600 a year that our rent would increase if you go with somebody else," said Bolasevich. "I think it's best just to stick with Bank of New Hampshire, and if our living arrangement changes any time in the future, we can always rewrite the loan and get a better rate."

Interim town manager Paul Smith said the town does not have the \$8,600 in the operating budget to cover the cost of a rent increase.

The New Hampshire Municipal Bond Bank is offering a rate of 3.5 percent, said Bolasevich.

The total BNH interest that would be paid on the Dells Dam project is \$119,000, and the total interest paid for the roadway culverts would be \$121,000, making for what Emerson said is nearly a quarter of a million dollars.

"That's why we need our own place," said Emerson. "It's just not fair. It's something that got negotiated into the lease."

Bolasevich said there is no clause stating that the loan cannot be rewritten and refinanced in the future.

"Unfortunately, right now, they have us over a barrel," said MacNeil. "We need to work harder on figuring out where the town offices need to go and putting that together."

Smith said the architectural firm involved in presenting options to Littleton for new town office space will be available at the end of August.

In the meantime, board members agreed that they must undertake the bond borrowing now because the projects must be completed.

"I think you guys should just go for it because I can't put my name to it, and that's okay," said Emerson.

MacNeil and Select Board member Kerri Harrington voted to take out the two bonds at BNH's 5.5 percent interest rate, making for a 2-1 board vote.

"If we can get moved in two years, we can refi," said MacNeil. "If you borrow from the state, their rates are lower than commercial rates."

EMS Contract

The board voted 3-0 to approve a new one-year ambulance contract with Franconia.

In 2022, following the disbandment of the Franconia Life Squad for lack of volunteers, Littleton worked out a short-term arrangement with Franconia where Littleton Fire Rescue would provide EMS to Franconia, which would fully fund it.

The contract was extended by one year in 2023.

"This is year two," said LFR Chief Chad Miller.

The total amount of the new contract is \$672,924.84.

"The total expense piece is up," said Miller. "It reflects all of the normal increases that are expected to be provided... and we now have a mechanism for capital equipment in the contract in year two. Year one did not have the mechanism because it was a start-up."

He said the new contract calls for an additional \$40,000 a year to get on a 10-year ambulance replacement schedule.

The contract also pays for the four additional full-time LFR firefighters/EMTs who were hired in 2023, with Franconia paying the full cost.

Several weeks ago, Miller met with the Franconia Select Board.

"They seem to be very pleased with the services we're providing and they do want to meet with some of the surrounding communities that we also contract with to try to do some cost sharing amongst those communities," he said.

Following the Littleton board's July 22 vote to enter into another one-year contract, which will run from July 2024 through June 2025, a public hearing will be held in Littleton to accept the funding from Franconia.

"It seems to be working?" asked Emerson.

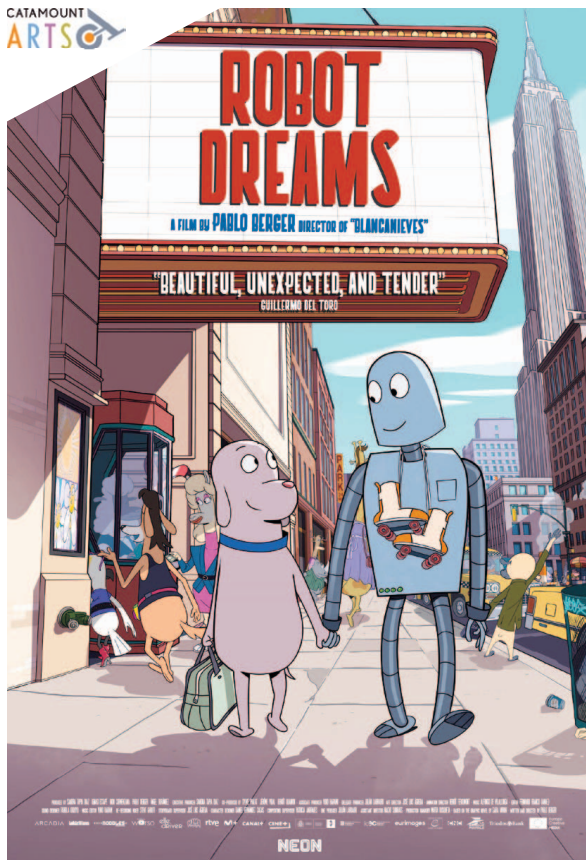
"I think it's a fair deal," said Miller.

WMRHS Poised To Strengthen Classroom Cell Phone Ban

WHITEFIELD — Cell phones may be banned in high school classrooms this fall.

See News Briefs, Page 9

ON THE COVER: Eric Pelletier of New Hampshire Homeland Security examines a culvert during a tour of damage caused by the remnants of Hurricane Beryl.



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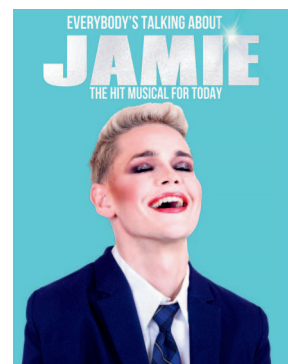
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News Briefs

Continued from Page 8

The White Mountains Regional School District’s leadership team is considering a policy update that would prevent high school students and staff from having cell phones on their person during instructional time.

Superintendent Marion Anastasia told the school board on July 25 that “[The district leadership team is] leaning towards absolutely no cell phones in any classroom whatsoever” in grades 9-12 for the 2024-25 school year.

However, she noted, “it’s going to be successful only if the teachers enforce it.”

The school board will hear a full report on the draft policy change next month.

It would strengthen and clarify the current policy, approved in August 2022, that requires students to turn off and refrain from using their cell phones in the classroom.

The policy was intended to bolster students learning and cut down on behavioral problems. It replaced a patchwork of classroom-by-classroom rules that had existed previously.

However, the school board in March learned the policy was not being uniformly enforced by staff.

In a follow-up discussion in April, high school co-principal Mike Curtis said the policy, as written, was a challenge to enforce.

He suggested it be amended to be more flexible, in order to reflect the realities of student cell phone use.

At his recommendation, school administrators agreed to craft an updated policy.

Curtis had said teachers were already overburdened with educational, disciplinary, social/emotional, record-keeping, and certification requirements.

“Teachers are juggling a lot of things, so in the list of daily things as an educator or administrator, where would you put cell phones?” Curtis asked the school board.

Curtis also suggested that the one-size-fits-all cell phone policy did not consider the differences between younger and older, more and less mature students.

“I need you to understand that it’s different with different classes,” Curtis said.

The current policy orders high school students to store their phones in secure locations away from their person during instructional hours.

The proposed policy update would allow high school students to use their cell phones during lunch and between periods, but not in classrooms, student advisory periods, or while using the bathroom.

Anastasia suggested the school district could purchase lockable cell phone pouches, produced by the company Yondr, as a way to support policy enforcement.

The magnetically sealed fabric pouches are used to lock up phones or other devices.

In other school districts, students are required to seal their phones in the pouches during the school day.

The pouches lock and unlock with the touch of a specialized magnets, which can be placed by school entrances and offices, and have become increasingly popular.

In the past eight years school districts in 41 states have spent \$2.5 million to buy pouches from Yondr, according to government purchas-

ing database GovSpend.

Supreme Court Upholds Woodburn’s Criminal Mischief Convictions

Two months after prosecutors dismissed the assault-domestic violence charges against ex-state Sen. Jeff Woodburn following a mistrial in March and a reversal of those convictions by the Supreme Court in 2023, the same court on July 23 affirmed his two criminal mischief convictions.

The court’s 4-page order — which comes without oral arguments and is based on the written arguments and record submitted with Woodburn’s appeal — paves the way for a 30-day jail sentence at the Coos County House of Corrections that was handed down by a Coos Superior Court judge following Woodburn’s first jury trial and resultant conviction in 2021 and reaffirmed by the judge in 2023.

See full story at www.CaledonianRecord.com

Town Authorizes AHEAD To Pursue \$500,000 Grant

WHITEFIELD — The Select Board on July 26 approved a

grant application for a downtown housing project. By a 3-0 vote, the board authorized Affordable Housing, Education and Development (AHEAD) Inc. to apply for a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) of up to \$500,000. Funds would go towards the estimated \$2.3 million renovation of 12 King Sq. The application will be decided on Nov. 7. See full story at www.CaledonianRecord.com

Littleton To Get New Ballot Tabulator Machines For Future Elections

LITTLETON — The AccuVote ballot tabulator machine has served Littleton for nearly three decades through many town

See News Briefs, Page 10

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News Briefs

Continued from Page 9

meetings, state and federal elections, and special town votes.

But its run is coming to an end. After 2024, the vendor will no longer service it.

During their meeting this week, the Select Board voted 3-0 to go with same vendor who is offering a modern and updated machine, which will be in place for its first election, the March 2026 town meeting.

See full story at www.CaledonianRecord.com

Littleton Seeking To Shift To Carberry Landfill

LITTLETON — With the uncertain fate of a proposed landfill in Dalton, Littleton is preparing to pivot to the Mt. Carberry landfill near Berlin.

Steve Bean, the Littleton Transfer Station manager, proposed to the select board on July 22.

"There are too many unknowns right now," he said.

See full story at www.CaledonianRecord.com

WMRSD Superintendent To Retire After One-Year Contract Extension

WHITEFIELD — White Mountains Regional School District Superintendent Marion Anastasia has agreed to a one-year contract extension.

Anastasia will serve through the end of the 2025-26 school year, at which point she will retire effective June 30, 2026.

The school board on July 25 approved the contract extension and retirement notice by unanimous vote.

Anastasia has served as WMRSD superintendent since July 1, 2015.

During her tenure, in response to declining enrollment, the five-town school district closed Jefferson Elementary in 2018 and developed plans for Pre-K and Grade 7/8 consolidation.

In addition, Anastasia has helped the school district meet challenges posed by a pandemic, Carroll's attempts to withdraw from the school district, multiple budget defeats, bus driver shortages, staffing shortfalls, and unfunded state mandates.

In spite of state efforts to downshift education costs onto local taxpayers, Anastasia has sought creative ways to increase WMRSD's special education and mental health support to meet growing student needs.

At nine years, she is the longest-tenured superintendent with a single public school district north of Franconia Notch.

See full story at www.CaledonianRecord.com

Governor & Council Celebrate Bethlehem's 250th

BETHLEHEM — The New Hampshire Governor and Council are on the road again, taking their summer meetings to locations across the state that each of the five councilors picked.

On July 24, they converged at Forest Society North, the New Hampshire Forest Society's new northern headquarters at The Rocks Estate, selected by District 2 Executive Councilor Cinde Warmington.

There, Gov. Chris Sununu and the Council presented two commendations — one, in recognition of the town of Bethlehem's 250th birthday, to be celebrated from Thursday, Aug. 8 to Saturday, Aug. 10, with events and activities, and the other, the 80th birthday of the North Haverhill Fair, which began on Wednesday.

Sununu noted that Bethlehem's 250th anniversary predates that of the nation.

See full story at www.CaledonianRecord.com

Local Protesters Gather At Governor & Council Meeting

BETHLEHEM — The July 24 on-the-road Governor and Council meeting at Forest Society North at The Rocks Estate drew two groups of local protesters making their voices heard.

The first set, comprising several dozen members from Save Forest Lake and the North Country Alliance for Balanced Change, gathered at the entrance to The Rocks, where they received some friendly honks from passing motorists, before heading up to attend the meeting.

The other group, carrying custom-made signs outside and into the meeting, was a Bethlehem family — Teresa and David Wood, and their daughters Iris and Sage, who protested Gov. Chris Sununu's July 19 signing of several bills, which they said are anti-LGBTQ+, marginalize trans people and trans youth, are discriminatory, and can pave the way for lawsuits.

Signed into law were House Bill 619, which prohibits gender reassignment surgery for minors under 18; HB 1205, which requires schools to designate athletics by gender and prohibit biological males who are trans girls from participating in female sports; and HB 1312, which requires teachers to provide a notice of two weeks to parents on classes regarding gender identity and expression and sexual orientation and allow a parent to opt out of course material if "the material is objectionable."

Sununu vetoed HB 396, which seeks to allow the classification of persons based on biological sex in restrooms and locker rooms, sporting competitions, and detention facilities.

In a statement, Sununu said HB 619 "ensures that life-altering, irreversible surgeries will not be performed on children," HB 1205 "ensures fairness and safety in women's sports by maintaining integrity and competitive balance in athletic competitions," and both bills "reflect commonsense, bipartisan solutions that reflect the values of parents across our state."

Not all local residents agree, including the Woods.

See full story at www.CaledonianRecord.com

NHDOT Estimates \$9 Million In Flood Damage To State Roads In Coos

The damage from the July 10 and 11 floods caused an estimated \$9 million on state roads in southern Coos County, the New Hampshire Department of Transportation commissioner said to the Governor and Council.

For one wash-out along Route 135 in Dalton, a temporary bridge is being erected that will be in place for the next few years while a permanent bridge is built.

During the July 24 on-the-road meeting at Forest Society North at The Rocks Estate, District 1 Executive Councilor asked NHDOT Commissioner Bill Cass, with whom he took a tour of the damage last week, about the process to make the area whole in regard to damaged state roads, culverts, and bridges, which took a big hit particularly in the towns of Lancaster and Dalton.

In all, primarily with the state roads within NHDOT's jurisdiction, there were six state roads and about 16 local full road closures the day after the storm, said Cass.

"Several days after that, we worked very hard getting the shoulder wash-outs and everything put back in order," he said.

By last week, most roads had been brought up to gravel, and

See News Briefs, Page 11

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News Briefs

Continued from Page 10

currently, there are only two extended road closures, one a bridge washed out in Dalton along Route 135 and the other a 60-inch culvert that washed out along Route 135 in Lancaster, said Cass. “Those will take some time to repair,” he said.
See full story at www.CaledonianRecord.com

Littleton Approves \$500K Emergency Expenditure, Meets With FEMA

LITTLETON — After a recent public hearing, the Select Board approved the first of what could be two emergency expenditures — this one for \$500,000 — from the town’s unreserved fund balance to put toward the repair of the July 10 and 11 flood damage to town roads and infrastructure.

To better determine the total estimated damage for possible state and federal reimbursement, Littleton Fire Rescue Chief Chad Miller further assessed the damage with representatives from the New Hampshire Department of Homeland Security and the Federal Emergency Management Administration during their visit to Littleton, which comes after visits to towns in southern Coos County earlier in the week.

The floods, Miller said to the Select Board on July 22, “had large-ranging financial implications for the town.”
See full story at www.CaledonianRecord.com

Most Parents Opposed To Changes Of Kids’ After-School, Summer Programs

During a public hearing on July 22, most parents and residents supported keeping their community’s in-town after-school and youth summer programs, which the Bethlehem Select Board is exploring, shifting to the Boys and Girls Club of the North Country for cost savings.

Among the reasons supporters cited for keeping them under the auspices of the town recreation department included the programs’ contribution to Bethlehem’s sense of community, the convenience of close to home, and the longer distance that would be required by some parents to fetch their kids from the Lisbon-based Boys and Girls Club and the extra transportation costs that would be incurred by working families.

Select Board member Nancy Strand, the board’s liaison to the recreation department, said at the outset of the hearing, which lasted nearly two hours and drew some two dozen speakers, that the board recognizes that the public hearing notice was a surprise to many residents.

The board’s intent was never to close the programs or eliminate the recreation department, which are essential to Bethlehem’s children, but to look at alternative after-school and summer camp programs, she said.

One of the main duties of a Select Board is fiduciary and managing expenses while balancing the costs of services and the burden on taxpayers, said Strand.

“With this past year’s reappraisal and subsequent rise in taxes, we take this responsibility even more seriously,” she said, adding that some residents are struggling.

Strand said that all town departments will face heavy scrutiny in the fall when budget hearings commence.

The Select Board recently learned of a new state rule for a paid minimum for municipal salaried employees, effective Jan. 1, which will represent a significant increase in recreation department expenses, she said.

At about the same time, the Bethlehem Select Board was one of several area boards receiving an invitation from the Boys and Girls Club to attend a June 25 discovery meeting, attended by Strand, to learn more about the club’s programs.
See full story at www.CaledonianRecord.com

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