



The Littleton Weekly Record

THURSDAY, AUG. 22, 2024

LOCAL NEWS

Middle School To Ban Phones In Class

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FREE



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Guilty Plea. Ex-Rep. Merner To Be Sentenced, No Jail Time Expected. **Page 2**

News Briefs

Merner To Be Sentenced;
No Jail Time Expected

(Editor's Note: This story was written by Nancy West of InDepth.NH)

Former Republican state Rep. Troy Merner is scheduled to appear before a judge Wednesday at his plea and sentencing hearing at 11 a.m. in Grafton Superior Court.

Merner, 63, intends to plead guilty to charges he voted illegally and stole taxpayer money. This would end the controversy he caused by moving out of his elected district from Lancaster to Carroll and serving for a full session as a state Representative, contrary to the state Constitution.

Merner resigned his House seat in September 2023, after New Hampshire Attorney General John Formella's investigation confirmed what many already knew: Merner moved out of his Lancaster-based district before winning the election in 2022. And then served the whole House session with House Speaker Sherman Packard, R-Londonderry, aware of the allegations, but later insisting he had believed Merner when he said he still lived in Lancaster.

The Attorney General's Office started investigating Merner in November 2022 and interviewed the then-Representative at the Carroll home he shared with his new wife. In December 2022, the Attorney General's Office informed

House leadership about Merner's living situation.

Merner continued serving in the House despite not living in his district. Packard claims he was waiting for the Attorney General's investigation to finish. The investigation appeared to have gone dormant, however, until March 2023, when it was learned that Merner voted in Lancaster's municipal elections.

Once Formella's investigation concluded in September 2023, Packard says he was able to force Merner to resign. Merner would subsequently be charged criminally for illegally voting in Lancaster and taking improper mileage reimbursements for travel between his former home in Lancaster and the State House in Concord.

According to a notice to enter into a plea agreement, Merner won't spend any time in jail if the judge accepts the plea agreement.

According to court records, Merner had been scheduled for confidential criminal mediation, but that was canceled.

Instead, Merner agrees to pay \$1,100 in restitution, not seek any elected office while on suspension for the next two years and acknowledge his right to vote is terminated.

Merner is pleading guilty to a misdemeanor count of wrongful voting and another misdemeanor for theft by deception. In exchange for the guilty pleas, the state is dropping charges of unsworn falsification, tampering with govern-

ment records, and felony wrongful voting.

Merner will need to remain on good behavior during his suspension or face the possibility of serving six months in jail on the two charges. He also needs to pay back the \$1,100 in mileage reimbursements.

According to the plea notice, Merner can run for office once he's served his sentence. However, under the New Hampshire Constitution he cannot vote unless that right is restored by the state Supreme Court.

Reporter Damien Fisher contributed to this report.

Middle School To Prohibit
Cell Phones During School

As the first day of school nears, Littleton School District administrators are seeking to take a bite out of classroom distraction and bullying and harassment by revising the cell phone policy for middle school grades 7 and 8.

Presenting the change — which resulted in an hour-long discussion and debate during Monday's school board meeting — was Al Smith, principal of Daisy Bronson Middle School/Littleton High School, who gave an overview of revisions in the handbook for students and parents and for staff.

"Cell phones continue to be a huge distraction, more so I think in the middle school," he

said. "What we try to do in the high school is teach students how to use cell phones effectively and without causing distraction."

In the high school, the district is reinforcing for better consistency the pouches on classroom walls, where high school students are required to place their phone in a group pouch for the duration of a class, said Smith.

Last year, it worked well in math class, when phones were exchanged for calculators, he said.

In the middle school, administrators want to experiment a bit, and one idea for the future is to purchase individual sealed pouches with magnetic strips that allow students to carry their cell phones on them, but the phones are rendered inoperable in the pouches.

"A lot of schools are using it, schools around us 7-12," said Smith. "We want to experiment with the 7-8. The phones are most distracting in the middle school. That's when we see more bullying and harassment with kids on their cell

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ON THE COVER: Segments of Route 135 in Dalton, pictured here, and in Lancaster have reopened after major repairs were made following the July 10 and 11 flooding from Hurricane Beryl. (Photo contributed by NHDOT)





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This article was originally published on Co+op, Welcome to the Table, & adapted for use. www.welcometothetable.coop

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phones constantly.”

He said that last year, middle school students were required to lock their phones in their lockers, and 99 percent of them complied.

Also last year, middle school students were allowed to use their cell phones at lunch.

The change going forward is to prohibit middle school phone use throughout the entire day, including lunch, where Smith said he would like to see 7-8 students having conversations with each other rather than using their phones.

“A group of friends sitting around with their phones and not interacting is an issue,” he said.

High school students, at an age when it is believed they can be more effectively taught to use phones appropriately, will continue to be allowed to use their phones during lunch and on breaks.

Melissa Jones, DBMS/LHS vice principal, said there have been struggles in classrooms between teachers and some students who are chronically addicted to their phones.

“Having teachers do different things in different classrooms creates inconsistency for students,” she said.

The goal is to develop more consistency and support teachers, said Smith.

The school board backing a policy is a big help, said Jones.

School board chairman Matt St. John said he is in favor of the approach, but wants a rule that means something, “otherwise it’s just a paper tiger.”

The policy for grades 7-12 is no cell phones in the classroom.

As for access to phones between classes, during breaks, and at lunch, school board member Greg Cook asked why the district isn’t considering the same policy for grades 7-12.

Smith said one reason is that the district has a responsibility to teach students to use cell phones responsibly and respectfully.

“But a huge complaint from teachers, and rightfully so, is it’s a huge distraction,” he said. “Students are on their cell phones messaging with friends ... The only change with the middle school

would be lunchtime ... But a larger issue with a small percentage of students was constant bullying and harassment of other students. That’s why the change in the middle school. I’m not saying high school students are perfect, but we’re hopefully teaching responsible behavior around cell phones.”

There are juniors and seniors who can handle phones appropriately and others who can’t, said Rachelle Cox, director of Above The Notch Community School and of LHS’s career and technical education center.

Multiple infractions result in phones being confiscated and taken to the office for the day.

“We can try as hard as we can to enforce the policy, but the bottom line is there is a group of students who will not turn their phones off,” said Cox. “Those are the things that we’re trying to eliminate.”

“There are many students that have no issues with their phones and it’s totally appropriate,” said Smith. “There are some students who if they have a minor issue with a phone it escalates to a major disruption.”

He said a blanket 7-12 policy would take time to get the needed feedback and might draw push-back from some parents and others.

St. John said the cell phone problem in schools is like the nicotine issue of his generation.

“The technology has advanced faster than our ability to understand how to properly work with it,” he said.

“Part of what we have to do here with most social skills and employability skills is teach students to be responsible, and be responsible with their cell phones,” said Smith.

The school board voted on a motion to require grades 7 and 8 to put their phones in their locker for the entire day, including for lunch and breaks, and have high school students drop their phones in the communal pouch during classes, with the exception that all grade levels be allowed to use phones for educational purposes at a teacher’s discretion.

The nay in the 4-1 board vote was St. John, who earlier favored a universal approach for 7-12 and the use of pouches across the grades.

The first day of school is Monday, Aug. 26.

New Required Classes

Smith said that personal finance is now a graduation requirement for new classes following a state law made two years ago.

Prior to the law, personal finance had been an elective course, and a curriculum is in place to meet the new requirement. That curriculum will come in handy because the law went into effect very few details, he said.

“There’s supposed to be a test book coming out by the legislators who proposed this bill,” said Smith.

Currently, juniors and seniors take the personal finance course, but eventually the district would like to see sophomores in it. He said the class teaches budgeting and helps students plan for their future.

The second graduation requirement is a citizenship exam, the latter of which will be provided through the school district’s social studies curriculum, said Smith.

The school is already able to offer a civics exam, which has been in place for a number of years, said Smith.

It’s been a success with students, and if some don’t do well the first time, with a little bit of increased studying they can be successful, he said.

Segments Of Route 135 Reopen After Flood Damage Repairs

More than a month after major flood damage caused by Hurricane Beryl washed out parts of Route 135 and prompted several closures, segments in Dalton and Lancaster have reopened following major repair work.

After the July 10 and 11 rains, the bridge in Dalton on Route 135, between Union Road and Landry Road, was closed following a wash-out.

A temporary detour was established, and a temporary bridge was constructed to allow for alternating traffic. Plans are being developed for a new bridge.

In Lancaster, Route 135 between Buffalo Road and Hoopers Drive was closed.

On Monday, Richard Arcand, spokesman for the New Hampshire Department of Transportation, said the temporary one-lane bridge in Dalton reopened on Saturday, and he had just received word that the Lancaster section had reopened.

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Judge Allows Transgender New Hampshire Girl To Play Soccer As Lawsuit Challenges New Law

BY HOLLY RAMER
Associated Press

CONCORD, N.H. — A federal judge temporarily cleared the way Monday for a transgender girl to play soccer for her high school team while she and another student challenge a New Hampshire ban.

The families of Parker Tirrell, 15, and Iris Turmelle, 14, filed a lawsuit Friday seeking to overturn the “Fairness in Women’s Sports Act” that Republican Gov. Chris Sununu signed into law last month. While Turmelle doesn’t plan to play sports until December, Tirrell sought an emergency order allowing her to start soccer practice Monday evening.

U.S. District Court Chief Judge Landya McCafferty granted the request with just hours to spare, finding that Tirrell had demonstrated likely success on the merits of the case. The two sides now have 14 days to schedule a hearing

on the plaintiffs’ broader motion for a preliminary order blocking the state from enforcing the law while the case proceeds.

The lawsuit said the law violates constitutional protections and federal laws because the teens are being denied equal educational opportunities and are being discriminated against because they are transgender.

The judge questioned how the law, as applied to Tirrell, would protect girls from unfair competition given that the state isn’t contesting evidence that she has no physiological advantage after taking puberty-blocking medication to prevent bodily changes such as muscle development. McCafferty also found Tirrell had proven that she would suffer irreparable harm without it, another criteria for emergency relief.

Michael DeGrandis, an attorney for the state, argued that missing soccer practice, while

“stressful,” didn’t meet that standard, but the girls’ lawyer disagreed, saying it would have a “permanent, stigmatizing impact.”

“We are very happy with the judge’s order. It is also what we expected, because we know that this law is unfair and violates the rights of transgender girls of New Hampshire,” Chris Erchull, an attorney at GLBTQ Legal Advocates & Defenders, said after the hearing.

The rights of transgender people — and especially young people — have become a major political battleground in recent years as trans visibility has increased. Most Republican-controlled states have banned gender-affirming health care for transgender minors, and several have adopted policies limiting which school bathrooms trans people can use and barring trans girls from some sports competitions.



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"I just got their update today, which is great," said state Rep. David Rochefort, R-Littleton, who had toured the damaged areas with other state officials. "When we first toured, they said it could be two or three months before Lancaster would reopen and here it was weeks later and they're open for business."

The flooding also washed out much of the shoulder along Route 3's Corrigan Hill on the descent into downtown Lancaster.

But repair work there has progressed much. "Corrigan Hill is looking good and should be in good shape for the fair," said Rochefort. "We have Moose Fest on Friday, and a lot of people are coming up for that, and then the fair and then the leaf peepers."

After the recent reopenings, Rochefort said he's not aware of any other major road issues in the region.

"I'm really thrilled with Route 135 in Lancaster," he said. "That exceeded expectations. I'm impressed by the hard work they're putting in. It's a testament to DOT."

After the floods, the bridge in Littleton, near the intersection of County Road on Route 135 heading into Dalton, was also being repaired.

One lane was closed and motorists were alternating through the work zone. Arcand said

it appears the Littleton segment is now open to two lanes of traffic.

Another Town Looking Into Homeless Camping Issue

A citizen complaint about people camping on municipal property near the community pool and possibly washing their clothes in the pool has led the Select Board in Bethlehem to mull options and consider an ordinance to present to town meeting voters.

During the board's Aug. 12 meeting, some also said the June 28 Supreme Court of the United States ruling that allows municipalities to limit or ban camping on public property, coupled with Littleton's 2024 town meeting approval of an ordinance to ban overnight camping on town property without permission and that town's plan to clear an encampment behind Littleton Water and Light (LWL) could push more homeless people into Bethlehem.

Bringing up the topic was Bethlehem Select Board chairman Mike Bruno, who said the area that involved the camping has since been posted with no trespassing signs, and while the board might not settle the issue immediately, it can at least have a discussion and chart a direction forward.

"I think we owe it to the member of the public who had the complaint that we bring this up in

public," he said.

Although Bruno said he doesn't think it's a major issue for the town and is in isolated incident, concerns for public safety should be discussed, given that people were camping along a public right-of-way and near a trail where youth might walk or ride a bicycle.

While the SCOTUS decision allows communities to limit people camping on public property, Selectman Bruce Caplain said he is not saying Bethlehem should do that.

"But if the [police] chief wants to do that, it's something that can be done," he said. "It's not a big issue, but if Littleton is going to close theirs, it could become a bigger issue."

Caplain said the Bethlehem board can decide if it wants to designate another piece of public property for camping that is not near a pool or public right-of-way.

Nancy Strand, vice-chair of the board, said washing clothes in a pool can cause filtration issues and potential contamination. Under criminal laws, it could be considered destruction of property or criminal mischief. She said if any drug use is discovered, police would have a reason to address it.

Select Board member Veronica Morris said RSA 236:58, the New Hampshire statute that restricts camping on public rights-of-way or public property unless authorized by the board, could be applicable.

"If this is a regularly used trail ... that might apply and would be a way to encourage these folks to find a different spot," she said. "I agree with Bruce. We would have to find another place ... We know some people are unable to find housing at various points and I truly don't want to be heartless."

Morris suggested that the board consult legal counsel to see if the RSA would apply and pointed to Littleton's approach, where she said police there worked with the homeless population and built up trust, so if there was ever an emergency, such as the February fire at the Littleton camp, those who are homeless do not hesitate to call.

Bruno suggested a continued conversation with the police chief.

Bethlehem Town Administrator Mary Moritz said any decision made by a five-member board would be a significant one and suggested that any policy instead be presented to town meeting voters through a warrant article so all residents can participate.

She added that the current camping incident did not involve a run-in or any laws broken.

Resident Rich Southwell said it was "not an isolated incident" and one morning several weeks ago he saw a woman who had been sleeping along Route 302, and who, after waking and walking, was "one bad wobble from going into traffic."

With Littleton having an enforceable ordinance and Bethlehem not having one, he said he thinks the town will see other people migrating to Bethlehem.

"You will see more of this until you get an ordinance on the books," said Southwell.

If the board allocates a piece of land for a homeless encampment, the board has to ask the question of how that would be in the best interest of taxpayers, said Southwell.

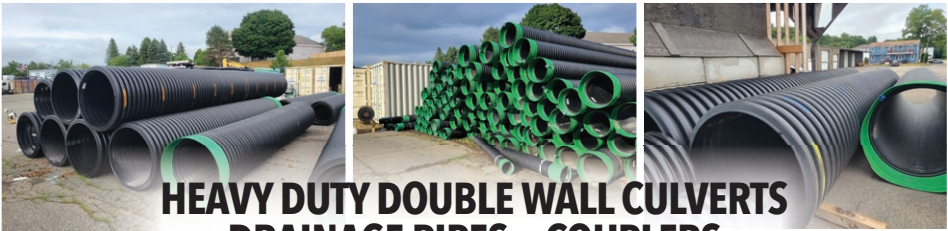
In Littleton, a notice of fair warning has since been issued to residents living at the camp behind LWL asking them to voluntary leave, inter-

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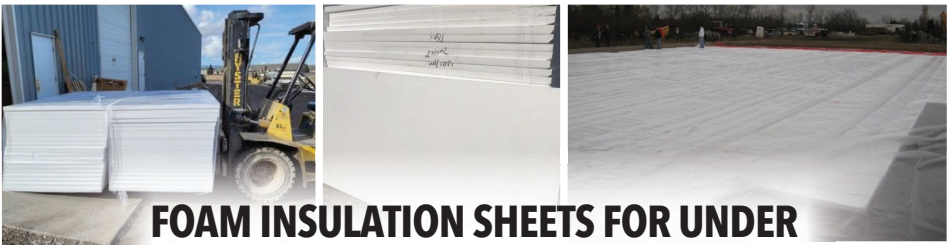
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im Littleton town manager Paul Smith said Monday. “It’s going to be closed, not prohibiting camping, but because it’s a restricted area for everybody because of the well heads,” he said. “We gave them advance notice and worked with them.” The LWL campers have since moved to other parts of Littleton, and to his knowledge, Smith said no one is camping behind LWL. Following the SCOTUS decision, Littleton has been working with town legal for a thorough review of that decision as well as how the town will develop a permitting process to allow camping in certain instances, with the permission of the Select Board, he said. Those who violate the ordinance are subject to a \$10 fine for a first offense and \$25 fine for subsequent offenses. “The ordinance is in place, but the enforcement piece will come after a fair and balanced permitting process,” said Smith. “We’re still holding off on doing any enforcement until we figure this thing out,” said Linda MacNeil, chair of the Littleton Select Board.

Attorney, Citing 2011 Settlement, Says Landfill Not Legally Allowable

As Casella presents Dalton with a proposed host community agreement, an attorney for an opposition group, citing the 2011 settlement agreement between the company and Bethlehem, argues that the proposed new landfill is not legally allowable and the state must, therefore, deny it. Meanwhile, a new law that takes effect in September includes such facilities in the definition of a development of regional impact. For abutting communities, the law requires a regional public hearing.

Zoning Ordinance, Settlement Agreement

On Aug. 5, Amy Manzelli, an environmental attorney for the North Country Alliance for Balanced Change, wrote Mike Wimsatt, director of the waste management division of the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services, to request that DES deny Casella’s application for a standard permit. The location of the proposed Granite State Landfill on Douglas Drive, a segment of which is in Bethlehem and which would include numerous supporting structures, presents several issues that justify denial, and Casella “has not received, and has refused to seek” what Manzelli said are required local approvals from both Dalton and Bethlehem. Manzelli said that while Dalton does not have a zoning ordinance, Bethlehem does, and Casella needs zoning approval. “In fact, GSL cannot obtain local approval from Bethlehem because both Bethlehem’s zoning ordinance and settlement agreements with Casella preclude the landfill,” she said. In Dalton, she argues that the company has not sought local approval per RSA 674:41, the statute on building permits that gives planning boards authority over the construction of new buildings, and has not demonstrated the state-required complete ownership

of Douglas Drive, which is part of the proposed landfill facility. In Bethlehem, visual inspection of Casella’s plans alone is enough to see that Douglas Drive, including the Bethlehem segment, is part of the landfill facility, and it’s especially true considering all the work that the company proposes for the Bethlehem length of Douglas Drive, she said. “However, even if Applicant updates its Application and approaches Bethlehem for zoning approval, Applicant cannot obtain zoning approval from Bethlehem,” said Manzelli. “For one, Bethlehem’s zoning ordinance does not permit any new private landfills in the town.” A provision in the ordinance prohibits commercial solid waste disposal facilities or expansion of existing facilities outside of District V, the sole designated landfill district that is located on the other side of Bethlehem, where Casella operates its NCES landfill.

She said that even if Casella sought zoning relief in the form of a variance to build a landfill outside of District V, such relief would not be possible because it would violate settlement agreements between Bethlehem and Casella. Two subsections apply, said Manzelli — Section 5(b), which states that “NCES shall not acquire any real property within the Town’s boundaries for the purpose of developing or operating a landfill on such property” and Section 5(c), which states “NCES shall not seek or acquire any federal, state, or local permits to develop or operate a landfill within the Town’s boundaries and outside of District V.” Another subsection, Section 5(a), might also be applicable, as it provides that “NCES shall not expand the landfill or develop or operate any other landfill capacity within the Town’s boundaries and outside of District V,” she said. “Therefore, GSL will never be able to show the necessary compliance with local approvals,” said Manzelli. “Ultimately, while Applicant has claimed that it does not need any local approvals for the Proposal, this is simply not the case ... It is impossible for Applicant to secure local approval from Bethlehem because (1) Bethlehem’s zoning ordinance prohibits landfill facilities in the proposed area and (2) Casella’s settlement agreements with

Bethlehem preclude GSL (or any other Casella affiliate/subsidiary) from pursuing a landfill within Bethlehem. For these reasons, the Department should exercise its discretion to deny the Application.” She also argues that Bethlehem “has not been treated as a host municipality for purposes of the state permitting process even though part of the Proposal is within Bethlehem and Bethlehem

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News Briefs

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and its residents will be exposed to the negative consequences, namely heavy truck traffic.”

On Friday, Casella spokesman Jeff Weld was asked, specific to Douglas Drive, if Casella will be seeking local zoning approval from Bethlehem, if it will seek local approval in Dalton specific to RSA 674:41, and if the company believes that the 2011 settlement agreement prohibits further landfill development and operation outside of Bethlehem’s District V.

“We will continue to work through the required local, state, and federal permit applications for the Granite State Landfill with the appropriate regulatory agencies,” he said.

“Our focus is meeting the requirements along the appropriate timeline to ensure that the Granite State Landfill can begin construction and operation to avoid prolonged disruption to the more than 60,000 customers in New Hampshire who rely on the critical disposal capacity that will no longer be available when the NCES Landfill in Bethlehem ceases operation,” said Weld. “We have secured the first of eight required permits for that project and are encouraged by the response we have received regarding our proposed host community agreement for the town of Dalton.”

Regional Impact

In July, Gov. Chris Sununu signed into law House Bill 1221,

which now includes solid waste landfills in the definition of a development of regional impact, for review by local land use boards.

As such, notice shall be made to all communities located within any watershed where such a landfill is proposed or, if outside the watershed, located within 10 miles of the boundaries of the proposed landfill.

On July 26, former Dalton Planning Board alternate member Adam Finkel wrote to the Dalton Planning Board about its new obligations and its requirement under law to notify the North Country Council and every impacted community and to set a date for a regional public hearing.

The new law takes effect Sept. 17, or 60 days after its July 19 signing.

Continuing Violations

A July 19 story in the New Hampshire Bulletin cites numerous NCES permit violations (some repeat violations) over the course of years, from trash placed outside of permitted areas, litter visible around the site, releases of liquid pollution, and failure to file mandatory reports.

In the story, Weld was quoted as saying a “significant investigation” will be undertaken to find the root causes.

NHDES Concerns

On July 15, Casella responded with a 39-page report to DES’s letter of deficiency and departmental concerns regarding leachate management, storage, flow, disposal, and stormwater diversion at NCES.

According to the report by CMA Engineers, during an inspection for construction-related damage in April a quarter-inch hole in the primary liner was observed that, over a free-flowing drain-

age geocomposite with several inches of head over it, can generate 3,000 gallons of water a day.

The company said the hole was upslope and outside of the area where leachate accumulates. A patch was made.

On July 31, Wimsatt issued his narrative of a June telephone conversation with Casella engineer Joe Gay and Sam Nicolai, Casella’s vice-president of engineering and compliance, regarding DES’s ongoing concerns about leachate and department data that suggest five months of non-compliance regarding leachate flow and storage.

Data suggests there is excess flow and that several incidents were reportable, but were not reported by Casella, wrote Wimsatt.

“I stressed that these systems were not designed to be operated this way and Sam agreed,” he wrote.

Wimsatt reiterated a “verbal emergency authorization to begin leachate shipping 24/7.”

He followed up the next day with Nicolai, who had looked into the matter and equipment.

“Sam further explained that NCES believed this equipment had been impacted by construction and knew it was a problem, but had not fixed it,” wrote Wimsatt. “He stated that he was very disappointed in how they responded to this issue, and apologized.”

The phone call was three years after a 154,000-gallon leachate spill at NCES.

Embattled Board Member Resigns, Walks Out Of Meeting

BETHLEHEM — Kim Koprowski abruptly resigned from the Profile School Board on Thursday.

Koprowski, who chaired the board for five years until March, walked out during a discussion of a hostile workplace investigation conducted by Municipal Resources, Inc. (MRI).

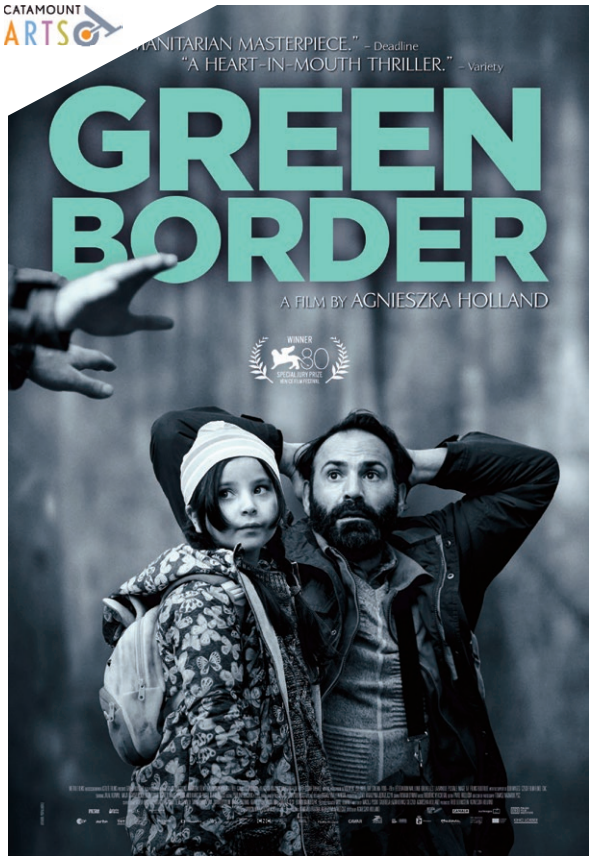
MRI found, among other things, that Koprowski had circumvented the chain of command and interfered with SAU 35 and the school district’s management of Profile School.

The results of the investigation, published in a 600-page report, affirmed accusations that Superintendent Kate Segal had made against Koprowski last fall.

Before leaving, Koprowski dismissed the accusations as lies

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and said Segal was part of a “broken” school administration that “needs to be fixed.”

“God help this staff as long as she [Segal] stays,” Koprowski said.

BREAKING HER SILENCE

The \$21,000 investigation stemmed from a months-long battle between Segal and Koprowski.

In November, Segal first expressed concerns that then-Chair Koprowski had habitually acted on her own in defiance of board policy.

In December, Segal presented communications that showed Koprowski had breached confidentiality and shared classified information on two separate occasions. Koprowski did not dispute Segal’s allegations at the time and apologized for any transgressions she may have made, saying, “My judgment might not always be perfect. I’m human, I make mistakes.”

In January, Segal recommended the School Board remove Koprowski as chair and determine if there were grounds to remove her from office. The board took no action.

Finally breaking her silence on Thursday, Koprowski said, “I’m tired of being the scapegoat for this woman [Segal].”

“I would tell you that everything she stated last December in that meeting about me, that I calmly sat through and took all of that crap, was a complete lie,” Koprowski said.

She also inferred that Segal, who announced her retirement when her contract ends on June 30, 2025, did not retire willingly.

Reached the following day, Koprowski declined further comment until she could speak with legal counsel.

ONGOING SITUATION

The situation stems from an October 2021 incident where a male Profile School student cyberbullied a female White Mountains Regional Student.

In that case, the Profile School Board under Koprowski reportedly spent \$48,000 in legal fees to avoid disciplining the responsible Profile student.

The matter was appealed to the state Department of Education and State Board of Education, which determined that school authorities had mishandled it.

According to those involved in the case, shortly after her hire, Segal intervened and helped bring about a mediated settlement dated Oct. 25, 2022.

Behind the scenes, Koprowski criticized Segal’s handling of the matter, suggesting the settlement had betrayed and scapegoated the school board.

Koprowski wrote an email to the full board on Oct. 29, 2023, saying “my level of trust with Superintendent Segal is broken,” and lamented to vice chair Alice Rocke in a Nov. 1 email that Profile cannot unilaterally act against Segal, stating, “We can’t dismiss her or really even discipline her.”

INVESTIGATION FINDINGS

On Thursday, Segal read a two-page summary of the 600-page investigation report.

According to the summary, MRI found that Koprowski had circumvented the chain of command and interfered with the SAU and school district’s management of Profile School.

The summary states, “Koprowski admitted to deliberately circumventing the chain of command because she was unhappy to find herself in the minority after a vote of the SAU Executive Board linked to Superintendent Segal’s employment contract. She took matters into her own hands, stepped outside of her official capacity, and engaged in a subversive course of conduct that has contributed, in part, to the overall work environment described by the complainants, witnesses, and within the findings listed above.”

Beyond Koprowski, the investigation looked at the overall school district culture.

MRI found no evidence of illegal, discriminatory or hostile actions, but determined that:

— The school district’s policies, procedures, rules and regulations were inconsistently applied, and

— The absence of communication up and down the chain of command had significantly contributed to the unhealthy work environment being experienced a Profile School.

School Board Chair Adam Boyer said the report findings would

be handed off to an advisory committee for further discussion and potential follow-up action.

SOCIAL MEDIA POST

While the school board meeting was still in session, Koprowski took to social media.

Koprowski said about her five and-a-half years of school board service, “[I] was chair for 5 of those years [and] I feel very proud for helping get the school through some difficult times including COVID.”

However, she said in her post, “I will not be bullied anymore by the current superintendent. There is a fine line between confidentiality and transparency but hiding incompetence and lies behind the excuse of confidentiality is NOT OK!”

Koprowski said she ran for the school board because she had worked at two SAU 35 schools (Lafayette Regional Elementary,

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Bethlehem Elementary) and cared deeply about the Profile School community.

"I have seen and experienced first hand with my own 3 children how special the staff at Profile is," she wrote. "Profile School is one of the top 10 schools in NH which is a state that already excels in education. The majority of our staff are long-term and highly qualified in their fields. We deserve leadership at the helm that is worthy of that!"

Referring to incoming Profile School Principal Brandon Ray, Koprowski added, "I'm hopeful that once the newly hired principal gets students and staff fully back in the building, he will see how lucky he is to be with Profile!"

Federal Disaster Aid Approved For Coos And Grafton Counties

Following a major disaster declaration and an Aug. 5 request by Gov. Chris Sununu, presidential disaster aid has been granted to Grafton and Coos counties in response to severe damage from the July 10-13 floods, the governor's office announced Tuesday.

The floods from Hurricane Beryl resulted in significant costs to several local communities, most severely in Dalton, Lancaster, Monroe, and Lyman, the four towns listed in the declaration and where a total of more than \$4 million in damage was assessed, which made up the bulk of damage in the state.

In addition, Great River Hydro, which operates the Comerford dam in Monroe, incurred \$2 million in damage to an access road.

"Communities in many areas of the state continue to face extraordinary weather events resulting in significant damage," Sununu said in a statement. "This disaster declaration provides the opportunity for communities in Coos and Grafton counties to recuperate costs incurred while fixing damages. The state recognizes the hardship these storms brought and will work with officials in both counties to utilize relief funding to make the communities whole again."

In his 8-page request, Sununu said, "The severe storm and flooding left many residents trapped in their homes, and in some cases, prevented access by emergency personnel. The impact of the response to this event was felt throughout the local mutual aid and state systems as personnel and assets were diverted to the incident area."

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), working with state and local emergency management officials, recently completed a preliminary damage assessment (PDA) and found that the statewide cost for response efforts totaled \$5,258,562.

The actual amount, though, is likely higher. The declaration allows communities in Coos and Grafton counties to move ahead and seek federal funding assistance.

According to the declaration, "precipitation anomalies" in the two counties resulted in rainfall departures that were 150 to 200 percent above average, the region had received 6 to 10 inches of rain during the previous month leading into the July flash flood event, and both counties were the wettest part of New Hampshire during that time.

Dalton, where the fire department conducted two water rescues and 50 homes could not be reached for a time, sustained \$1.9 million in validated damages. The town sustained impacts to more than two dozen roads, and damages ranged from culverts to major washouts.

Lancaster, where 300 residents were cut off from services for

about 24 hours, sustained \$1.869 million in damage.

Both towns had segments of state Route 135 closed, although in the past few days those areas have since reopened.

Monroe, where 300 residents were shut off from services for 48 hours, sustained \$240,154 in damages.

Lyman sustained \$104,913 in damages.

In addition to local infrastructure, the New Hampshire Department of Safety's Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (HSEM) reported that Great River Hydro, which produces about 23 percent of the conventional hydro-power electricity throughout New England, experienced significant impacts to road and bridge infrastructure surrounding their hydro-power facilities.

According to an impact statement from the company, the storm "wreaked havoc with culverts and bridges in the area ..." and resulted in the \$2 million in damage to the access road to their Comerford station in Monroe.

See full story at www.CaledonianRecord.com

State Representative, Resident Gear Up For Next Recreational Pot Bill

With different takes on revenue, a state representative and a local resident who chairs the advisory board for the New Hampshire Cannabis Association are gearing up for the next bill seeking to legalize adult recreational cannabis.

In June, House Bill 1633, the most recent legislation, was tabled by the New Hampshire House of Representatives after concerns that a Senate-amended version of the bill put the state at legal risk and changed what had been a free enterprise and small business system in favor of a state-run franchise model.

Prime-sponsoring some of the bills in the 2025 legislative session will be state Rep. Jared Sullivan, D-Bethlehem.

See full story at www.CaledonianRecord.com

Judge Affirms Ex-Senator's 30-Day Jail Sentence

Ex-state Sen. Jeff Woodburn will serve time in county jail. That's according to an order issued Thursday by a Coos Superior Court judge, who in 2021 handed down a sentence of 30 days to serve for a Class A misdemeanor conviction against Woodburn, who in 2017 kicked down the locked door to his ex-fiance's home in Jefferson.

On July 30, the New Hampshire Supreme Court rejected an appeal by Woodburn, 59, of Whitefield, who had asked the court to reverse that conviction and another misdemeanor criminal mischief conviction for kicking the clothes dryer door belonging to Emily Jacobs, 42, his former fiancée.

See full story at www.CaledonianRecord.com

Boards, Budget Committee Implement Quarterly Meetings

Seven years after Littleton school voters passed a petition warrant article calling for quarterly joint meetings between the select and school boards and the advisory town-school budget committee, those meetings are being scheduled.

In March 2017, residents, in a 951-229 vote, passed the petition to have the school board meet quarterly, at minimum, with the select board and budget committee to present financial and budget reports, with one meeting held a minimum of 10 days before the state sets the tax rate.

The goal was better coordination to ensure that services continue with the least impact on taxpayers, avoid large spikes in the tax rate, and navigate any upcoming challenges.

But outside of a meeting or two here and there, the quarterly schedule hadn't been realized.

See full story at www.CaledonianRecord.com

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