



The Littleton Weekly Record

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2026

LOCAL

Synagogue Reports
Anti-Semitic, Anti-
LGBTQ Flyers

FREE



Cyan Magenta Yellow Black

Following Minneapolis Shootings, Residents Gather For Interfaith Peace Vigil... Page 10

- Sewer Spill Victims Request Reimbursement For Damages
- Police Chief On Administrative Duty Pending Recertification
- Casino Ban Question Raises Concerns In Littleton

OBITUARIES

COURTNEY LEMIRE

With broken hearts, the family of Courtney Janice Lemire announce her passing at home surrounded by her loving family on Tuesday, Feb. 3, 2026 after a brave fight with Leukemia. Courtney was born in Littleton on Jan. 2, 2015, to proud parents Nick and Samantha Lemire.

Courtney was a student at Lakeway Elementary School. She was also an athlete with the Special Olympics and especial-

ly enjoyed bowling. She had a burning desire to know what was for dinner beginning first thing every morning and was affectionately known as the "taco queen" at her house. Courtney loved school, unicorns, Disney princesses, and helping in the kitchen. Above all else, she loved her family and spending time with them, especially her brothers (Riley and Milo). Courtney will be remembered for her sweet, kind heart and her infectious giggles. She was a special girl to so many people and will be deeply missed by those who knew and loved her.

Courtney was predeceased by her uncle, Nick Marquis. She is survived by her parents, brothers, maternal grandparents (Mark and Joy Hebert), paternal grandparents (Larry and Teenia Lemire), aunt (Beth Marquis) and her partner (Brian Kins-



man), and cousins (Kurt and Kody Marquis and Kopelyn Kinsman).

A memorial gathering will be held on Friday, Feb. 13, from 3-5 p.m. at Phaneuf Funeral Home & Crematorium in Littleton. Following the gathering, a reception will be held at Reklis Pint House in Bethlehem. Friends and family are invited to attend to enjoy some tacos in honor of Courtney.

In lieu of flowers, please consider making a donation to Special Olympics (NH Special Olympics, PO Box 3598, Concord, NH 03302, ATTN: White Mountain Special Olympics) or CHaD, where some truly exceptional humans cared for her over the last 16 months of her life and to whom the Lemire family would like to express their unending love and appreciation (checks can be made out to CHaD/D-HH and sent to: Medical & Healthcare Advancement, c/o Polly Antol, One Medical Center Drive, HB 7070, Lebanon, NH 03756).

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

To view Courtney's Online Tribute, send condolences to the family, or for more information, visit www.phaneuf.net.

RONALD H. BEAN

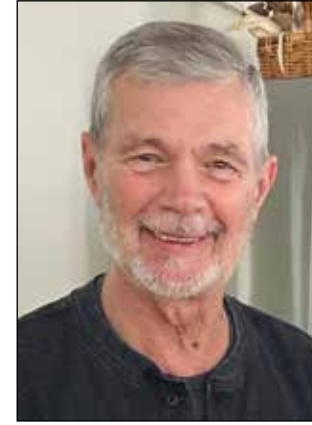


Ronald "Ron" H. Bean, of Waterford, Vt., passed away on Feb. 2, 2026, at the Lafayette Center in Franconia, N.H., surrounded by his loving family.

Ron was born on Jan. 17, 1947, in Concord, N.H. to the late Herbert "Jim" & Marion (Bernier) Bean of Bow, N.H. He grew up in Davisville, N.H. and was a 1965 graduate of Simonds Free High School in Warner, N.H. He attended Utah State University in Logan, Utah. He went on to proudly serve his country in the United States Navy, where he was stationed on the USS Richard E. Byrd and the USS Farragut.

Ron was employed in his earlier years by Howard Johnson's Restaurant and Harry's Steakhouse, both in Concord, N.H. He also worked for Moore Business Forms in Manchester, N.H. It was there that he met Ernie, Mo, and Bill, making lifelong friendships that lasted nearly 50 years. Ron was Office Manager of Bag Balm in Lyndonville, Vt. and enjoyed working there for many years before retiring in 2013.

Ron will be remembered for many things that left a legacy. He enjoyed golfing and had two holes-in-one. He enjoyed riding his beloved Harley Davidson motorcycle. He volunteered in his community, most notably by participating in the annual Toys for Tots drive. Above all, Ron cherished his family and friends. He was a proud Papa to his grandchildren and always looked forward to his vacations at Pine Point in



Maine with Candy. He enjoyed fishing and created many memories with his good friends Ernie, Mo, Bill and Donny, who were always by Ron's side. He was a beloved family member and a true friend to many.

Ron is survived by his wife, Candy Bean; daughters Kimberly (James) Macenas, Jessie (Donald) Therrien, Audra (Andrew) Sicard, Erin (Donald) Patoine, & Laura (Jesse) Maxwell; grandchildren Chelsea (Edward) Sheppard, Kayla (Thomas) Cantrell, Dylan

Therrien, Lily (fiancé Scott Walters) Therrien, Allison (Davin) Hagman, Austin Sicard, Aiden Sicard, Wyatt Patoine, Eli Patoine, Odin Patoine, Gunner Brown, Albie Maxwell, Everett Maxwell & Iris Maxwell; great-grandchildren Cole Sheppard, Autumn Sheppard, Olivia Cantrell & Henry Hagman; sister Laurel (Roland) Gamelin; brother Marlon (Tracy) Bean; sisters-in-law Kathi (Larry) Stewart & Gail (Dennis) Henson; longtime friends Ernie, Mo, Donny, Bill & Tammy; as well as his nieces and their families. He was predeceased by his parents and his brother, Gerald Bean.

The family wishes to thank the staff of Lafayette Center for their dedicated and excellent care for Ron over the last several months.

We will always remember Ron's favorite phrase: "To the moon with you, Alice."

A graveside service with military honors will be held in the spring at Evans Cemetery in Bow, N.H.

Memories and condolences can be shared with the family at saylesfh.com

ROBERTA E. MCGEE

Roberta E. McGee, 88, passed away at her home on Friday morning, February 6, 2026, after a long battle with cancer. She was surrounded by her loving family.

Roberta was born in Lancaster, NH, on January 26, 1938, the daughter of Murray and Phyllis (Sheridan) Merrow. She was the widow of John R. McGee Sr., who predeceased her in 2013.

Roberta was a lifelong resident of the North Country, where she attended schools and worked as a postal clerk. She was devoted to her Catholic faith and a longtime parishioner at St. Patrick Church in Twin Mountain. The church was home to St. Margaret Cemetery, and for many years Roberta assisted with the record-keeping and management of the cemetery. She loved her home in Twin Mountain, and her family was her whole world. In her spare time, she enjoyed reading and visiting with family and friends.

Surviving family members include her

children John Robert McGee Jr. and his wife Corena of Twin Mt., Karen Lynn McGee and husband Brian Malette of Bow, NH, Carla Jean McGee of Twin Mt.; 5 grandchildren, Laura McGee, Violet McGee, Kimberly McGee Reilley McGee, Michael Malette; her siblings, Allen Smith, Michael Smith, Diane Dupont, Roger Merrow, Bruce Smith, David Smith; and many nieces and nephews. She was also predeceased by her daughter, Anne Marie McGee of Barrington.

Memorial visiting hours will be held on Friday, February 20th, from 5:00 to 8:00 PM at the Bailey Funeral Home in Lancaster. A Mass will be celebrated in the spring at St. Patrick's Church

Donations may be made in her memory to North Country Health & Hospice, 536 Cottage Street, Littleton, NH 03561 or Voice for Animals, PO Box 34, Harrison, ME 04040.

For more information or to leave an online condolence, please go to www.baileyfh.net.

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\$8⁹⁹

BULK
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BAKERY
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6 oz
Raspberries or Blackberries
2/\$5

Top Round Roast
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Boneless Pork Sirloin Roast
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7.2 oz
Effie's Homemade Biscuits
\$4⁹⁹

3 lb Bag
Cortland or McIntosh Apples
2/\$5

DELI
NE Traditions Virginia Baked Ham
\$3⁹⁹ Lb

DELI
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\$4⁹⁹

5.3 oz
Belgioioso Italian Style Grated Cheese
2/\$6

Sweet Onions
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BULK
Magical Mystery Mix
\$8⁹⁹ Lb

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Califia Farms Plant Milk
\$4²⁹

7-8 oz
Cabot Cheese Cuts & Slices
2/\$6

25.3 oz
San Pellegrino Sparkling Mineral Water
\$1⁹⁹

12 Pack
Sierra Nevada Brewing Co.
\$17⁹⁹

32 oz
Select Varieties Dr Bronner's Liquid Castile Soap
\$8⁹⁹

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13.6 oz Vermont Bean Crafters Burgers
\$8⁹⁹

FROZEN
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Round Up at the Register in February to Support Franconia Children's Backpack Program

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Police Chief On Administrative Duty Pending Recertification

BY PAUL HAYES
Staff Writer

LANCASTER — Lancaster Police Chief Jonathan Woodworth has been placed on administrative duty pending a physical fitness test scheduled for next month.

Interviewed Friday, Woodworth said a back injury prevented him from passing the physical fitness test, which is required by law as part of routine re-certification for all New Hampshire law enforcement officers every three years.

The timed test includes push-ups, sit-ups and a 1.5-mile run, with standards adjusted for age and gender.

Woodworth said he was granted a two-year extension to complete the test, but that extension has expired. He plans to take the test when it is next offered by New Hampshire Police Standards and Training on March 6 in Concord.

"It's not a secret. I'm not trying to hide it," Woodworth said. He said his certification is temporarily suspended pending completion of the test.

"It's not the end of the world. I can still do my job administratively. What it means is that I can't arrest people, I don't carry a gun, I don't carry a badge, I'm in plain clothes. But administratively I'm still allowed to do my job, which is what I'm doing," he said.

Woodworth said police standards officials indicated he could continue serving as police prosecutor, but that role will be handled by Officer Allen Komisarek until the March 6 test.

"I've talked to police standards. They say

there's nothing stopping me from prosecuting if I want to. But after speaking with the Select Board today, just to ease anybody's mind, I'm going to step back while I'm currently on this administrative position and step back from prosecutor," Woodworth said.

Woodworth became Lancaster police chief in October 2023. He previously served 14 years in the Navy before beginning his law enforcement career. He worked six years with the Northumberland Police Department and two years with the Gorham Police Department, where he attained the rank of lieutenant, before joining the Lancaster Police Department in March 2018.

The matter was raised publicly after resident Rob Christie questioned the Select Board on Feb. 1 about officer certification.

"Somebody who was suspended who is still acting that would be a liability for the town," Christie said.

Select Board Chair Leon Rideout responded that "'suspended' is not the correct word, but it's a personnel issue we cannot discuss in this meeting."

In 2024, a bill that would have eliminated the physical fitness test from the state's three-year law enforcement re-certification requirements did not pass.

A bill filed this year, House Bill 1805, would extend the required testing interval from every three years to every five years. The bill would also allow officers who have served as certified law enforcement officers for a designated number of years to request a permanent physical fitness waiver.

OBITUARIES

TIMOTHY MCKENNA



Timothy James McKenna, 79, of Haverhill, New Hampshire, died peacefully at home on Feb. 5, 2026, surrounded by his family, after a long and difficult battle with cancer.

Born in Middleborough, Massachusetts, on July 15, 1946, to Arthur and Emily (Maleski) McKenna, Tim was the oldest of four children. He attended Catholic schools and earned his undergraduate degree from the University of Massachusetts Amherst before receiving his Juris Doctorate from Suffolk University Law School in 1972.

While living in Boston, he met and fell in love with Phyllis (Pridmore). They married in July 1972 and soon moved to Woodsville, where Tim began his career as an attorney. Together, they built a life rooted in shared traditions and simple pleasures, including antique auctions, gardening with their daughters, and cherished annual events such as attending the Christmas Revels and the Big Apple Circus. Tim also loved cooking big meals for the family and baking; he and the girls took many baking classes together.

Tim served his community for 34 years as a judge, where he was widely respected for his fairness, integrity, and compassion. He was deeply committed to justice and valued the relationships he built with colleagues across the

courts.

An outdoorsman at heart, Tim enjoyed rowing, fly fishing, and duck hunting, especially the quiet early mornings spent with friends. He loved all dogs, always keeping a stash of treats on hand.

Tim was predeceased by his parents and his sisters, Kathleen McKenna and Janet McGarry. He is survived by his wife, Phyllis McKenna; his daughters, Meghan McKenna and Laura McKenna;

Laura's husband, Daniel Worthing; and his sister, Rosemary McKenna.

Calling hours will be held Sunday, Feb. 15, from 4–6 p.m. at Hatchland Farm in North Haverhill. A Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated Thursday, Feb. 19, at 11 a.m. at St. Joseph Catholic Church in Woodsville. A private interment will take place in the spring. Donations in Tim's memory may be made to the Hatchland Farm Milk Drive, which provides milk vouchers to local food banks. By phone 603-787-6077, in person, or by mail: Hatchland Farm c/o The Milk Drive; Robin Page 401 Clough Road N. Haverhill NH 03774

To offer the family an online condolence, please visit www.rickerfh.com

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

MEGAN ANN YOUNG

Megan Ann Young, age 42, of Haverhill, N.H., died unexpectedly at her home on Lime Kiln Road, Friday, January 30, 2026.

Megan was born in St. Johnsbury, Vt., on December 14, 1983, daughter to Donald Ray Jr. and Sandra (Morey) Young and had lived in the St. Johnsbury area most all her life. She grew up in St. Johnsbury and graduated from Lyndon Institute with the Class of 2003. Megan loved animals and being outdoors, whether taking a walk in the woods, jumping out the front door to make snow-angels or starting a snowball fight and raising heck with her kids. She was charismatic, strong-willed and stubborn, funny and independent. She liked coin collecting, fast cars, legal or not, and going to the racetrack.

Megan leaves her 2 children: Patrick and



Destiny LeFleur, and their father Chris LeFleur of St. Johnsbury; her parents: Donald and Sandra Young of St. Johnsbury; her boyfriend: Keene Cummings; 5 siblings: Donald Young III (Kelly) of St. Johnsbury, Rose Aldrich (Steven) Lyndonville, Mary Riendeau of St. Johnsbury, Samatha Young (Edward Charbonneau) of St. Johnsbury and Bo Young (Denise) also of St. Johnsbury and several cousins, nieces and nephews.

There will be no calling hours or services at this time.

She was predeceased by her daughter: Lily and her brother-in-law: Jack Rien-

deau.

Memories and condolences may be shared with the family at saylesfh.com.

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<p>2024 FORD ESCAPE ACTIVE</p> <p>\$290 /MO</p> <p>Stk.#CCP1072 42,664 miles SALE PRICE \$21,000</p> <p>Payment calculated with \$2,100 cash or trade equity down at 7.49% APR for 84 months</p>	<p>2024 NISSAN ALTIMA 2.5 SR</p> <p>\$297 /MO</p> <p>Stk.#CCP1070 61,317 miles SALE PRICE \$21,500</p> <p>Payment calculated with \$2,150 cash or trade equity down at 7.49% APR for 84 months</p>	<p>2023 NISSAN ROGUE SV AWD</p> <p>\$320 /MO</p> <p>Stk.#CCP1071 49,439 miles SALE PRICE \$23,200</p> <p>Payment calculated with \$2,320 cash or trade equity down at 7.49% APR for 84 months</p>
<p>2019 RAM 1500 EXPRESS QUAD CAB CERTIFIED</p> <p>\$375 /MO</p> <p>Stk.#DT26012B 49,912 miles SALE PRICE \$27,200</p> <p>Payment calculated with \$2,720 cash or trade equity down at 7.49% APR for 84 months</p>	<p>2023 MAZDA CX-30 TURBO PREMIUM AWD</p> <p>\$400 /MO</p> <p>Stk.#CPX1704 22,388 miles SALE PRICE \$29,000</p> <p>Payment calculated with \$2,900 cash or trade equity down at 7.49% APR for 84 months</p>	<p>2021 CHEVROLET SILVERADO 1500 RST CREW CAB</p> <p>\$418 /MO</p> <p>Stk.#J25082A 84,502 miles SALE PRICE \$30,300</p> <p>Payment calculated with \$3,030 cash or trade equity down at 7.49% APR for 84 months</p>
<p>2023 DODGE DURANGO R/T PLUS 3RD ROW V8 AWD</p> <p>\$435 /MO</p> <p>Stk.#DT26079A 77,069 miles SALE PRICE \$31,500</p> <p>Payment calculated with \$3,150 cash or trade equity down at 7.49% APR for 84 months</p>	<p>2022 RAM 1500 REBEL CREW CAB</p> <p>\$545 /MO</p> <p>Stk.#DT26014A 47,926 miles SALE PRICE \$39,500</p> <p>Payment calculated with \$3,950 cash or trade equity down at 7.49% APR for 84 months</p>	<p>2025 TOYOTA TUNDRA SR5 TRD OFFROAD CREW</p> <p>\$689 /MO</p> <p>Stk.#DT26030A 5,352 miles SALE PRICE \$49,900</p> <p>Payment calculated with \$4,990 cash or trade equity down at 7.49% APR for 84 months</p>



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Bethlehem Synagogue Reports Anti-Semitic, Anti-LGBTQ Flyers

BY ROBERT BLECHL
Staff Writer

The Bethlehem Hebrew Congregation has reported anti-Semitic and anti-LGBTQ+ flyers that were posted around town and found on Jan. 18, marking the latest such incident in what have been several since 2024.

Late on Sunday, Jan. 18, a member of the congregation sent an email to Melissa Potter, co-president of the BHC, to notify her that he had found the flyers posted on the bulletin boards at Bethlehem town hall and at the Bethlehem Village Store.

It was undetermined how long they had been there.

The flyers were removed, photographed, and delivered to the police station.

"These flyers are hateful and disturbing, and this is not the first time we've seen them," said Potter.

Prior anti-Semitic flyer incidents in Bethlehem include Aug. 22, 2024, at the village store, Colonial Theatre, and Bethlehem Public Library and July 13, 2025, at the Colonial Theatre, Legacy Used Books store, and BHC synagogue marquee.

On each occasion, police were notified.

After the Jan. 18 incident, BHC's board of directors agreed that it was important to make the public aware that a white supremacist group exists locally, said Potter, and that "their message is bigoted, full of hatred and that it goes against American values."

In a statement issued Monday, representatives for BHC, which was established in the Bethlehem community more than a century ago, said, "The leadership and members of Bethlehem Hebrew Congregation are extremely disturbed by this incident, which is the third time that these offensive, ha-



The Bethlehem Hebrew Congregation is making the public aware of anti-Semitic and anti-LGBTQ flyers posted at Bethlehem town hall and at the village store. (Contributed photo)

tred-filled flyers have been posted in Bethlehem in the last eighteen months. Most disturbing was the use of the yellow star that Jews in Europe were forced to wear in the lead-up to the Holocaust, during which six million Jews were killed just because they were Jews.

"The memory of the Holocaust is still fresh in the minds of Jews worldwide,

and the fact that this type of unwarranted hatred exists in New Hampshire or anywhere in the United States is unacceptable," they said. "We are a land of many freedoms, and especially dear to us is the freedom of religion. We hope that others share our feelings of disgust and repugnance, and that they will not tolerate hate flyers, hate speech, or any type of anti-Jewish actions in our community or anywhere."

They ask anyone who finds future flyers to remove them and notify the police.

A message left this week with Dube for comment on the status of any investigation was not returned by press time Wednesday.

In speaking with a Jewish organization that assists with synagogue security, Potter said the flyers appear to be constitutionally protected speech and are not a crime.

Trespassing onto private property,

however, would constitute criminal trespass and defacing property, such as the spray painting of a Littleton storefront with a gay slur in June 2025, would constitute criminal mischief.

As for anti-Semitic incidents, other synagogues in downstate New Hampshire have been targeted, including in Portsmouth, where Temple Israel was vandalized in 2024. The same synagogue was targeted with spray paint in 2023.

Potter said she is also aware of the lawn of a synagogue president in another part of the state being plastered with anti-Semitic flyers.

"It's just horrible what's going on," she said.

In speaking with an FBI agent, BHC members were informed that there are four or five hate groups in New Hampshire, all located downstate, with the farthest north around the Lakes Region, she said.

Sewer Spill Victims Request Reimbursement For Damages

BY PAUL HAYES
Staff Writer

LANCASTER — The Select Board has begun the process of reimbursing a Middle Street family whose home has been repeatedly affected by chronic sewer overflows tied to long-standing infrastructure failures downhill from Weeks Medical Center.

At its Jan. 20 meeting, the board agreed to start compensating Madison and Benjamin Gonyer, whose home at 129 Middle St. has been hit by seven sewer spills since 2019, including four incidents late last year. The most recent overflow, on Christmas Eve, forced the Gonyers and their two young children out of their home for 18 days.

"As a young family, the ex-

penses on our end are adding up. Being out of our house on Christmas Eve through the holidays for a total of 18 nights has taken a financial toll on us," Madison Gonyer told the board. "We're really looking for a clear and consistent line of communication outlining the process for us to become whole again."

Board members expressed sympathy and encouraged continued communication as the town works through reimbursement and mitigation efforts. Chair Leon Rideout urged Gonyer to keep officials informed of all related issues until the matter is resolved.

The board suggested that the family replace damaged items with identical models and submit invoices to the town for reimbursement. Other expenses, including the hiring of plumbers

and contractors, will be handled on a case-by-case basis in coordination with municipal officials.

"I think it would probably be cleaner and easier," Rideout said.

According to Gonyer, the family must replace a washing machine, freezer, clothing and basement flooring damaged by sewage. They are also seeking reimbursement for costs associated with being displaced from their home, including food, laundry and temporary housing.

Additional repairs may include hiring a plumber to fix a cast-iron sewer cleanout that Gonyer said was damaged by town crews. That work may require replacing the connector between the home and the main sewer line. Gonyer also said further testing is needed to determine whether contamination has

spread deeper than six inches into the soil, which could require more extensive remediation.

Noting the timing of the request, Gonyer acknowledged the town's budget pressures.

"I am aware of the season, I do know that time frame is not ideal and I know that this can take some time. I also know that it's cold and flu season," she said.

Town officials have previously attributed the repeated spills to chronic blockages in a section of sewer line near the Middle Street-Brickyard Lane intersection, which has overflowed multiple times in recent years. The area is downhill from Weeks Medical Center, and municipal officials have said past clogs included large amounts of wipes and other material inconsistent with residential use.

The town manager previously told the board that one past spill deposited "thousands" of wipes on the Gonyers' lawn, and that similar incidents had occurred repeatedly since 2019. The Gonyers filed a formal complaint with the state Department of Environmental Services after sewer system failures in September and November sent raw sewage across their property.

In response, the town hired

environmental consultants to conduct soil testing and scheduled a robotic camera inspection of the affected sewer line. Town officials have also discussed long-term solutions, including rebuilding or relining the pipe or installing infrastructure to divert and contain future spills.

Representatives of North Country Healthcare, which includes Weeks Medical Center, have previously challenged claims that the hospital was responsible for the blockages but said the network was open to working with the town.

"We have been partners with the town in the past on infrastructure issues and have always been willing to collaborate to resolve concerns," spokesperson James Patry said in December. "We have not had any recent reports brought to our attention. As always, we are willing to partner with the town as we are grateful to provide health services for their residents."

Town officials have acknowledged that the sewer line involved is more than a century old and has been subject to deferred maintenance, with board members previously stating the town bears responsibility for addressing the ongoing failures and their impact on nearby residents.

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NEWS BRIEFS

NCH Hosts Listening Session

LANCASTER — More than 100 residents packed Lancaster Elementary School on Feb. 3 for a public listening session with leaders of North Country Healthcare, raising concerns about transparency, executive pay, local control and quality of care at the region's rural hospitals.

The meeting came two months after the New Hampshire Attorney General's Charitable Trusts Unit opened a formal review of the system, citing concerns about board governance, executive compensation, contracting practices and access to primary care.

North Country Healthcare oversees Weeks Medical Center in Lancaster, Androscoggin Valley Hospital in Berlin, Upper Connecticut Valley Hospital in Colebrook, and North Country Home Health & Hospice.

Hosted by the system and facilitated by New Hampshire Listens, the session included small-group discussions and a question-and-answer period. CEO Tom Mee said the listening sessions were planned before the state review but acknowledged the need for clearer communication.

"What we've learned quite acutely over the last few months is that if we don't give you the accurate information, it will be filled with misinformation," Mee said.

Residents cited the loss of longtime primary care physicians and increased reliance on temporary providers. Chief Nursing Officer Tiffany Haynes said concerns must be addressed. "Perception is reality," Haynes said.

Executive pay drew scrutiny. Mee said his salary is set at the 50th percentile nationwide using consultant Sullivan Cotter and that portions are performance-based.

State Sen. David Rochefort, R-Littleton, has introduced legislation that would limit CEO pay at hospitals that lay off staff. The Attorney General's review, launched in November 2025, is examining governance, compensation, contracting and restructuring. North Country Healthcare said it is cooperating fully and aims to "strengthen trust" with the communities it serves.

Council Approves Hospital Bonds, Drug Funding

CONCORD — The New Hampshire Executive Council on Jan. 28 approved more than \$6 million in bonds to refinance debt at Cottage Hospital in Woodsville and re-authorized \$565,525 to support drug enforcement efforts in the state's northern counties.

The council ratified District 2 Executive Councilor Karen Liot Hill's report supporting Cottage Hospital's request to refinance up to \$6.6 million in bonds issued by the Business Finance Authority.

At a Dec. 29 public hearing, hospital CFO Ann Duffy said the plan includes refinancing approximately \$4.371 million in outstanding Series 2011 bonds. Proceeds from those bonds were used to refinance prior debt and fund capital improvements.

The new 2026 bonds will also refinance about \$2.14 million in taxable bank debt used to construct and equip a medical office building. The bonds are expected to mature no later than 2051 and will likely be purchased by Passumpsic Savings Bank.

Duffy said refinancing with tax-exempt bonds will reduce bor-

rowing costs. The debt does not obligate the state; principal and interest will be paid by the hospital.

In a 5-0 vote, the council also authorized the Department of Justice to amend a sub-grant to the Department of Safety for overtime and related expenses tied to Granite Shield and Northern Shield drug enforcement initiatives.

Attorney General John Formella said the funds will support overtime at the state forensic laboratory and state police, as well as confidential funds for drug buys. The original grant was intended for local law enforcement, but other funding made that unnecessary.

The council also approved a \$35.96 million contract with Alvin J. Coleman and Son Inc. for 4.5 miles of Interstate 93 paving in Franconia, funded 100% federally through August 2028, and authorized \$35,824 for an emergency snowmaking pump motor repair at Cannon Mountain Ski Area.

Littleton Voters Reject Proposed Budget Cuts

LITTLETON — Voters at Wednesday's deliberative session overwhelmingly rejected a proposal to cut the town's 2026 operating budget by nearly \$933,000, or about 10 percent.

Former Select Board member Carrie Gendreau made the motion, citing rising property taxes, lower median household income and what she called "a slow eviction of the very people who built Littleton." The proposal drew support from 21 of more than 100 voters.

Town moderator Chad Stearns declined to count the opposition. "It's very evident," he said.

The proposed \$11.527 million operating budget, recommended 4-1 by the Select Board and 4-3 by the budget committee, will appear on the March 10 ballot as written. The default budget is \$11.376 million.

Town Manager Troy Brown said officials reduced the initial draft by \$600,000 and presented a 6 percent increase over 2025, in line with a goal of keeping increases between 5 and 8 percent. Much of the \$679,000 increase reflects higher insurance costs and fixed expenses, he said.

Voters also reviewed two proposed three-year union contracts. A State Employees Association contract for police officers includes salary and benefit increases totaling \$115,504 in 2026, \$94,585 in 2027 and \$100,588 in 2028. An AFSCME contract for highway and transfer station workers carries increases of \$92,280 in 2026, \$58,825 in 2027 and \$62,650 in 2028.

Article 19 would fund a new school resource officer at \$104,296 in 2026, with future annual costs of \$125,266. A \$125,000 federal grant would offset one-third of the three-year cost.

Other warrant articles include several zoning amendments, petitions to ban casinos and KENO, and a \$9 million sewer bond for wastewater plant upgrades. The bond would be repaid through sewer user fees and requires a 60 percent majority.

Program Works To Prevent Families From Rehoming Beloved Animals During Financial Hardship

HAVERTHILL, N.H. — A new Grafton County program seeks to help prevent families from having to part with beloved animals during temporary financial hardship.

Petunia's Pantry, launched by Tomten Farm and Sanctuary, provides short-term animal food assistance to help local guardians keep animals fed and safely at home during difficult seasons.

Grafton County spans nearly 1,750 rural square miles. Approximately 1 in 10 residents lives below the poverty line. In communities where horses, goats, pigs, cows, and other animals are woven into daily life, even a brief disruption in income can create overwhelming pressure.

"Unexpected hardship can impact any of us," said Jenifer Vickery, founder of Tomten Farm and Sanctuary. "A job loss. A medical

bill. A spike in heating fuel. An illness. A broken truck. For families who love their animals, a few difficult weeks can create heartbreaking decisions. No one should have to choose between feeding their family and feeding an animal they love. If 30 days of feed can keep that bond intact, that is prevention at its best."

Thanks to the generosity of local supporters, Petunia's Pantry provides up to 30 days of food assistance to qualifying Grafton County residents, with the option to reapply in certain circumstances. The program serves individual animal guardians and does not provide assistance to production livestock or commercial agricultural operations.

While the program is available year-round, winter presents the greatest risk. Rising heating fuel costs, frozen ground, and increased feed demands can quickly compound financial strain for rural families already navigating tight budgets.

Feeding a single horse can cost \$300 to \$600 per month, before veterinary care, hoof care, bedding, and supplemental support are considered. For many species, costs continue to climb. A month of feed is often a fraction of the cost, and far less disruptive, than an animal leaving a home where they are already loved. In many cases, a short period of support provides the breathing room families need to regain stability and find firmer ground beneath their feet.

Petunia's Pantry is administered with discretion and confidentiality to ensure assistance reaches those who need it most. Applications are now open to qualifying Grafton County residents.

Impact does not always mean welcoming an animal to Tomten, Vickery pointed out. "Sometimes the most powerful rescue is helping one stay exactly where they are, home with the people who love them."

More information can be found by emailing tomtenfarmandsanctuary@gmail.com, or online.

Pathways Funding Survives Debate

LITTLETON — Voters at this week's deliberative session again rejected an effort to reduce funding for Pathways Pregnancy Care Center, allowing the group's \$3,200 request to move to the March 10 ballot unchanged.

Resident Elise Cherian made a motion to amend the petition to \$1, arguing the town should not fund a faith-based organization that advises against abortion, a legal option in New Hampshire.

"This is the only faith-based group that the town plans to give money to, which is a direct violation between church and state," Cherian said.

Seven residents supported the amendment. Town Moderator Chad Stearns ruled the opposition clearly prevailed.

Pathways, located at Elevate Church, provides diapers, formula, clothing and parenting classes at no charge. Matt St. John, a board member and primary petitioner, said 69 patients were served in 2025 over 300 visits, with more than 500 boxes of diapers and wipes distributed.

Supporters, including Budget Committee member Steve Kelley, said the program assists struggling families and should go to voters as written.

Voters also approved sending a \$50,000 petition to support the Littleton Community Center's \$2.2 million annex rehabilitation project to the ballot without amendment. The project has secured \$1 million in federal funds and requires a matching commitment.

Articles dissolving two revolving funds and restructuring capital reserve funds to increase flexibility and transparency also advanced unchanged.

Most voters supported Article 20, which seeks \$85,500 as a cancellation fee to secure a \$1.9 million ladder truck production slot. Fire Chief Chad Miller said the current 23-year-old truck is nearing the end of its life.

Other articles heading to the ballot include \$21,352 for downtown flowers and decorations and \$125,000 for Mill Street riverbank design work. Ballot voting is March 10 at the highway garage.



NEWS BRIEFS

Residents Oppose Proposed Carroll Transfer Station

CARROLL — Residents are organizing against Casella Waste Systems’ proposal to build a transfer station on Route 3, voicing concerns about traffic, noise and the potential for expanded landfill activity in town.

The issue surfaced during public comment at the Feb. 5 Planning Board meeting, though it was not on the agenda. Carroll resident Nathaniel Lesch-Huie said neighbors are mobilizing ahead of any formal land-use applications.

“Our neighborhood is obviously concerned,” Lesch-Huie said, noting the proposed site sits in a residential area despite Route 3 being a busy corridor. Residents are gathering petitions and preparing to launch a social media group, he said.

The proposed facility would occupy about 3.5 acres of an 11.2-acre parcel across from the UPS warehouse and bordered by more than 480 acres owned by Pike Industries Inc. Casella has said the transfer station would handle roughly 200 tons of waste daily, with 20 to 30 collection vehicles delivering trash and seven long-haul trailers transporting it out.

Casella first outlined concept plans at a Dec. 16 Select Board meeting, targeting early 2028 operations. The company is seeking additional capacity as its North Country Environmental Services landfill in

Bethlehem nears closure.

Before construction, the project would require Zoning Board of Adjustment approval for a special exception, Planning Board approval to exceed the 15% impervious surface limit, and state driveway and alteration-of-terrain permits.

Select Board Chair Bonnie Maroney strongly opposed the plan, warning of increased truck traffic and odors. “I would definitely fight you tooth and nail,” she told company representatives.

Planning Board members have urged consultation with town counsel. Chair Alex Foti said officials must ensure “we cross our T’s and dot our I’s” given the likelihood of legal challenges.

Casino Ban Question Raises Concerns

LITTLETON — A petitioned warrant article seeking to prohibit “games of chance” in Littleton sparked debate Monday over whether

the measure could unintentionally ban charitable gaming that supports local nonprofits.

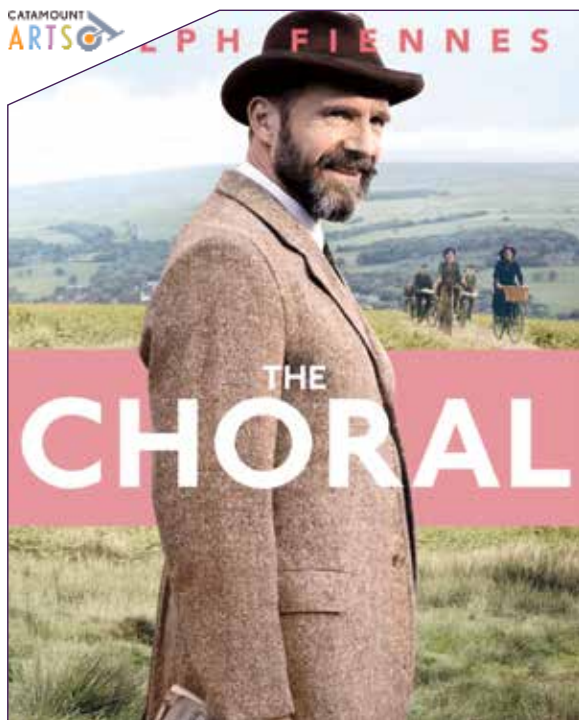
Article 58 asks voters March 10: “Shall we prohibit the operation of Games of Chance within the town of Littleton?” A separate Article 57 would prohibit KENO.

Resident Debi Warner spearheaded both petitions following a 2023 proposal by Chicago-based developer Greg Carlin to open a casino in town. Warner said Article 58 is intended to block future casino licenses under RSA 287-D:32, not charitable gaming, bingo or KENO.

“There’s no word ‘casino’ in it, but that’s what it really is,” Warner said.

She argued casinos divert local spending and cited state data showing charitable gaming returns 35 percent of table-game profits to nonprofits but just 8.75 percent from historical horse racing machines.

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Following Minneapolis Shootings, Residents Gather For Interfaith Peace Vigil

BY ROBERT BLECHL
Staff Writer

LANCASTER — In the wake of the fatal ICE shootings, violence, and unrest in Minneapolis and elsewhere, local clergy members, feeling the weight upon themselves and seeing it in others, met to chart a path toward healing.

Putting out the call on Monday, Jan. 26, was The Rev. Peter Ilgenfritz, pastor at the First Congregational Church of Littleton.

In less than a day, they had a plan — two North Country interfaith vigils for prayer, peace, and non-violence, the first on Feb. 3 at Congregational Church in Littleton and the second on Saturday at the Lancaster Congregational Church.

“We wanted to represent solidarity,” said The Rev. Pamela Spain, pastor of the Lancaster Congregational Church, where

50-some residents turned out on Saturday. “We talked about should we do a protest or should we do a peace and non-violence service. Many people are in need of prayers and hope and solidarity and we decided to do that. We will be doing an evaluation next week to see what did we do well and what did we not do well. There’s always room for improvement, but this is the result of something that was decided in about an eight-hour period of time, and to me that says God’s all over this. Welcome, and we’re glad that you’re here and you will hear from many different faiths. And you will be amazed at the overarching theme of love and peace and hope that comes out of this as we listen to words from great people.”

Among those they cited were Gandhi, who had said, “Nonviolence is the greatest force at the disposal of mankind ... mightier than the mightiest weapon of de-

struction,” Martin Luther King Jr.’s six principles of non-violence; and Desmond Tutu, who said, “Do your little bit of good where you are; it’s those little bits of good put together that overwhelm the world.”

Among the songs they sang were “We Shall Overcome.”

They also learned that there aren’t many degrees of separation.

For more than two decades, now-retired Rev. Fred Anderson, of Whitefield, served a congregation in New York City, where he had a student — Jessica Patchett.

Patchett is now senior pastor at Westminster Presbyterian Church in Minneapolis, the city where Alex Pretti was shot and killed by an U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement agent on Jan. 24 and Renee Good was shot and killed by another agent on Jan. 7, amid protests regarding ICE activities in the city.

“I reached out to Jessica last week to see how she was, to tell

her these peace vigils were taking place, and asked if she’d like to say something,” said Anderson.

Patchett, who, in a letter read by Anderson, said many have “deeply needed this day,” recounted present life in Minneapolis.

“I sat with others who weep because their young children suffer daily anxiety attacks, frightened that their parents won’t make it home that night,” she said.

Teachers have broken down from exhaustion.

“Each day, they go to school and teach half-empty classrooms and every evening they look for food and medicine for the families of those children who have now been sheltering in place for more than a month,” said Patchett.

“I listen to small business owners talk about the crushing pressure of trying to keep their doors open so that they and their employees can stay in their homes. And yet all these people,

traumatized and desperate that they are, seem to gain strength to endure when they learn that they have not been forgotten, that people across the world do see their suffering and want it to end.”

Anderson then read a litany for peace and non-violence, whose refrains were repeated by Saturday’s participants.

“We gather in the presence of one another, seeking peace in a wounded world,” he said. “We commit ourselves to peace. Where violence has taken lives and shattered trust, we choose the way of nonviolence. Where fear tempts us to hatred or revenge, we choose the way of non-violence. Where words are used to inflame and divide, we choose the way of non-violence.

“For all who have been harmed by war, terror, and oppression — the known and the unnamed, the near and the far — especially Alex Pretti and Renee Nicole Good in Minneapolis, Keith Porter in Los Angeles, and Silverio Villegas Gonzales in Illinois, Victor Manuel Diaz, Parady La, Luis Beltran Yanez-Cruz, Luis Gustavo Nunez Caeres, Gerardo Lunas Campos,” he said.

“We hold them in our hearts and commit ourselves to peace. For those driven from their homes, for families separated by conflict, for children who know more of fear than of safety. May peace take root in the shelter of our care ... For our own communities, when anger hardens us or silence makes us complicit. Teach us the courage of non-violence, and the demands of love. Non-violence is not passivity, not indifference, not the absence of struggle — it is the strength to seek justice without destroying one another.”

Represented at both vigils

were the Congregational Churches in Littleton and Lancaster; the Community Church of Christ in Franconia; the Bethlehem Hebrew Congregation; the Muslim faith represented by Skip Cady, who gave the Islam and Sufi blessing; Buddhism, represented by Rebecca Brown, of Sugar Hill, who spoke about “the wisdom of our faiths’ traditions”; St. Paul’s Episcopal Church in Lancaster; First United Methodist Church in Littleton; and All Saints Episcopal Church in Littleton.

Melissa Potter and Anna McClellan, of the Bethlehem Hebrew Congregation, performed “I Have A Voice,” by Elana Arian, whose words include, “I’ll stand up for what’s right.”

Robin Lubguban, of Franconia’s United Church of Christ, gave readings from some 20th-century prophets.

Spain asked those in attendance to write on a piece of rice paper what they believe prevents them from doing what they can for world peace and from reaching inner peace. The papers were then dropped into a pitcher of water, where they dissolved.

The vigil ended with everyone holding lit candles.

“As we go, may we go with this blessing,” said Ilgenfritz. “Oh, beloved who dwells at the inmost heart of every soul. Oh, beloved who dwells at the inmost heart of every soul do not let our hearts be broken by the suffering we are witnessing. Free our hearts to unconditional love of you that we may love all living beings as you love them and know the peace that comes from such living. Amen. Let it be so.”

Spain thanked those for coming and asked them to stay tuned for possible future gatherings.

News Briefs

Continued from Page 9

Opponents questioned the article’s wording. Littleton Police Detective Scott Powers said Article 58 contains no reference to state statute and broadly states “prohibit games of chance.”

“I would consider that if they were to continue to do it to be illegal and in violation of the town ordinance. That would include the VFW. That’s my interpretation of it,” Powers said.

Police Chief Paul Smith said

the ordinance language is “pretty broad” and could create confusion.

Mackensie Southard of the Littleton VFW said his post received more than \$15,000 last year from casino partnerships and has distributed \$70,000 to local charities over 18 months.

The Select Board voted 1-3 to not recommend Article 58. Article 57, related to KENO, is also on the ballot. Warner said she supports banning casinos but recommends voters reject the KENO ban.

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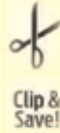
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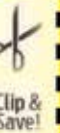
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