



# The Littleton Weekly Record

THURSDAY, JUNE 25, 2026

LOCAL

Woman Dies In  
Head-On Crash; Fundraiser  
Launched For Local Family

FREE



**Littleton's Fillion Named GSC Northern Division Baseball Player of the Year**

- ***Dispute Over Marching Group Emerges After Old Home Day Parade Is Canceled***
- ***Creditor Says Bankrupt Senior Living Community Owes \$44 Million-Plus***
- ***Casella Withdraws Landfill Permit Application For Dalton***

## LOCAL

# NCH Provides Update On Status Of Weeks Medical Center President Search, Board Recruitment At Listening Session

BY PAUL HAYES  
Staff Writer

LANCASTER — North Country Healthcare plans to begin recruiting a permanent president for Weeks Medical Center within days and will wait for an independent governance consultant before refilling vacant seats on the hospital's board, CEO Tom Mee said during a virtual public listening session Monday.

The announcements address two of the key requirements imposed by the New Hampshire Attorney General's Charitable Trusts Unit after a months-long investigation found governance failures at North Country Healthcare, particularly involving Weeks Medical Center.

The state review — launched last fall after citizen complaints and media reports raised concerns about governance, executive compensation, contracting practices and access to primary

care — concluded that North Country Healthcare failed to follow its bylaws when former Weeks Medical Center President Mike Lee was removed in 2024. Investigators also found the organization failed to begin a search for a permanent replacement, a lapse that contributed to significant turnover on the Weeks board.

As part of a settlement agreement reached in May, North Country Healthcare agreed to work with an independent governance consultant, continue holding public listening sessions, provide annual board training, reconstitute its affiliate boards and recruit a permanent president for Weeks Medical Center. The consultant is expected to provide regular public reports on the organization's progress.

During Monday's online listening session, a participant asked about the status of those efforts.

Mee said the search for a permanent Weeks president is about to begin.

"We are going to be posting the



North Country Healthcare CEO Tom Mee speaks during a community listening session held at Lancaster Elementary School on Feb. 3, 2026. (Photo by Paul Hayes)

Weeks Medical Center president position any day now," Mee said.

He did not provide additional details about the search timeline or whether any interim leaders would be considered for the permanent position.

Mee said the organization is also waiting for its governance consultant to begin work before filling vacancies on the Weeks board.

"The efforts to reconstitute the Weeks Medical Center board, we are

waiting until the governance consultant has started, and I'll be working in concert with him to fill those positions," Mee said. "In the interim, if people have interest, they can always reach out to me."

He did not say how many board seats are vacant or what qualifications will be sought in prospective board members.

Monday's online meeting was one of four listening sessions scheduled across the North Country between June 18 and June 24. The sessions are being conducted in partnership with NH Listens, a program of the Carsey School of Public Policy at the University of New Hampshire, and are required under the settlement agreement with the Attorney General's Office.

"We are here to listen tonight," Mee told participants at the start of the meeting, adding that if administrators could not answer a question immediately, "we commit to getting back to you with a response as quickly as possible."

North Country Healthcare said more than 300 people participated in an earlier round of listening sessions this year in Lancaster, Berlin and Colebrook. Participants raised concerns about access to care, staffing, communication and local control while also expressing support for maintaining local health care services.

The Attorney General's investigation did not identify legal violations related to executive compensation, the outsourcing of revenue cycle management services or the departure of physician Dr. Elizabeth Cooley.

Mee closed Monday's session by thanking participants and encouraging them to attend future forums.

"If nothing else, you gave us an opportunity to talk about the projects that we're most proud of, and we don't often get an opportunity to do that, so thank you for that," he said. "We'll be doing these consistently, so keep an eye on your calendars, and we'll be back."

## Retired Judge Named Governance Consultant For North Country Healthcare

BY PAUL HAYES  
Staff Writer

CONCORD — The New Hampshire Attorney General's Office has selected retired Circuit Court Administrative Judge David D. King to serve as the independent governance consultant overseeing reforms at North Country Healthcare under a settlement agreement reached earlier this year.

The appointment is one of the key requirements stemming from a review by the Attorney General's Charitable Trusts Unit that found governance deficiencies at North Country Healthcare and its affiliate hospitals, including Weeks Medical Center.

Attorney General John M. Formella announced King's selection on Tuesday.

"Judge King is uniquely qualified for this role and to work with NCH and its affiliate hospitals to strengthen their adherence to their governing agreements, bolster their oversight of management, and improve their communications with the North Country communities they serve," Formella said.

The Charitable Trusts Unit's investigation



Retired Judge David King (N.H. Bar Association)

concluded that North Country Healthcare failed to follow its bylaws when former Weeks Medical Center President Mike Lee was removed in 2024 and later failed to begin a search for a permanent replacement. Investigators found those actions contributed to significant turnover on the Weeks Medical Center board.

As part of a settlement agreement with the state, North Country Healthcare agreed to work with an independent governance consultant, continue public listening sessions, provide annu-

See King, Page 6



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NORTHUMBERLAND

# Charges Against Former Town Clerk, Assistant Town Clerk Dismissed

BY PAUL HAYES  
Staff Writer

NORTHUMBERLAND — The Coos County Attorney's Office has dismissed all charges against former Northumberland Deputy Town Clerk Courtney McLain and former Town Clerk Melinda "Min" Kennett, ending a case that had been pending for more than two years and was headed toward retrial following a mistrial last year.

Defense attorney Leif Becker announced the dismissals on Monday.

"Yesterday, at approximately 10:25 pm, the Coos County Attorney's Office entered Notices of Nolle Prosequi (dismissal) on all charges against Becker Legal clients Courtney McLain and Melinda 'Min' Kennett, citing insufficient evidence for prosecution. The dismissal

of these 44 combined charges came mere hours before the parties were to appear for a final pretrial to schedule a trial in these matters," Becker said in a statement.

"This decision follows a November 2025 jury trial in which a mistrial was declared after the state's investigator gave non-responsive and inadmissible testimony.

"From the onset, we have felt that the evidence in this matter not only failed to establish guilt but also spoke to the innocence of the Defendants.

"The State's insistence on the 2024 arrest of Ms. McLain mere days prior to a town election in which she was running for town clerk, while simultaneously not insisting on the immediate arrest of her codefendant raised concerns of intentional election interference.

"We congratulate Ms. Mc-

Lain and Ms. Kennett on their long-awaited vindication in this matter."

McLain had faced 28 Class A misdemeanor charges alleging she used another person's credentials to access the state Department of Motor Vehicles system and processed 28 transactions without authorization on May 5, 2023.

Kennett was charged with 16 counts of accomplice liability, accused of either failing to supervise McLain or aiding the conduct while serving as town clerk.

The dismissals came months after Coos County Superior Court Judge Lawrence MacLeod declared mistrials in both cases.

In a Nov. 6, 2025 order, MacLeod found that a state investigator improperly referenced the defendants' prior criminal trial while testifying before a

jury. References to previous proceedings are prohibited in a de novo trial, where charges are retried from the beginning.

MacLeod wrote that the defendants moved for a mistrial immediately after the state's lead investigator "impermissibly made explicit reference" to learning of incriminating evidence during the defendants' earlier circuit court trial, which had resulted in guilty verdicts.

Although the investigator did not directly testify that the defendants had previously been convicted of the same charges, MacLeod found the likelihood that jurors would draw that

conclusion was "unacceptably high."

The judge declared a mistrial without prejudice, allowing prosecutors to retry the cases. He denied a defense motion to dismiss and ordered the matters returned to the docket for a future trial.

At the time, Becker urged prosecutors to abandon the case.

"The state has the discretion to bring these cases to trial again, but it would be my hope that the state would exercise that discretion in dismissing these charges," Becker told The Caledonian-Record following

the mistrial. "Especially given the context that witnesses intended to be called by the state in their prosecution would have spoken to the innocence of the defendants."

Becker has long argued that the case against McLain was politically motivated. McLain was arrested four days before the March 12, 2024, town election, in which she lost a race for town clerk and tax collector.

The Coos County Attorney's Office cited insufficient evidence in its notices dismissing the charges. A response from the office was not immediately available.

## ON THE COVER

Littleton starter Chase Fillion fires a pitch during the Crusaders' 14-4 win over Groveton in a New Hampshire Division IV baseball game at Remich Park on Tuesday, May 26, 2026. The Littleton junior took home GSC Northern Division Baseball Player of the Year honors following an exceptional spring for the Crusaders, who earned the No. 4 seed and a spot in the New Hampshire Division IV final four. (Photo by Michael Beniash)

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## FRANCONIA

# Dispute Over Marching Group Emerges After Old Home Day Parade Is Canceled

BY PAUL HAYES  
Staff Writer

FRANCONIA — Franconia's annual Old Home Day parade has been canceled after the volunteers who organized it for the past two years stepped away and no new organizers came forward, but a social media dispute has raised questions about whether controversy from last year's parade played a role.

The parade's Facebook page said the cancellation resulted from a lack of volunteers.

"Unfortunately there were not enough people who step forward to carry on the tradition," the page wrote.

The page said two part-time residents who organized the parade in 2024 and 2025 stepped away "for personal reasons" and had been seeking volunteers since January.

But one of those organizers later suggested another factor was involved.

John Saba, who wrote that he was one of four people who organized and ran the parade over the past two years, said he had remained silent about the issue

until now.

"The reason we stepped away from the parade is because of what happened last year," Saba wrote in a Facebook comment that was later liked by the parade's official account.

At the center of the dispute is North Country Resilience, a local pro-democracy group that marched in the 2025 parade.

Saba said organizers repeatedly objected to allowing the group to participate because they viewed it as a protest organization. He alleged the Franconia Notch Regional Chamber of Commerce overruled those objections and required organizers to include the group.

Saba further alleged that members of the group carried an upside-down American flag, displayed "No Kings" signs and deliberately slowed the parade, causing fire trucks behind them to move slowly.

"THERE IS NO PLACE FOR POLITICAL BULLS\*\*T in an old home day parade," Saba wrote.

Members of North Country Resilience strongly disputed those allegations.

Beth Gelber Harwood, a



Among the participants in Franconia's 2025 Old Home Day parade was North Country Resilience. (File Photo/Robert Blechl)

member of the group, said North Country Resilience supports the Constitution, Bill of Rights and rule of law and is "not politically aligned right or left."

She said the group followed instructions from parade organizers and marched only with signs identifying the organization.

"We did not hold a 'NO KINGS' sign or any other political message during the parade!" Harwood wrote.

Harwood acknowledged the group moved slowly but said it was because of high temperatures and health issues affecting one of the flag bearers, not as a form of protest.

She also said group leaders do not support displaying an

upside-down American flag and that a young participant carried a small one without leadership's knowledge.

Another member of North Country Resilience, Lucy Golden, said she watched the parade while operating a booth at the Old Home Day art show but did not march with the group.

"The intention was to specifically not offend anyone, and that the accusations put forth by an organizer [Saba] were a total surprise and not accurate," Golden wrote.

"There were no 'No Kings' signs, political messages or hostility."

Golden said she did not see an upside-down flag during the parade, although she acknowledged "there may have been a small upside-down flag held by a young person that the group missed."

"We absolutely respect veterans and have some in our group," she wrote.

Golden also said the group's slow pace was caused by health limitations affecting one of the marchers.

The disagreement has prompted debate over whether political groups belong in the parade at all.

Several residents noted that political participation has long been part of Franconia's Old Home Day tradition.

Over the years, the parade has included candidates for local, county, state and federal office, as well as local Democratic and Republican party organizations. More recently, the parade included Our Friends, Our Neighbors, a group that advocates for LGBTQ+ equity and inclusion, without public controversy.

Robert Owen Williams wrote that "Politics has always been a part of Franconia's Old Home Day parade, many political candidates and various political groups from different political parties have participated in the parade over the years."

Golden pointed to a parade several years ago that featured six Democratic presidential

candidates.

"Tulsi Gabbard, Seth Moulton and Amy Klobuchar were three of them," she wrote. "And everyone loved it, no matter what their political persuasion."

Golden also stressed that North Country Resilience is not affiliated with either major political party.

"Part of our mission is to welcome anyone who wants to make change and to stand up for the Constitution, and we have a diverse group," she wrote.

It remains unclear whether the dispute over North Country Resilience directly contributed to the lack of volunteers this year. However, Saba's comments are the first public indication from a former organizer that last year's controversy influenced the decision to step away from organizing the event.

Saba also alleged that money raised to help expand future parades, including funds intended to hire additional bands, was left in the care of the Franconia Notch Regional Chamber of Commerce and that organizers had not received confirmation from the town regarding those funds.

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## LITTLETON

# Creditor Says Bankrupt Senior Living Community Owes \$44 Million-Plus

## Service Credit Union Seeks To Convert Chapter 11 Bankruptcy To Chapter 7

BY ROBERT BLECHL  
Staff Writer

LITTLETON — The main creditor owed \$30 million in the bankruptcy of a defunct senior living community is asking the court for a new bankruptcy classification and a trustee, saying that the owners owe more than \$44 million, have no way to pay, and a reorganization is not realistic.

On March 30, Granite Senior Services LLC (GSS), whose corporate owners are listed as George Papadimitos of Littleton and Michael Papadimitos of Brookline, N.H., filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection after the money ran out and the work ground to a halt nearly a year ago.

The company was formed in 2018 by George Papadimitos, its manager and the owner of a four-lot property at 1262 St. Johnsbury Road and Bigelow Loop, where the campus would be located, near Littleton Regional Healthcare.

Planned were more than 100 living units, including two dozen cottages and 40 apartments, 35 assisted-living units, and 20 memory care units, along with a medical office building.

In 2022, the project received a \$20.638 million community facility loan from the U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development.

In 2025, Artemis Living at Littleton was formed to spearhead the project.

On June 17, two months after GSS filed for bankruptcy, a hearing at the federal bankruptcy court was held for a request

by Service Credit Union (SCU) to convert the current Chapter 11 case, which is a debt reorganization process overseen by a court and where the debtor often remains operating as a business, to a Chapter 7 case, which, over the course of months, would eliminate the majority of unsecured debts through a liquidation process that requires the debtor to sell non-exempt assets to pay off creditors.

SCU also asks the court to appoint a Chapter 7 trustee to administer the estate.

In a May 20 filing, SCU said GSS, as the debtor in possession, "is presently not operating a business and has no income."

The residential building is only 70 to 85 percent complete, and GSS's general contractor, Dan Hebert, of Colebrook, who has filed suit against GSS to collect nearly \$8 million in payments owed, said it will cost about \$6.5 million to complete the project's first phase, said SCU attorneys Deborah Notinger and Timothy Britain.

"The Debtor ran out of money after various cost overruns and problems with the Project, particularly with the water and sewer needed for the Project to qualify for a certificate of occupancy," they said. "After the Debtor ran out of funding, work on the Project stopped. Except for winterization paid for by SCU to the general contractor in or about November 2025, work on the Project stopped in August 2025."

SCU is owed approximately \$30 million under its first-position lien.

The property, though, is currently worth about \$21 million,



Service Credit Union, the main creditor in the senior living community bankruptcy in Littleton, says more than \$44 million is owed by Granite Senior Services. SCU seeks a reclassification of the bankruptcy and is asking the court to appoint a trustee. (File photo by Robert Blechl)

much less than the amount of liens recorded against it, said Notinger and Britain.

In addition to SCU's first-position lien on the property, there are junior liens totaling some \$14 million and unpaid real estate taxes of at least \$209,000, accruing interest at a rate of 8 percent per year, they said.

The town of Littleton will be issuing another property tax bill to GSS in June 2026 for an additional \$100,000.

There are also other challenges, said the SCU attorneys.

"SCU has heard from the engineers on the Project that the Project requires SWPPP (Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan) monitoring (which is not occurring), vegetation, gravel, and other site work before it meets the requirements of the state SWPPP plan in place for the Project," they said.

SCU has previously filed a motion for relief from stay (MFR) to ensure that its claims will not be automatically paused through the bankruptcy process. Stays, which

are common in bankruptcies, would block a creditor like SCU from foreclosing or repossessing property. If the relief is granted, it would allow a creditor to proceed with collection.

Given the disparity between the \$21 million value of the property — and excluding the \$6.5 million required to finish phase one — the liens of at least \$44 million, "and the Debtor's complete lack of funds to pay adequate protection payments to SCU, or even to maintain the Project 'as is,' or pay its real estate taxes," SCU expects that its MFR will be granted, said Notinger and Britain.

"If the MFR is granted, there will be nothing to reorganize, and the Debtor will not be able to file or confirm a feasible plan of reorganization that can be implemented within a reasonable amount of time ...," they said. "Further, the Project has and will continue to suffer a diminution in value that cannot be reasonably rehabilitated until such time as

SCU is able to foreclose on its mortgage on the Property.

"Even if the MFR is not granted in the near term, there is no equity in the Project, and no income for the Debtor," they said. "Thus, the Project will continue to suffer a diminution in value that cannot be reasonably rehabilitated. By the time this Motion is heard, the Project will have been idle for approximately 10 months, and substantial real estate taxes will have gone unpaid for three tax periods (18 months), with no resolution in sight."

Any plan that might be filed by GSS appears like it would be unfunded "and/or will rely on dubious litigation with the Debtor's secured creditors, which will not provide any benefit to the bankruptcy estate," said Notinger and Britain.

Under federal law, a debtor is required to file a plan that shows there is "a reasonable possibility of a successful reorganization within a reasonable time," they said.

"The Debtor is not operating, has no money, owes secured creditors in excess of \$44 million on Property worth \$21 million, on which the Debtor requires an additional approximately \$6.5 million dollars just to finish

Phase 1," said Notinger and Britain. "The Debtor has been unable to secure DIP [debtor-in-possession] financing or identify a refinancing partner. There is no way that the Debtor can file a reasonable plan of reorganization within a reasonable amount of time."

Under federal statute and on request of a party in interest, the court shall convert a case to Chapter 7 or dismiss a case under Chapter 11, whichever is in the best interests of creditors and the estate, they said.

"SCU further submits that conversion of the case to Chapter 7, rather than dismissal, is in the best interests of the creditors of the Debtor as there are various pieces of heavy equipment listed in the Debtor's schedules that have been used for the Project that can be sold by a Chapter 7 Trustee for the benefit of unsecured creditors in a Chapter 7 case," said Notinger and Britain.

The hearing on June 17 was continued.

As of Tuesday, the court had not issued a decision on SCU's Chapter 7 request.

George Papadimitos has not returned calls inquiring about his next steps in the process.



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### LISBON PUBLIC LIBRARY - ACCESSIBILITY RAMP PROJECT

45 School Street, Lisbon, NH.

Project consists of: Demolition of the existing entrance stair structure, including salvage for reinstallation of granite steps, construction of new entry stairs with an accessibility ramp and replacement of the existing front entrance door.

Bid Date: July 13, 2026

Bid Time: Receipt by 5:00 p.m.

Location: Lisbon Public Library, 45 School Street, Lisbon, NH.03585

All information can be found as of June 4, 2026 at:

Lisbon Public Library website: [lisbonpubliclibrary.org](http://lisbonpubliclibrary.org)

Town of Lisbon website: [lisbonnh.org](http://lisbonnh.org) News and Announcements

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## Woman Dies In Head-On Crash; Local Family Transported To DHMC

COLUMBIA, N.H. — A 25-year-old Pelham woman was killed and five members of a family were hospitalized following a head-on collision Friday night on Route 3 in Columbia, according to New Hampshire State Police.

Troopers from Troop F responded to the crash shortly after 9 p.m. June 19.

A preliminary investigation found that a 2021 Chevrolet Silverado was traveling southbound and a 2012 Chevrolet Camaro was traveling northbound when the Camaro crossed the centerline and collided head-on with the Silverado. Investigators said the reason the Camaro crossed into the opposite lane remains under investigation.

The driver and sole occupant of the Camaro, identified as Courtney Diamond, 25, of Pelham, suffered fatal injuries and was pronounced dead at the scene.

The Silverado was occupied by a family of five, including two adults and three children. Several bystanders stopped immediately after the crash to assist the occupants of both vehicles, police said.

[An online fundraiser](https://www.gofundme.com/f/support-for-the-pariseau-family-after-accident) (<https://www.gofundme.com/f/support-for-the-pariseau-family-after-accident>) launched by Christa Howe-Lambert identified the family as the Pariseaus from Colebrook.

“The Pariseau family, a local family of five, recently experienced a devastating head-on accident on June 19th,” said the GoFundMe campaign. “The accident has resulted in significant medical needs, ongoing transportation challenges, and added living expenses that the family simply cannot manage alone.... Every donation will go directly toward medical care, transportation, and daily living costs, making a real difference in their recovery.”



*The Pariseau family. (GoFundMe)*

As of Wednesday morning, the campaign had raised \$74,175. Brian Pariseau is the owner of Ducret’s Sporting Goods, which has been serving the North Country hunting and fishing community for over 50 years.

The Pariseaus were transported to Upper Connecticut Valley Hospital in Colebrook. Two suffered non-life-threatening injuries, while three sustained life-threatening injuries. All five were later transferred to Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center for further treatment.

New Hampshire State Police were assisted at the scene by the Colebrook Police Department, Colebrook Fire Department, New Hampshire Fish and Game Department, Pittsburg Police Department, Stratford Fire Department and 45th Parallel EMS.

Route 3 was closed for approximately 3 1/2 hours while investigators processed the scene and cleared the roadway.

The crash remains under investigation. Anyone with information about the collision is asked to contact Trooper Jacob Ingerson at 603-846-3333.

## King

Continued from Page 2

al board training, reconstitute its affiliate boards and recruit a permanent president for Weeks Medical Center.

King, who grew up in Colebrook and still has family in the area, practiced law in the North Country for more than two decades. From 1984 to 2007, he managed the law firm of Waystack & King in Colebrook. He also served as presiding judge of the Coos County Probate Court from 1990 to 2007.

According to the Attorney General’s Office, King has extensive nonprofit governance experience, including 20 years as a board officer at Upper Connecticut Valley Hospital.

Under the settlement agreement, King will oversee efforts to improve governance at North

Country Healthcare and its affiliates. His responsibilities include helping recruit and train independent board members, periodically attending board meetings, meeting quarterly with the chair of the North Country Healthcare board and meeting quarterly with Sen. David Rochefort to receive community feedback.

King will also submit quarterly progress reports to the Charitable Trusts Unit. Those reports will be made public and will track North Country Healthcare’s efforts to address issues identified in the state’s review.

“I am grateful Judge King is willing to serve in this consulting role, and I know that his commitment to the North Country, combined with his judicial background and board leadership experience, will give NCH and its affiliate boards and management the necessary tools to remedy the deficiencies set forth in CTU’s report and rebuild community trust,” Formella said.

## OBITUARIES

## SISTER MONIQUE GAGNE

Sister Monique Gagne was called by her loving God on June 7, 2026 at the age of 93 years. Sister was born on May 14, 1933 in Magog, Quebec.

Sister Monique made profession of vows in the Congregation of the Daughters of the Charity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in 1952, in Sherbrooke, QC, with 74 years of profession in our Congregation.

Sister Monique was a very focused person, always striving to share her spirituality of making the Sacred Heart of Jesus known and loved, which is the mission of our religious Congregation. Sister's love for God and nature shined through in her competent skills as a communicator, in teaching in various states of our US Province, namely: Champlain, NY, Newport and Burlington, VT, and Colebrook, NH. Later in life, after professional training, Sister served as a spiritual director on staff at Berakah Center in Pittsfield, NH. Many individuals from all walks of life sought guidance in their spiritual lives. Retreat animation became an important mission in her serving various religious congregations as well as for our Associate Group in the US Province.

Sister Monique became a Vicar for Religious in the Diocese of Ogdensburg, NY from 1984 to 1988. In 2005, Sister was appointed as Provincial Superior for the US Province of our Congregation.

Sister Monique was predeceased by her father, Oliva Gagne of Waterloo, QC, her mother, Leonie Langlois (Gagne), of Magog, QC, two brothers,



Onide Gagne, Bertrand Gagne, and three sisters, Gisele Gagne, Yolande Goyette, Violette Gagne. She is survived by a sister, Nicole Gosselin and several nieces and nephews.

Due to declining health, Sister took residence at the Warde Assistant Living Center in Windham, NH and later at Holy Cross Health Care Center in Manchester, NH. We wish to thank sincerely the Sisters of Mercy and the Sisters of Holy Cross with their staff who gave such loving attention to our Sister while in their care.


Sister Monique now enjoys the profound peace and joy that she so well deserves from a life lived in love and service for God's people, family and her Sisters in community.

On June 23, 2026, the Mass of Christian Funeral will take place at Mount Sacred Heart Chapel, 226 Grove St. Littleton, NH at 10 a.m., with Father Ryan Amazeen officiating. Burial will take place at St Mary's Cemetery, Coventry Street, Newport, VT, at 2 p.m.

In lieu of flowers, donations in memory of Sister Monique Gagne may be made to the Daughters of the Charity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, 226 Grove St. Littleton, NH 03561,

The Ross Funeral Home, Littleton, NH, and Curtis Britch & Bouffard Funeral Home, Newport VT, are overseeing arrangements. To offer your condolences please visit [www.rossfuneral.com](http://www.rossfuneral.com)

## JOHN MACDONALD III

 John Herbert MacDonald III, 79, of Littleton, New Hampshire, passed away on Saturday, June 13, 2026, at Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center in Lebanon, New Hampshire, after a brief illness.

Born on May 28, 1947, at his family home in Warren, New Hampshire, John was the son of John H. MacDonald Jr. and Grace (Tewksbury) MacDonald. He attended Warren Village School and graduated from Plymouth Regional High School.

John served in the Army National Guard as a Private (E-2) with Company A, 2nd Battalion, 172nd Armor in Bradford, Vermont. He served as an Armor Crewman (MOS 11E10).

Following his military service, John owned and operated MacDonald Drilling & Blasting for many years. Known for his love of the work and his larger-than-life personality, he earned the nickname "Boom Boom" among friends. After retiring from the drilling and blasting business, he tried his hand at masonry work. To his family, however, he was simply and affectionately known as "Johnny."

John was a member of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks in Littleton, New Hampshire, for 40 years. He enjoyed spending time there with friends, sharing stories and a cold beverage. John also loved



the outdoors and could often be found hunting and fishing.

John was predeceased by his parents, John H. MacDonald Jr. and Grace MacDonald, and by his niece, Arlene, daughter of his sister, Catherine Lee.

He is survived by his son, John H. MacDonald IV and his wife, Terry MacDonald; his son, Andrew MacDonald; his granddaughter, Madelyn MacDonald; his great-grandchildren, Peyton and Calian; his siblings, Catherine Lee, Sharon Donahue, Kim (Deborah) Finney, and Barry Mac-

Donald; and his nieces and nephews, Gina, Michael, Jeff, Denise, Ginny, Patty, Mia, Heather, Sarah, Allison, Ashley, Tristan, and Stephanie.

A graveside service will be held at 10 a.m. on Thursday, June 25, 2026, at High Street Cemetery in Warren, NH where John will be laid to rest beside his parents.

Following the graveside service, a Celebration of Life will be held at noon at the Littleton Elks Lodge. Family and friends are warmly invited to attend both services.

Assisting the family with arrangements is Phaneuf Funeral Homes and Crematorium.

To view John's Online Tribute, send condolences to the family, or for more information, visit [www.phaneuf.net](http://www.phaneuf.net).

## RAE REED (SANBORN)

Rae Eloise Reed (Sanborn), 74, of North Haverhill, New Hampshire, passed away peacefully at her home, surrounded by her loving family, on June 17, 2026.

Rae was born on Oct. 10, 1951, in St. Johnsbury, Vermont, to John and Eleanor Sanborn. She attended schools in St. Johnsbury and carried with

her throughout life a strong sense of dedication, resilience, and quiet strength. At a young age, she married Walter Rainey, and together they had three children.

Rae was known for her tireless work ethic and commitment in every role she held. Over the years, she worked in a variety of positions—from her early days as a car hop waitress at the Frosty Bar, to caring for the Barnet School and the State Police Barracks in St. Johnsbury. She devoted many years to E.H.V., where she spent the majority of her working career, and later in life, she lovingly served as a caregiver to two sisters in New Hampshire.

On Feb. 14, 1985, Rae married the love of her life, Ronald Reed of North Haverhill. Together, they shared 41 wonderful years filled with love, laughter, and cherished traditions. They enjoyed attending auctions and collecting antiques, a passion that led Rae to open her own antique shop for a time. Rae and Ron also made lasting memories through family vacations to Maine, trips to amusement parks, and hosting meaningful holiday gatherings.

Rae was a talented, self-taught quilter who created countless treasured quilts for her grandchildren and great-grandchildren, each one stitched with love. She found joy in tending her flower gardens wherever life took her. The Christmas season held a special place in her heart; she delighted in decorating her home, baking cookies with her grandchildren and later great-grandchildren, and hosting the annual family Christmas



celebration.

She also enjoyed watching birds, especially hummingbirds at her feeders, and visiting ducks at local ponds. In her final days, she found comfort in visits from a chipmunk she affectionately named "Chippy."

Rae is survived by her beloved husband, Ronald Reed; her children, Wanda Berwick

and her husband Bruce, and William "Bill" Rainey; her stepdaughters, Pam Roberts and her husband Steve, and Michelle Elliott and her husband Mark, along with their families; eight grandchildren, Krystal, Nikki, Alycia, Brittany, Jennifer, Brett, Gage, and Holli; as well as many great-grandchildren, nieces, and nephews.

She was predeceased by her parents, John and Eleanor Sanborn; her sisters, Helen Sanborn, Mae Shatney, and Charlotte (Christie) Fisher and her husband Jerry; her son, Walter "Little Walt" Rainey III; and her nephew, Brian Sanborn.

A private service will be held for Rae with her immediate family. Those who wish may make contributions in memory of Rae, honoring her love for animals, to a local animal rescue of their choice.

The family extends their heartfelt gratitude to the many compassionate caregivers who supported Rae throughout her health journey and in her final days, including Dr. Vijay Thadani, Dr. Tanner of Danville Health Center, the staff at Little Rivers in Wells River, Cottage Hospital, Grafton County Nursing Home, and the dedicated team at North Country Home Health & Hospice Agency.

Rae will be deeply missed and lovingly remembered by all who knew her. To offer the family an online condolence, please visit [www.rickerfh.com](http://www.rickerfh.com) Ricker Funeral Home & Cremation Care of Woodsville is assisting the family with arrangements.

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# Casella Withdraws Landfill Permit Application For Dalton

## Public Documents: Casella Leachate Exceedances Continue In Bethlehem

BY ROBERT BLECHL  
STAFF WRITER

After seven deadline extensions and two years of repeated requests for more information, Casella Waste Systems has withdrawn a major permit application for a commercial landfill beside Forest Lake in Dalton before the state could approve or deny it.

This week's voluntary withdrawal of the wetlands permit application comes after the proj-

ect, for more than seven years, has been a magnet of opposition in the North Country and beyond and follows Gov. Kelly Ayotte's statements that there will never be a landfill by Forest Lake State Park.

It follows, too, an April 2025 denial by the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services of Casella's standard solid waste permit application, after DES concluded that Casella repeatedly omitted required information and has not provided evidence that it has the legal

right to use the Dalton property, which it has an option to purchase, for the proposed landfill use.

Casella has appealed that denial.

On Monday, Toni King, a regional engineer for Casella, wrote DES to say that the company is formally withdrawing the wetlands permit application for what it calls the Granite State Landfill (GSL), though with the right to resubmit at a later date and in coordination with federal, state, and local approval re-

quests.

### Casella, Landfill Opponents Respond

"We withdrew the permit application to ensure that the review process is properly aligned with the solid waste permit that is currently under appeal," Casella spokesman Jeff Weld said Wednesday. "Proceeding in this manner allows the relevant regulatory considerations to be addressed in a coordinated and consistent way, rather than in parallel tracks that could create confusion or inefficiency."

Opponents, though, were encouraged by the news and, pointing to project headwinds, aren't convinced that GSL is sailing through blue skies.

"The withdrawal of Casella's wetlands permit application is another indication of just how troubled and problematic this proposal has been from the outset," Wayne Morrison, president of the North Country Alliance for Balanced Change, and Tom Tower, vice-president of NCABC, said in a statement.

"Despite years of review, the company has been unable to provide the information that [DES] has repeatedly requested," they said.

It is important to note that Monday marks the second time that Casella has withdrawn its wetlands permit application, said Morrison and Tower.

"The repeated withdrawal of permit applications raises serious questions about the suitability of this site for a landfill of this magnitude," they said. "After years of review and extensive public scrutiny, the inability to advance a critical permit only reinforces concerns that this proposal is fundamentally flawed."

"While we acknowledge Casella's statement that it intends to continue pursuing this project, NCABC and the thousands of residents, businesses, property owners, and visitors who oppose this landfill remain equally committed to protecting the North Country, Forest Lake, and the region's clean water resources," said Morrison and Tower. "The withdrawal of the permit is a significant development, but it does not signal the end of this fight."

"As Casella slinks away from this needless, ruinous vanity project, my concern as a taxpayer and former federal regulator is with DES," said Adam Finkel, a professor of environmental health sciences and former OSHA regulator, who lives in Dalton.

"It should have taken DES seven hours to nix a project that they were still helping along seven years later," said Finkel. "As soon as they received the application, a sensible agency would have denied it on the grounds that excess capacity already existed far into the future, and that no one in their right mind would propose dumping garbage in an active sand and gravel operation, next to a lake."

Weld did not respond to questions about when Casella will resubmit the wetlands application and how the company will pursue GSL amid opposition at the local and state levels. He declined an opportunity to speak specifically to the governor's opposition.

"The proposed development of GSL is driven by the demonstrated need for disposal capacity to serve customers and businesses in more than 200 New Hampshire communities currently relying on the North Country Environmental Services (NCES) Landfill in Bethlehem, which is expected to cease operations in 2027," he said.

"If additional disposal capacity is not permitted, those communities will need to transport waste to other facilities, which could result in increased transportation costs and reduced competition in the marketplace," said Weld. "This will impact everyone from residents and local businesses to small haulers and contractors who rely on local disposal capacity for operating their business."

### Other Permit, Lawsuit And Appeal Status

On Sunday, June 21, the deadline for Casella's alteration terrain permit application for GSL expires.

In an April 23 letter to King, Michael Schlosser, an engineer with DES's alteration of terrain bureau, said, "this letter serves

as a final notice that no further extensions will be granted ... GSL has had nearly two years to produce information responsive to the RFMI and the Department must move this application forward."

Weld did not respond to a question asking if Casella will also be withdrawing the alteration of terrain application.

Following DES's April 2025 standard permit application denial, Casella, in addition to its appeal before the New Hampshire Waste Management Council, sued DES.

On May 29 at Merrimack Superior Court, the lawsuit went to a hearing on motions for summary judgment. As of Wednesday, the court had not issued a decision.

### NCES In Bethlehem

On June 9, the Bethlehem Zoning Board of Adjustment granted an equitable waiver of dimensional requirements for a flare at Casella's NCES landfill in Bethlehem. The flare was moved in 2025, only to encroach on a 30-foot setback.

After a few weeks of research and a postponed decision, zoners concluded that the error was unintentional and not made in bad faith.

Casella is leasing land in the area of the flare to Viridi Energy, which will capture landfill gas, convert it to methane, and sell it into the New England region's commercial natural gas system.

The gas operation is part of the post-active landfill life of NCES and follows three decades of expansion.

Several residents and zoners during the two public hearings said that a lot line adjustment, rather than an equitable waiver of dimension requirements, would be the logical solution.

Resident Bob Murray began building a small ranch home on Swazey Lane and completed it 16 years later in 2006. For his approval before the board, he buried a power line, after a judge who lived in the neighborhood didn't want it going across the road from his house.

"That was my legal remedy," Murray said to zoners. "Their legal remedy is a lot line adjust-

See **Application**, Page 10

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AD DEADLINE

JULY 2

# Judge To Decide Fate Of Davidge Hedge

**BY PAUL HAYES**  
Staff Writer

LANCASTER — A judge is expected to decide within 60 days whether the town must take action to address the Davidge hedge, a longtime source of complaints about visibility and safety at the intersection of Mount Prospect Road and East Whitefield Road.

Coos County Superior Court Justice Lawrence MacLeod heard arguments Monday in a petition filed by retired attorney Robert Mekeel, who is asking the court to order the town to remove vegetation he says creates a dangerous blind spot at the intersection.

After the hearing, MacLeod joined Mekeel, property owner John Davidge and town officials for a visit to the site.

During the visit, Mekeel said he decided to file the petition after a near accident while driving his grandchildren through the intersection.

He stressed that his lawsuit is about safety, not a personal dispute with Davidge.

“I bear no animosity toward Mr. Davidge,” Mekeel said, adding that descriptions of Davidge as “the bad guy is totally offensive.”

Mekeel’s petition, filed in February, argues the hedge and other vegetation are located within the town’s right of way and amount to a public

nuisance. He claims the town has failed in its duty to keep the road safe by removing obstructions and unreasonable encroachments.

The hedge, which stands about 27 feet tall, has been the subject of debate in Lancaster for years. Critics say it blocks drivers’ views at the intersection and narrows a stretch of Mount Prospect Road. Davidge

has said attorneys advised him that the hedge predates current zoning regulations and is grandfathered.

The dispute escalated earlier this year after attempts to reach a compromise stalled. In March 2025, voters rejected Davidge’s proposal to slightly relocate the intersection by adjusting his property line while leaving the hedge in place.

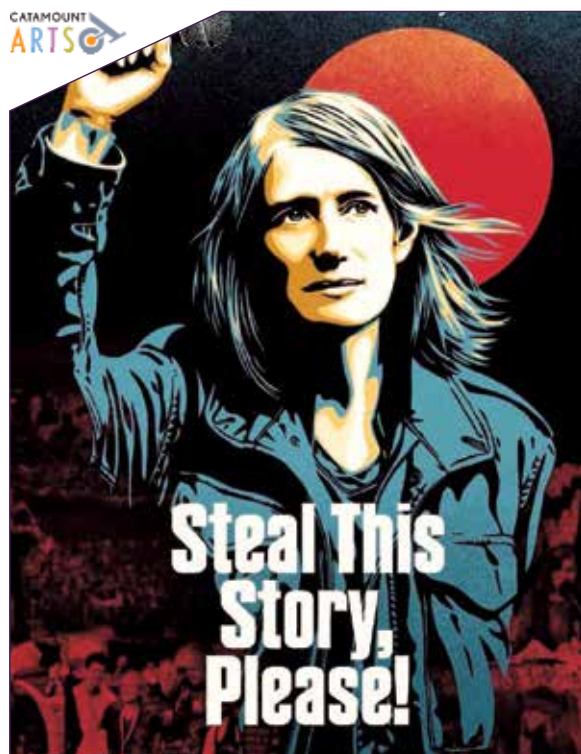
More recently, Davidge offered to allow town crews to remove several cedar trees and trim part of the hedge. The Select Board declined the offer, saying it would not permanently resolve the issue.

Board members instead proposed an agreement that would establish future maintenance requirements. Davidge objected to provisions that would remain

in effect in perpetuity and apply to future owners of the property.

Following Monday’s hearing, Davidge said he remains willing to work with the town to address concerns at the intersection but continues to oppose any agreement containing perpetual conditions.

MacLeod is expected to issue a written decision within 60 days.



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# Whitefield Receives \$129,500 Through ICE Partnership

BY PAUL HAYES  
Staff Writer

WHITEFIELD — The Whitefield Police Department has received \$129,500 through its partnership with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, making it one of several northern New Hampshire agencies receiving federal funding tied to participation in the agency's 287(g) immigration enforcement program.

The Select Board formally accepted the funds at its June 8 meeting, according to meeting minutes.

Board member Pete Russo said \$100,000 was provided for joining the 287(g) program, while the

remaining \$29,500 was designated for training Whitefield officers.

Russo said the money cannot be used to offset the department's voter-approved operating budget but may be spent on equipment and other costs associated with the program.

Former police officer and Select Board Chair Shawn White said the funding could help cover purchases such as Tasers, body cameras and police cruisers.

Town Administrator Mike Lee said the funds had not yet been earmarked for specific purposes.

Whitefield officials began pursuing participation in the federal program in March, when the Select Board unanimously support-

ed Police Chief Max Hodgdon's request to enter into a 287(g) agreement.

The program allows selected local officers to receive federal training and perform certain immigration enforcement functions under ICE supervision.

As the board considered the agreement in April, members defended the move as both a public safety tool and a financial benefit for taxpayers.

"This is a tool," White said, according to meeting minutes. Officers "are not hunting down people as part of their daily job and duties."

White also pointed to the financial incentives associated with

the program.

"There is a lucrative side to this, as it does bring money to the town," he said. "That is money we can use that won't have to be raised by property taxes."

Hodgdon previously cited an investigation involving suspects linked to ATM thefts in multiple states, saying local officers lacked access to information that could have aided the case.

"Legally, morally, and philosophically, this helps public safety in Whitefield," board members said during the April discussion. "We can't let people get away who are wanted."

The funding comes amid growing debate over 287(g)

agreements across the North Country.

Nearby Carroll received more than \$122,000 through its own agreement with ICE earlier this year. Carroll voters later split 82-82 on a nonbinding article asking whether the Carroll Police Department should withdraw from the program, though officials said the department will continue participating.

In Gorham, voters approved a warrant article recommending that police end their participation in the program, but the department has not withdrawn. The decision has drawn criticism from residents and civil liberties advocates.

Other North Country communities participating in the program include Colebrook and Pittsburg. Officials in Northumberland have discussed whether to pursue an agreement.

In April, the Grafton County Sheriff's Office withdrew from its 287(g) agreement. Sheriff Jill Myers did not publicly explain the decision.

The American Civil Liberties Union has warned that municipalities participating in 287(g) agreements could face legal liability stemming from wrongful detention or civil rights claims and has argued that such partnerships can undermine public trust in local law enforcement.

## Application

Continued from Page 8

ment. All this paper going back and forth and they are looking

for an equitable remedy that I don't think they're entitled to ... Why burden yourselves with this?"

"I agree with Bob and I was

circling around the same place the last time around, which is this is not the proper remedy for this," said resident Rich Southwell. "They can just move the

lots. It's definitely not a cost issue."

It's a couple hundred bucks in survey work and a trip to the planning board, he said.

"It seems like we have a little more clarity about what happened, looks like an accident, but unfortunately they're tarred with the brush of everything else that goes on down at that site," said Southwell. "There have been operational failures and mistakes for a very long time. So when somebody comes maybe not looking for the best, easiest remedy and they don't have the firmest story about what happened and how it happened, suspicions arise ..."

In January, in the largest civil penalty in New Hampshire for a landfill company, Casella was fined \$2 million by the state for years of repeated violations, for mismanagement of leachate, drilling through the landfill liner, operating the facility with a quarter-inch hole in the primary landfill liner, placing waste beyond the permitted landfill limits, and for failing to report incidents or conduct its own investigations.

In New Hampshire, landfill operators have a legal requirement to maintain no more than 12 inches of a head, or depth, of leachate, also known as garbage juice, on the landfill liner system.

According to a check of DES public records on Wednesday, leachate issues and exceedances continue at NCES.

There were four documented instances of leachate exceedances on the landfill liner, on April 22 (more than four feet, after pump equipment failures), on May 5 (when leachate reached

nearly five feet on the primary liner system), on May 11 (during a power outage when leachate levels again reached nearly five feet on the liner), and on May 15 (when another equipment failure led to a leachate exceedance).

**Twin Mountain, Haverhill**

Outside of Dalton and Bethlehem, Casella had proposed a new transfer station in Carroll that would accommodate some 200 tons of trash daily.

That proposal drew stiff opposition, with some residents voicing suspicions that it could be the gateway to a new landfill there, which they said would lead to truck traffic, odor, noise, and tourism impacts.

In April, Weld said that Casella pulled the Carroll proposal.

On May 26, Carroll voters, by a margin of 169-11, approved two zoning amendments to restrict future private solid waste facilities and limit recycling and transfer operations to town or regional ownership.

In October in Haverhill, resident Donna Clark appeared before the Select Board regarding a partnership with Casella and a proposal to open a transfer station and recycling center on her 80-acre property along County Road.

Weld did not respond to a question asking specifically about the Haverhill proposal and if it's still on the table.

"There are no current plans to pursue a commercial transfer station in the North Country," he said.

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