



Dump Delay. Casella Pulls Dalton Wetlands Permit Application. **Page 2**



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Casella Pulls Dalton Wetlands Permit Application

BY ROBERT BLECHL
Staff Writer

Amid intensifying scrutiny on the proposed Granite State Landfill in Dalton, Casella Waste Systems has pulled its amended wetlands application with the state.

On Friday, company CEO John Casella issued a letter to the town of Dalton notifying municipal officials and residents of his intention to withdraw the permit application with the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services, saying it will be resubmitted some time in 2022 at the same time the company submits other applications, among them a state alteration of terrain permit application and a permit application for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

"I wanted to make sure to reach out to you directly so you would read it from me," Casella wrote. "This decision was not made lightly as it comes at a significant cost to our company, but was made for several reasons."

One reason, he said, is that DES had expressed interest in coordinating its review of

the wetlands application permit with other state and federal permit applications.

Another is the additional time will allow the company to perform more field work to support the multiple applications, said Casella.

"This decision will also allow us to take into consideration the public opinion that we have gathered, and will continue to solicit, through this process," said Casella.

In July in Whitefield, DES held a public hearing on the wetlands permit application, which drew a large showing of residents, with more than 100 gathering outside to protest a landfill and just five of the 59 people who gave testimony speaking in favor.

The plan is for a total 180-acre landfill area that would involve the destruction of 17 acres of wetlands.

In August, DES requested that Casella amend its wetlands application so it can coordinate that application with the other applications.

That decision drew criticism from opponents, who said DES already held the July 14 public hearing on the wetlands application

and told the public it would issue a decision on the application no later than October 2021.

Before the company's announcement on Friday, the revised plan was to submit an amended wetlands application by this Wednesday, with DES to issue an approval or denial no later than December 2022.

Under its rules, a DES requirement is that Casella have local approval in Dalton, which in 2019 adopted emergency temporary zoning allowed under New Hampshire statute.

At town meeting in March, voters will be asked to support a permanent zoning ordinance.

To date, the company has not sought local approvals in Dalton.

In his letter to Dalton, Casella said, "Those who have opposed this project from the outset will broadcast their own viewpoint about the process and the project, but the reality is that New Hampshire will be facing a waste disposal capacity shortfall based on its current permitted capacity. Without the new landfill capacity in Dalton and recycling infrastruc-



Casella Waste Systems has announced it will not be submitting an amended wetlands permit application this month as had been the plan. The application for its proposed landfill in Dalton is expected to be submitted in 2022. Here, company engineer, Joe Gay speaks at a public hearing on July 14 in Whitefield on the original permit application. (File photo by Robert Blechl)

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Cyan Magenta Yellow Black



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News Briefs

Presby Brothers Buy Mt. Agassiz

Franconia-based brothers Thad and Trevor Presby own a number of businesses and properties in Franconia and surrounding towns. On Monday, they added another property to their portfolio — the 130-acre Mt. Agassiz in Bethlehem, a mountain and peak popular with hikers and mountain bikers. Several weeks ago, they purchased the Hillwinds Lodge in Franconia. For Agassiz, Trevor Presby on Tuesday said the opportunity for a purchase arose and they jumped on it, but they currently have no develop-

ment plans or other plans for the property. “There is nothing on our radar at this point,” he said. “The status quo is what the plan is right now, to allow the mountain bikers and people to hike up there and go from there. That’s our thought right now.” The uniqueness of Agassiz, which sits at an elevation of nearly 2,400 feet, the highest in the area, encouraged them to become its new owners, said Presby. “You can’t find a piece like that anymore, not a place that’s on top of a mountain with those views,” he said. “That’s a pretty impressive place up there ... It just came up, and we were in the right place at the right time, like other things, and thought it would be a good fit for us. My broth-

er and I live right down the street from there and we are big in keeping Franconia and the area the same way it is. It blended and worked well with what we have.” For 25 years, the Agassiz property was owned by Stan Harrison, who sold it to Blue Sky Towers III LLC, which has a cell tower on the peak and access to it via an easement. “Blue Sky Towers bought it from Stan a day in between us,” said Presby. “They were more interested in the rights to the cell tower and they don’t want to own the land. They offered it to us a little while ago when they were putting their deal together, and we said, sure, we’re here locally and we like purchases like that ... We’ve always bought a lot of land around town and this seemed like a nice one to purchase and maybe to keep.”

The land, made up of five tracts, has road and power and water all the way to the top. Decades ago, a big commercial ski operation was planned, but it never came to fruition. “If you look at the history of it, they were going to put a monorail up there, a ski resort, all kinds of stuff,” he said. “They used to run little cars up there and tow people up the road in the ‘60s. A monorail for skiing would have taken you to the top. They tried to get it done, but I think the funding collapsed in the ‘60s and ‘70s.” The land is named after Lois Agassiz, the 19th-century naturalist, and was operated as a for-profit tourist attraction for 75 of the last 100 years, according to a historical narrative. The property is unique enough where Presby said he and Thad don’t want to move forward with any changes right now.

“We’ve already met, last week, with the mountain bike association that’s already over there and talked to them about continuing what they’re doing, which I’m fine with at this point,” he said. “I know people hike up there, and we are all fine with that right now. There’s no reason to change anything. We enjoy the outdoors and doing that kind of stuff, too.” A larger stone building that was rehabilitated sits on the property, along with some cottages that the Presbys bought. The transaction with Blue Sky Towers was made on Monday through TTW LLC, the Presby’s real estate buying, selling and development company formed in 2007, with a property purchase price of \$500,000, according to the Grafton County Registry of Deeds. According to deeds records, Blue Sky Towers purchased the property from Harrison for \$510,000. On Nov. 15, registry of deeds records shows an \$800,000 purchase from the Presbys’ other company, T&T Mtn Investments LLC, which bought the Hillwinds from Deane and Tina Haskell, of Franconia. “We have no plans now and are just doing seasonal rentals for the winter until spring,” Presby

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ON THE COVER: Inclement weather ranging from rain to sleet to snow affected much of the North Country on Dec. 8, 2021. (Photo by Katherine Fiegenbaum)



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News Briefs

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said of the Hillwinds.” We didn’t have time to plan together when it came on the market and we picked it up pretty quickly.”

One future plan could address a perennial problem in the North Country — the shortage of housing, compounded of late by local homes and properties being bought and then rented out for short-term Airbnb and VRBO stays.

“There’s such a housing need in town, and everywhere, and we’re trying to figure out which part of the housing market we’re going after,” he said.

To address the problem, the Hillwinds motel property offers options, he said.

“It could be 10 different things,” said Presby. “It could be regular housing, it could be a motel again, it could be senior housing, it could be a 55-and-older community, it could be housing that we need to run the businesses here in town, employee housing. There’s so many different options on where to go. Right now, there’s no place for locals to be buying or living.”

For another business, this one in Gorham, they began rebuilding in July the old Gorham Car Wash, and adding it to their portfolio of now four car washes, with the other two in Littleton and one in Lancaster.

In December 2019, the brothers stepped in to purchase the former Mac’s Market in Franconia amid concern by residents that its closure would leave a big hole in town.

The renamed Franconia Market and Deli opened 18 months ago. Since then, the business has been going well with a good base of local residents who are employed and a brand new gift shop, said Presby.

Haverhill School Board Ditches Mask Rules

The Haverhill Cooperative School Board on Monday removed all mask orders for students.

By a 3-2 vote, the school board made masking optional in grades K-12, despite state and federal recommendations for universal masking at this point in the pandemic.

Barring a new vote, students won’t have to wear masks under any circumstances at Woodsville Elementary, Haverhill Cooperative Middle and Woodsville High for the remainder of the 2021-2022 academic year. Those schools have reported a combined 87 cases (14 active) since classes resumed.

The decision, effective immediately, also ends the school district’s practice of temporary, targeted masking in response to positive COVID cases.

The motion — approved by school board members Alexandra Keeler, Michael Aremburg and Stephanie Chase — comes a week after New Hampshire saw record case numbers. Meanwhile Haverhill has one of the highest case rates in the state.

Chase said having no mask policy “is kind of the way that it should be. The school board shouldn’t be making the decisions for the families. The families need to make their own decisions if they want their kids to mask. It’s not up to us to mandate those decisions.”

The school board struck down masking in spite of a recent parent survey.

The survey was completed by roughly half of HCSD parents. The majority supported student masking in some form.

The survey shows that over 74% of respondents support targeted masking, or something more. More than 54% favored full-time masking until case numbers return to zero.

Chairman Richard Guy questioned how the school board could set policy in defiance of the survey results.

“Just a couple of months ago we were stating that we wanted to be true representatives of the parents. And that we were going to do what the parents told us to do. Clearly, the parents overwhelmingly said they want masks full time,” Guy said, adding with a hint of dis-

belief, “and now we’re talking about going to even less masking? Am I understanding that correctly?”

Board member Donald LoCascio said the survey backed the school district’s targeted masking policy and argued for its continuation.

“I think that this survey is extremely important to find out the will of the people, to determine and guide what we should vote for in terms of masking,” he said. “To my mind, masking is basically an inconvenience that’s warranted given the dire effects of somebody getting COVID and getting very, very sick or dying from it, or giving it to somebody else who does get very, very sick.”

Guy and LoCascio both cast dissenting votes.

Vice-Chair John Rutherford attended virtually and did not vote due to connectivity problems.

Board member Sabrina Brown, who had previously supported masking, was absent.

New Hampshire does not have a blanket mask mandate and Gov. Chris Sununu has said there are no plans to establish one. Without clear guidance, school districts in the Granite State have created their own mask policies.

Up until now, the Haverhill Cooperative School Board had offered lukewarm support for masking.

They rejected mask mandates twice over the summer before they

reluctantly agreed to temporary, targeted masking for students (and universal masking for teachers) in response to public outcry.

The policy for staff remains in place.

Aremburg initially proposed removing all mask requirements for everyone on school grounds — students, staff and visitors — but that language was lost in a flurry of discussion, motions and amendments.

During a lengthy back and forth on the matter, Guy, the former head of Woodsville Ambulance, pushed back.

“I think we have a responsibility for the health and welfare of our students. It’s right in our policies. And not only are we responsible for their health and safety, but we were just informed by the parents that they want us to do more masking, not less,” Guy said, adding in disbelief, “I can’t believe I’m having to make these statements.”

In the end, those in the majority felt that individual rights trumped those concerns.

“I don’t think we should be making the parents’ decision,” Aremburg said.

At least one parent disagreed.

Haverhill resident David Robinson read a letter to the school board after the vote.

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Obituaries

Cindy L. (Baker) Frazer

Cindy L. (Baker) Frazer of Monroe, N.H. passed away on Saturday, Dec. 11, 2021 at Littleton Regional Healthcare. She was born on May 5, 1957 in Newport, Vt. to Laura (Nelson) and Lawrence Baker. She lived in Newport, Vt. until her family moved to Meredith, N.H. where she graduated from Inter-Lakes High School in 1975.

Cindy married Bruce A. Frazer of Monroe, N.H. on June 30, 1984. She worked at The Coffee Pot, Saranac Glove Company, Hilliards Candyland, and People's Bank in Littleton and Bethlehem before becoming the Administrative Assistant to the Town of Monroe. She was a Trustee of the Monroe Public Library, as well as a member of the Monroe F.A.S.T. Squad for many years. She was also involved in the Monroe School as a substitute teacher and Odyssey of the Mind coach. She enjoyed spending time with her large family, researching genealogy, collecting Annalee dolls and anything to do with cardinals and the Old Man of the Mountain.

Survivors include her husband, Bruce of Monroe; her three children, Tod Frazer and husband Rudy of Houston, Texas, Betsy (Frazer) Bray and husband AJ of Littleton, N.H., and Ben Frazer and wife Marcy of Bluffton, S.C.; five grandchildren, Meef Frazer, Jake Frazer, Charles Fisher, Lucas Bray and Nicholas Bray;



Cindy Frazer

her sister Penny (Tom) Paquette of Leesburg, Fla., her sister Sandy (Ron) McCormick of Bedford, Va., her brother Blaine (Darlene) Baker of Morristown, Tenn., and her brother Kerry (Loretta) Baker of Hoodspout, Wash. as well as several nieces, nephews, aunts, uncles and cousins.

She was predeceased by her parents, Laura Baker on Nov. 17, 1995 and Lawrence Baker on Sept. 6, 2010 and her brother Larry Baker on April 17, 2009.

There will be a graveside service on Friday, June 10, 2022, at 1 p.m. at the Monroe Village Cemetery on Plains Road. In lieu of flowers please consider making a donation to the Monroe F.A.S.T. Squad, c/o Robert Regis 233 Stan-ton Rd. Monroe, NH 02771.

To share memories and condolences or for more information go to www.rickerfh.net. Ricker Funeral Home and Cremation Care of Woodsville has the privilege of these arrangements.

Mary Ann (Dailey) Duranty

Mary Ann (Dailey) Duranty, 74, passed away on Thursday, Dec. 9, 2021, after a brief, unknown illness. Mary Ann was born Nov. 9, 1947, in Springfield Mass to Herbert Dailey and Madaline (Boucher) Dailey. She was the oldest of nine. Mary Ann spent many years in foster care and ended in Littleton, N.H., where she met James Duranty. They married on June 21, 1969.

Mary Ann graduated Littleton High School in 1965 and after high school she worked at Connors and Hoffman. She then worked with the Telephone Company on Pleasant Street in Littleton. She left her job at the phone com-

pany after 9.5 years soon after the birth of her daughter, Juli, in 1973. Later, Mary Ann became employed with the Littleton Police Department in 1982. She was one of the first dispatchers for the police department and she also worked as a Parking Enforcement Officer. In 1985 she became a part-time certified officer with the police department. Mary Ann also worked for Butson's Supermarket for 17 years and then finally finished her career at Littleton Hospital as the receptionist and registrar. She was known as "The voice of LRH". She was with LRH for 21 years. After retiring she still wanted to help people, so she started volunteering at Littleton Hospital. She was one who never said "no." She will be greatly missed as she was a kind, cheerful, helpful, strong, caring, sweet, and a pleasant lady that everyone loved.

Mary Ann loved taking her annual trip to Goose Rocks Beach in Kennebunkport, Maine; something she and Jim had been doing for over 23 years. During these trips she loved it when her daughter, husband, and especially her grandchildren came to enjoy the beach with her.

Mary Ann loved shopping, trying to find the special birthday present or Christmas present for those she loved. Even if it wasn't right, she bought it. When someone was selling something, have it be a child or an adult, to raise money, or a person hosting a jewelry party she would buy something to help support the event or person. Mary Ann was a great soul always giving where she could. She was pre-deceased by her parents, Herbert and Madaline Dailey, her brother-in-law Richard Daley, a nephew John Daley and a sister Barbara Vysosky.

Mary Ann is survived by her husband of 52 years, James, her daughter Juli and her husband Jeremy Ward and their two children Jarrett and Brittin of Monroe, N.H. Her newest cat, 6-month-old Molly. Her sister-in-law Jody (Duranty) Daley, nieces Jill (Daley) Gibson of

Tuftenboro, N.H., Jennifer (Daley) Fullerton and husband Rob of Campton, N.H., Danielle Daley of Portland, Maine, and nephew James Daley and his wife Linda of Sugar Hill, N.H. Her sisters Shelia Regione, Sandy Demarym, Debra Dailey Adams, Donna Mullins, Rose Dailey, Tian Dailey and brother Gerald Dailey, and many nieces and nephews.

Calling hours will on Friday, Dec. 17, 2021, from 4 – 6 p.m. Ross Funeral home and. A Mass of Christian Burial will be held on Saturday, Dec. 18, 10 a.m. at the St. Rose of Lima Catholic church with Father Mark officiating. Burial will take place spring of 2022.

Memorial donations may be made in Mary Ann's memory to Second Chance Animal Rescue, 1517 Meadow Street, Littleton, NH 03561, or Catholic Charities of NH Department D Box 9510 Manchester, NH 03108.

To offer your condolences to the family please visit www.rossfuneral.com.

Wayne Henry Fortier (Fort)

Wayne Henry Fortier (Fort), 74, died peacefully, surrounded by his family, on Wednesday, December 8, 2021, at Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center.

Wayne was born Bruce Henry StCyr Spaulding on Friday, July 18, 1947, in Newport, N.H. to Henry Pichette and Marie Rose StCyr Spaulding and later adopted by William Joseph Fortier, Jr. & Dorothy Marie Cochran Fortier of Pike, N.H.

He graduated from Haverhill Academy in



Wayne Fortier

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Obituaries

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1966 and ten days later, enrolled in the United States Marine Corps where he served for three years including 20 months in Da Nang, Vietnam. Upon his discharge from military duties, he enrolled at Plymouth State College where he studied for a one-year period. It's assumed that he might have graduated college if his attention wasn't focused on the love of his life, Sandra Lee Mann, who was living in Boston, working for Pan Am Airlines. They married on July 11, 1970, and started building their family, ultimately giving birth to and raising five daughters.

In 1973, Wayne kicked off what would become a 40+ year career in Law Enforcement starting first as a patrolman/Chief of Police in Haverhill, N.H. and eventually ending up as an Investigative Detective in the Homicide Division for the N.H. State Police. He spent the next 27+ years proudly wearing this uniform ending his career as the Troop F Commander.

After retirement in 2004 from the N.H. State Police he became the Plymouth Police Departments' prosecutor, where he stayed until 2010. Not wanting to waste his talents he immediately became a Special Service Investigator for the Grafton County Attorney's office. Although he attempted retirement twice, in 2019, the Grafton Sheriff's Department called him for some "help for three months" in which he rose to the occasion remaining there until his final days on this earth.

Wayne was a community member through and through. He served tirelessly in his commitments to the VFW, Select board, School board, and various other associations.

His passion for his Catholic faith was immeasurable. It is fitting that he passed away on the Day of the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, for which he had a special relationship with our Blessed Mother Mary.

Wayne served as a lector, choir member and CCD teacher for St Joseph's church and was known as the "Pit Master" at their annual chicken BBQ.

He devoted his time and attention to helping others, often welcoming people into his home for the holidays.

He was an avid runner, competing in sixteen consecutive Marine Corp marathons, having completed his final run on November 1, 2021. His training diet included chicken & beer.

He was often the loudest spectator at his children and grandchildren's sporting events, yelling words of encouragement and an occasional swear or two. He especially liked to watch his grandson's baseball games as he was once a shortstop and home-run hitter.

Make no mistake, Wayne was a wizard in the kitchen who continually made his family a complete breakfast of

eggs, bacon and his famous fried potatoes every Sunday and had perfected his popcorn making (and eating) skills for most any night of the week.

He was an animated storyteller, captivating his audiences with a gin & tonic in hand. Much of his storytelling was about his pride for his children and their accomplishments, his endless

love for his wife and his many adventures in law enforcement. In his later years his attempt at "slowing down" was camping in his RV's named "BULA" and "S LEE" in which he spent many nights enjoying Mother Nature with his family.

To say that Wayne will be missed is a tremendous understatement. He had the ability to cast a very wide net reaching an insurmountable number of people. His gift of uniting a crowd of individuals to encourage people to reach across the table to find solutions is a talent that is often unfound. He will forever be remembered as a loving husband, an incredibly devoted father and grandfather, a devout Catholic and a patriotic Marine - "Semper Paratus".

He is predeceased by his parents, William & Dorothy Fortier of Pike; his biological twin brother, Brian McGirr of Newport, N.H., and his beloved N.H. State Police bloodhound, Oscar.

He is survived by his wife of fifty-one years, Sandy Fortier; his daughter Tammy Lee Leewenberg Fortier and her husband Jan-Volkert; his daughter Windy Kelley & husband Michael; his daughter Heidi Fortier Murphy & husband Ryan; his daughter Haley Fortier & her partner Meg; his daughter Kristy Fortier Recuay & her husband Marco; his many grandchildren, Camden, Logan, Austin, Liam, Colin, Grace & Mia; his many grandpuppies; his sister Janet Locklin; his brother James Fortier and many extended relatives & lifelong friends.

In lieu of flowers, to carry on Wayne's legacy, please consider helping your neighbors.

Calling hours will be Tuesday, December 14, 2021, from 5 - 8 PM at Ricker Funeral Home and Cremation Care of Woodsville, 1 Birch St. Fr. Maria Sebastian HGN will celebrate a Mass of Christian Burial at St. Joseph Catholic Church in Woodsville, for immediate family and invited friends. Interment will be Friday, May 27, 2021, at 10 AM at St. Joseph Cemetery, Bath, N.H.

To share memories and condolences or for more information go to www.rickerfh.com Ricker Funeral Home and Cremation Care of Woodsville has the privilege of these arrangements.

Jean E. Chamberlin

Jean E. Chamberlin, 90, formerly of Monroe Road, in Bath, N.H., died Wednesday, Dec. 8, 2021, at the Grafton County Nursing Home. She was born in West Medway, Mass., the daughter of George and Thelma (Pope) Elder. From early childhood she lived with her Aunt Theresa Pope Gutterson's family in Ryegate, Vt., and attended school there. She attended Woodsville High School for three years. She and Nelson were married May 30, 1948, and resided in the family homestead until 2008. She and Nelson took over Chamberlins Greenhouses in Bath and Woodsville in 1961. Jean always had a sensational artistic ability, a talent that enabled her to create beautiful arrangements. Some of her designs were illustrated in national publications. She also painted and carved. She



Jean Chamberlin

was a member of the Woodsville United Methodist Church where she was an active member of the choir for many years. Jean sang with the North Country Chorus, was very active in Home Demonstration, 4-H, made many prize-winning floats in numerous parades, 50+ year member of the Eastern Star, and a floral design teacher at many statewide events. She was known for her sweet and gentle spirit.

She was pre-deceased by Nelson in 1987, her son Gary N. Chamberlin, her daughter, Nancy Zickler, her parents, siblings Judith Scott, Geneva Smith, Hugh Elder, Robert Elder, David Elder, Jonathan Elder, Andrew Elder, Donald Elder, Stephen Elder, George Dustin Elder, and Diane Piacentini.

Jean is survived by her son Neil A. Chamberlin and Gail Kimball, Bath, N.H. her daughter Gail S. Chamberlin Eames and her husband David, North Haverhill, N.H. 16 grandchildren, 24 great grandchildren, brother-in-law Gerry Zickler of Vergennes, Vt. and sister-in-law Marilyn Cospito-Chamberlin of St. Johnsbury, Vt., brother-in-law Robert Piacentini, West Medway, Mass., sisters in-law Vera Elder and Lyn Elder, Dublin, N.H. Cousins/co-siblings Audey Gutterson Batchelder Flagstaff, Ariz., Richard Gutterson, Raynham, Mass. and Norman Gutterson

and wife Judy, Amherst, N.H., and many nieces, and nephews.

Calling hours will be on Wednesday, Dec. 15, 2021, from 5 to 7 p.m. at Ricker Funeral Home and Cremation Care of Woodsville, 1 Birch St. Funeral services will be Thursday, Dec. 16, 2021, at 11 a.m. at the North Haverhill United Methodist Church. Interment will be on Tuesday May 10, 2022, at 1 p.m. at Pinegrove Cemetery in Woodsville. Those who wish may make donations in memory of Jean Chamberlin in the Woodsville United Methodist Church, c/o Mrs. Paula House, PO Box 282, Woodsville, NH 03785 or the NH Alzheimer's Association 166 S River Rd #210, Bedford, NH 03110.

To share memories and condolences and for more information go to www.rickerfh.com. Ricker Funeral Home and Cremation Care of Woodsville have the privilege of these arrangements.

Maurice Dubois

Maurice Dubois passed away peacefully at home surrounded by family on December 5th as a result of the effects of Agent Orange exposure during his tour of duty in Vietnam. He was born

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Balsams Takes Step Forward With Crucial Investor

After being shuttered for a decade and incurring a number of setbacks in its redevelopment, a critical investor has come along for The Balsams Grand Resort in Dixville.

If the financing comes together this winter, the ground could be broken on the first phase of development early next year.

On Wednesday, lead developer Les Otten asked the Coos County Commission to consider adopting a resolution that would invite Provident Resources Group Inc., a 501(c)(3) nonprofit based in Baton Rouge, La., which began partnering with The Balsams team in April, to participate in the financing of the new Lake Gloriette House hotel and convention center, a major piece in the redevelopment plan.

"The plan has always called for two major hotels, one the rebuild of the Hampshire-Dix house ... and the other, a 280-room hotel that, until now, had not had a partner to build it," Otten told The Caledonian-Record on Thursday. "And both hotels are critical in order to get critical mass for the ski area and everything else that we're building."

Provident Resources Group, which has placed some \$5 billion in bonds in 21 states for projects similar to The Balsams, specializes in making community-based investments in areas of need where hotels and housing of different types can significantly and positively impact the community, he said.

Provident would be making a roughly \$100 million investment through a bond to acquire, finance, design, develop, own, and operate the Lake Gloriette House hotel and conference center, a critical financial piece in a total \$208 million first-phase Balsams redevelopment.

"This is significant funding that puts the project in a position where we expect, if this deal goes forward, that we'll have the rest of the funding to build the first phase of The Balsams starting later this late winter or early spring," said Otten, who projects 24-month construction period before completion.

As a 501(c)(3), Provident is required by the IRS to be invited to participate in a project that will benefit the county.

By passing the requested resolution, the county commissioners, who enthusiastically received the proposal this week, would be expressing support for the project and Provident's participation, said project spokesman Scott Tranchemontagne.

"The resolution in no way, shape, or form makes the county liable for the bonds that will ultimately be sold and paid back by the taxes/assessments on the real estate," he said.

House Bill 540, signed into law in 2019, gave the county the authority to create a Tax Assessment District around the Balsams property, with taxes and assessments on the property going to repay that separate assessment district bond during a period of 20 or 30 years.

Along with Provident, Goldman Sachs, which has a direct relationship with Provident and with the Balsams team for the potential issuance of the tax assessment district bond, is looking at underwriting the Provident bond, which Tranchemontagne said would be sold to institutional investors, such as Blackstone or Fidelity, at no financial risk to county taxpayers.

"This is a significant step forward that could lead to financing for additional elements of the project, and perhaps breaking ground at some point in the spring," he said. "If you're a supporter of The Balsams, it was a pretty good day yesterday."

Provident would own the hotel as well as some municipal services, and any excess funds from hotel operations would be reinvested in the commu-

nity, with Provident paying its fair share of the assessment district and general real estate taxes along with the other owners, said Otten.

Although Otten said he is not yet in a position to identify the other investors, he said the team is working with a bank for the Hampshire-Dix House and has a bank for the equipment that will need to be leased.

"We waited to identify Provident and Provident to identify Goldman and Goldman to be identified with our project until we had a pretty strong feeling we knew where all the parts and pieces were," he said.

The county commissioners are expected to take up the request to approve the resolution with Provident's involvement on Monday.

"[The resolution] is a recognition by the county commissioners that the project will be a social and economic development benefit to the community and that it's something that the county doesn't have the financial capability of undertaking on their own," said Otten.

The commissioners for Coos County, which is not putting up any money for the project or being asked for money, have already arrived at that preliminary finding and community benefit, he said.

Before the next step, digging in with due diligence and finding buyers for the bond, a Tax Equity and Fiscal Responsibility Act (TEFRA) public hearing will be held, in about a month or so, after the new year, as required by the IRS.

Otten, who has been the lead developer since 2014, and Tranchemontagne said they appreciate the patience of everyone through the years and the persistence of the development team.

There is still a ways to go, though, and the hope is that no more roadblocks are thrown in front of the project, they said.

"What I'm most happy about is the partners that we have are nationally recognized in what they do,

not back-room chop shops, not hard money lenders," said Otten. "You can't get much more traditional than a company like Provident and a company like Goldman ... This is clearly an indication of a very solid step forward for the project."

The total first-phase redevelopment had been estimated at \$185 million, but increasing construction costs nationwide led to a 7- to 10-percent increase in The Balsams project, bringing it to the current \$208 million, with contingency costs.

(The Balsams team, made up of more than a dozen developers, is putting \$20 million into the project).

First-phase components, though, remain the same and include an expansion of the Wilderness Ski Area with new lifts and snow-making; renovating the historic Dix and Hampshire houses; building the new Lake Gloriette Hotel and conference center; revitalizing the Panorama Golf Course; adding Nordic baths, a retail marketplace, and fine dining and culinary offerings; and a Planned Unit Development for the future development of up to 4,600 four-bedroom equivalent lodging or residential units.

For the project's real estate program, which currently has more than \$20 million of reservations on sales, Otten said sales are going well and there's about \$12 to \$14 million worth of inventory of equal value available.

In May 2020, he announced a new Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) proposal that seeks a clean energy resort that would provide hundreds of jobs in an impoverished area.

"All of the things we were emphasizing in the ESG will be part of the package," said Otten.

A revitalized Balsams would help the North Country economy in a significant way with about 600 construction jobs, more than 400 new jobs at the resort, and the potential for 1,500 new resort jobs in the long term, said Tranchemontagne.

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In it, he said masks are proven to reduce COVID transmission and could reduce the burden on local hospitals, which have been overwhelmed with COVID patients.

He wondered why mask opponents were so quick to ignore health experts and so unwilling to do something uncomfortable for the greater good.

He lamented that some Americans oppose masks on the grounds of "freedom" and "liberty" but rarely talk about sacrifice.

"We do not have the freedoms that we enjoy as a nation without sacrifice. Sacrifices of those who came before us," he said.

He said the school district should do a better job of modeling that quality for its students.

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“I want everyone to ask themselves one question: what are we teaching our children in this district if we are not teaching them what we do every day is for more than just ourselves?”

Special Town Meeting
In Littleton: Property
Purchase Article Goes On
Warrant As Written

LITTLETON — After a deliberative session for a special town meeting, the article asking voters for a temporary expenditure of \$120,000 toward the town purchase of a river district parcel will go on the warrant as written.

Following the half-hour proceeding on Friday at the Littleton Community House that detailed the plan and answered questions, residents voted 16-0 to place the article on the ballot for the second session, the town-wide vote scheduled from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. Jan. 7 at the Department of Public Works garage on West Main Street.

In the meantime, Grafton Superior Court must formally approve Littleton’s request for a special town meeting vote, with a court decision expected at 11 a.m. Dec. 23.

“Being hopeful and optimistic, I would say yes, that it’s going to be fine,” Carrie Gendreau, chair of the Select Board said Monday afternoon. “I can’t believe a judge wouldn’t allow it.”

The reason for the special town meeting is a Dec. 31 deadline for the town to close on the 7-acre parcel on the south side of the river near the Littleton Area Senior Center.

In January 2019, the town entered into a purchase agreement with current property owner Ron Murro.

What seemed like a smooth process hit some snags when the town experienced delays in the appraisal process because of requirements from the New Hampshire Land and Water Conservation Fund, which is providing a \$200,000 grant toward the total \$450,000 purchase of the 7-acre parcel.

The LWCF wouldn’t accept the standard appraisal the town had done and instead required what is called a Yellow Book appraisal to satisfy the grant.

“We had all our ducks in a row, but the Yellow Book appraisal messed us up,” said Gendreau. “We would have been long closed by now. There were so many variables and we spent so much time and money on it. I can’t believe a judge wouldn’t grant us permission.”

At town meeting 2020, voters authorized \$175,000 in taxpayer funding toward the purchase.

Coupled with a \$155,000 donation, it left the town with \$330,000 toward the acquisition, which was \$120,000 short with the grant not coming in before the Dec. 31 closing deadline.

The additional \$120,000 from taxpayer money is a temporary expenditure and is needed to receive the grant, which is expected early next year and will fully reimburse the \$120,000, which will come from the town’s general fund, leaving the total taxpayer share at the same \$175,000.

The \$120,000 will be held in escrow until the Jan. 7 town vote.

The property will be made into a public town commons area, offering space for recreation and events, to be called Riverfront Commons Park.

In November, River District Redevelopment Commission Chairman John Hennessey said the total project is \$1.4 million, most of it paid for by grants and with the same \$175,000 taxpayer share, making for a 7-1 match.

During a public hearing before their regularly scheduled meeting on Monday evening, selectmen voted 3-0 to accept the the \$155,000 anonymous donation toward the purchase.

Along with court approval, Gendreau remains optimistic for an affirmative town vote on Jan. 7.

“The taxpayers will be the proud owners,” she said.

Haverhill Addresses
COVID Basketball
Concerns

HAVERHILL — The Haverhill Cooperative School Board made a couple of decisions regarding COVID-19 and basketball on Monday.

By a 3-2 vote, fans at Woodsville High School basketball games will not be subject to mask requirements or capacity restrictions.

The decision applies to the boys and girls varsity and JV teams, whose home games are played at the Dr. John A. Bagonzi Community Building (capacity 350) and the Haverhill Cooperative Middle School gymnasium.

The motion was made by board member Alexandra Keeler and supported by Michael Aremburg and Stephanie Chase.

Casting votes against were Chair Richard Guy and board member Don LoCascio.

LoCascio said the motion was “reckless, asking for trouble and irresponsible” and set the stage for multiple “super spreader” events.

Fan masking policies vary in Division IV. Colebrook, Hinsdale, Newmarket, Moultonborough, Lisbon, Derryfield and Pittsfield will require fans to mask. Franklin, Littleton, Mount Royal, and Concord Christian will not. Only two schools (Hinsdale, Pittsfield) will have capacity limits.

Players at all three HCSD schools (K-12) were already exempt from masking under a previous school board vote.

MIDDLE SCHOOL HOOPS

Meanwhile, the school board voted to allow Haverhill Cooperative Middle School officials to set fan and player masking rules on a game-by-game basis.

That’s because the middle school plays two-thirds of its games against Vermont opponents, and those schools follow strict masking protocols for players and fans.

The school board decision will allow the middle school to schedule games against Vermont opponents and announce protocols ahead of time. The middle school basketball season begins after the holiday break.

LEGAL CHALLENGE?

Haverhill resident Tim Robie handed school board members a 3,000-word form letter in opposition to COVID-19 measures.

The letter, titled “Notice of Maladministration, Malice, Malfeasance by Haverhill School Board,” demands an end to COVID protocols on school grounds. These include mask mandates, social distancing, temperature checks, COVID testing, quarantines, and vaccinations.

Nearly a dozen people submitted the same letter to the school board. The others were delivered outside of Monday’s meeting.

The letters cite the U.S. Constitution and Bill of Rights, various state constitutions, and at least one court decision. It states that the school board must remove all “unconstitutional” COVID rules and measures within five days or “you will face the State Grand Juries.”

Towards the end of the letter, it says, “Take Notice that it is the peoples’ will to resolve these issues in a peaceable and cooperative manner and you have not been reciprocal. You have displayed utter disregard to the Peoples’ will and we are not going to accept any more political speeches, facts or opinions from you unless you swear it under oath in an Affidavit with penalty of perjury. We are going to hold our servants and entities accountable. Your personal financial capacity and livelihood are now on the line.”

The matter will be referred to legal counsel for review.

OTHER MATTERS

— Haverhill Police Chief David Appleby will appear at the next school board meeting on Jan. 8 to discuss the possibility of creating a school resource officer position.

— School board members agreed to increase the stipend for three school nurses, from \$600 to \$2,500. Those stipends will be paid through federal COVID relief funds. The stipends award the nurses for extra time worked during COVID-19. That includes after-school hours spent on COVID documentation and follow-up.

**School Board
Wants Better
Budget Sales Pitch**

The White Mountains Regional School District has a problem.

ACROSS

1 See red

5 Movie mogul

9 A nanny pushes it

13 Straw in the wind

14 Like notebook paper

16 Miff

17 Enjoins

18 World-weariness

19 Outback mineral

20 Varnish

22 On the scene

24 Novelist — Rand

25 Historical period

26 With courage

30 Book copiers of yore

34 Exude moisture

35 Racing vessel

37 Layer of paint

38 Fanatic

39 Hostilities

40 Lopsided

41 Navaho foes

43 Remove errors

45 Indoor cat's perch

46 Withdrew

48 Horse chestnut

50 — Wiedersehen

51 Luau souvenir

52 Band instrument

56 Flaw

60 St. —'s fire

61 Enlisted man (2 wds.)

63 Small grimace

64 Weighs —

65 Pony's comment

66 Aquarius' tote

67 Keeps following

68 Gets older

69 Statistics

DOWN

1 Breaks in

2 Asian nanny

3 Actor Richard —

4 Keep in thrall

5 Neatly

6 Element used in many alloys

7 — Margret

8 Stay in the army (hyph.)

9 Matter-of-fact

10 Mellow

11 Mr. Greenspan

12 Dissolve

15 Run the show

21 Caustic substance

23 Make a blunder

26 Payday surprise

27 Turnpike

28 Montezuma's empire

29 Swung off-course

30 Low grower

31 Hunting knife

32 In good time

33 Panache

36 Hired car

42 Fall and winter

43 Clears the windshield

44 Throats

45 Thumbed through

47 Half a double date

49 Average grade

52 Droplet

53 Choir voice

54 Urban problem

55 Ms. Foch

56 Tunnel

57 Keokuk's locale

58 Bird feeder treat

59 Zeus' wife

62 Tweak the memory

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PREVIOUS PUZZLE SOLVED

RANG SCAM APEX

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They create A+ annual budgets, then sell them to the public with D- presentations.

Dissatisfied with that disparity, the school board last week demanded better.

Board members requested a clear and concise budget presentation for the deliberative session on Feb. 7.

They said the status quo — long, boring and complicated lectures — simply wasn't an effective way to inform voters, or get their support.

"The education that we do every year at the deliberative session around tax impacts is incredibly confusing," said board member, Kristen Van Bergen Buteau, of Lancaster.

The school district expects to put forward a lean budget next year. The draft proposal under consideration would increase spending by 2 percent, mostly due to mandatory wage and benefit hikes.

School board members agree it's bare bones.

Even so, budget scrutiny may be high due to record inflation.

To avoid misunderstandings and rumors, board members recommended a simple, direct approach. They said the budget presentation should focus on key facts and not be an overwhelming "information dump."

They added that the person making the budget presentation should tailor the message to the general public — including the growing percentage of taxpayers without children.

"We need someone that can speak loudly, concisely. Who can put it into layman's terms and answer questions without making people's brains hurt," said board member, Tara Giles, of Whitefield.

High School Principal Jacob Hess, a Lancaster taxpayer, said the

budget message should center on community benefits, not reams of data.

"Let's not stand up there and show charts and graphs. Let's tell the narrative of what our programs do, how we're funding them, and what the kids are getting out of them," he said.

Van Bergen Buteau agreed, adding, "The biggest piece to understand is not the accounting math, but how is this valuable to the community? How are the taxpayers getting their money's worth?"

WMRSD Finance Director Kris Franklin agreed that past budget presentations have included superfluous details. That's partly because the school district over several years added information in response to specific complaints, said Chairman Greg Odell.

"We were told we were not providing enough," Odell said.

For school board members and district officials, having to convince voters to approve no-frills budgets is a fact of life.

WMRSD is made up of rural communities with some of the lowest median household incomes in the state. Meanwhile Coos County continues to grapple with the decline of the paper and wood industry.

WMRSD has kept those socioeconomic factors in mind when building its budgets. This year's draft budget proposal is an example of that, said Vice Chair James Brady, of Jefferson.

He and others hope the budget presentation at the deliberative session will make that point clearly and without confusion.

"[The draft budget proposal] is reasonable. We have over a 6 percent inflation rate right now, and we're asking for 2 percent. I mean, how much more reasonable can you get?" he said.

DES: Brown Street Contamination Not Significant

WHITEFIELD — Good news.

A Level 2 environmental assessment of the former Brown Street Furniture site found low levels of contamination.

The New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services identified mostly minor issues and determined that costly cleanup was not required.

Town officials expressed relief that the site contamination was modest.

The Select Board may explore taking the property for back taxes (over \$100,000) in light of the new information. They had previously declined due to liability concerns.

Some have suggested moving the town garage to the 12-acre Brown Street Furniture property, to replace the current, outdated

facility located across the street.

"We're pleased that there isn't a lot of contamination, which we thought could potentially be the case, and that the issues that need to be dealt with all appear to be easily manageable, which will help inform our decision making," said Select Board Chair Peter Corey.

DES explained the findings of the Level 2 environmental assessment to town officials in a virtual meeting on Thursday.

Contaminants, such as cancer-causing asbestos and PCBs, were found in some building materials.

In most cases, those contaminated materials can remain "as is" until the building is demolished or renovated. However, one item — 250-linear-feet of floor caulk — exceeds federal PCB thresholds and must be removed now.

Meanwhile, low levels of Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons (PAHs) were detected in soil samples.

The contaminated soil poses little risk and no action is required unless the site is redeveloped, in which case the tainted soil should be covered (with clean soil, plantings or paving) to reduce exposure, DES recommended.

PAHs were also detected in groundwater through one monitoring well. DES suspected a false-positive and recommended that a confirmation sample be collected and tested.

Corey thanked DES officials for their work, which will be taken under advisement by the Select Board, "It certainly will be some time before the town decides if we're willing take on this liability through tax deed. The board will have to discuss it."

If the town acts, there are state and federal grant programs available to help with cleanup costs, in order to dispose of the hazardous soil and building materials, DES officials said.

The environmental assessment did not address structural integrity.

Brown Street Furniture was a 45-year-old, furniture-making business that produced custom-made, high-end furniture products that were sold across the United States and Canada. It was once Whitefield's largest employer.

It was sold to Massachusetts investors in 2008, experienced brief growth, then ran into cash flow problems during the great recession. By 2012 it had closed.

In 2013, Reg Abbott purchased it at auction for \$122,500, well below its then-assessed value of \$1.1 million.

Since then, much of the 48,000-square-foot factory space, 17,000-square-foot warehouse and 12 acres of land have fallen into disrepair.

Today, Abbott owes more than \$200,000 in town and federal liens. That includes over \$106,000 owed to the town of unpaid property, water and sewer taxes, and approximately \$130,000 to the Environmental Protection Agency for hazardous material disposal.

For a time, it served as a warehouse for his business, Family Furniture, which has locations in Littleton and Derby, Vt.

Reached in April, Abbott described the building as an albatross.

"I just want someone to pay the back taxes and take the building over," he said.


North Country Residents Turn Up Spotlight On Out-Of-State Trash

To the board members of the Pemi-Baker Solid Waste District (PBSWD), which covers a number of northern Grafton County towns, some local residents are voicing concerns about the amount of out-of-state trash brought into New Hampshire.

On Wednesday at Plymouth Town Hall, with a remote meeting option available, Kevin Roy, division manager for North Country Environmental Services, Casella Waste Systems' New Hampshire subsidiary, gave the status of the NCES landfill in Bethlehem — which is projected to reach capacity and close at the end of 2026 — and spoke of upcoming regarding Casella's proposed landfill in Dalton.

"There's a flurry of legislation related to solid waste in New Hampshire, more than typical," said Roy. "There are several bills


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being presented that will attempt again to either stall or stop the permitting process of the Dalton project.”

Bills include prohibiting new landfills within close proximity to state parks, such as Casella’s proposal beside Forest Lake State Park, and prohibiting any new landfills in New Hampshire until the state updates its solid waste management plan, which hasn’t been updated since 2003.

The state’s solid waste working committee, formed out of a law passed in 2020, is rewriting solid waste rules and looking at such things as waste diversion, one of several options that are out there, as there should be, said Roy.

“It’s an exciting year for solid waste and everybody is paying attention,” he said. “It seems today there are a lot of people who know more about waste than we do, but we deal with it every day. We know what the issues are, we have tried to solve the issues, and I think together we can continue to move forward ... But we have to literally pay attention. There are people who really do not know our industry like we do.”

NCES would be willing to extend its contract with the PBSWD through the end of the landfill life in Bethlehem, said Roy, who also spoke of a landfill capacity shortfall and trucking difficulties.

The PBSWD (which includes Easton, Franconia, Landaff, Lisbon, Littleton, Lyman and Sugar Hill) has a good price and transportation cost with NCES, but in 2026 things could change drastically, and the distance to another facility would be longer, he said.

“If you kick us out of the marketplace, the prices are going to change, said Roy. “Once more capacity goes off line, all of those dynamics change.”

Contesting some of Roy’s statements before the PBSWD was Wayne Morrison, a resident of Whitefield and member of the North Country Alliance For Balanced Change.

“We want to let you know there’s a great deal of opposition to the Dalton project,” he said.

That opposition is not only specific to the proposed site, but is also a recognition that New Hampshire is lagging compared to other New England states in updating its solid waste management plan, he said.

While Roy said some people don’t know a lot about solid waste, Morrison said he’s learned much the last few years.

“There’s a reason why there’s so much opposition to this specific project, and that’s siting a landfill next to a lake and state park and pristine place that represents so much of what New Hampshire is all about,” he said. “We think it’s an unnecessary risk.”

Although there is a need for landfill capacity, the capacity crisis is of the companies’ own making, said Morrison.

“Some of the for-profit companies are driving in out-of-state trash into our landfills to the extent that now more than half the trash going into some of our landfills is coming from out of state,” he said. “The truth is there’s no capacity issue with New Hampshire trash. It’s only a problem because they’re bringing it up [Interstate] 93.”

In a notice to Dalton abutters in February, Casella representatives said up to half the waste transported to a Dalton facility during several decades could be from out of state.

Although NCES is projected to close in 2026, that challenge also presents an opportunity, said Morrison.

“This is an opportunity for us to step back,” he said. “There’s not a crisis. There’s expansion going on at other sites. We do not have to sacrifice pristine forests and wetlands in New Hampshire to satisfy contracts with other states. This is an opportunity to make a change in the way that we’re doing business with our landfills in New Hampshire. As a resident, this is in some ways a generational decision that’s being made. If the landfill goes through in Dalton, we are going to live with that decision for 40, 50, maybe 100 years if there’s expansion ... We need to do what’s best for New Hampshire, not what’s best for Casella.”

Morrison said one of the first questions he was asked when he became involved in the landfill fight is the Interstate Commerce

Clause, which some have argued cannot prohibit out-of-state trash.

“I think what other states have done is say that may be true if you have private, for-profit companies operating landfills,” he said. “But Maine, Vermont, and some other states have said, ‘Okay, maybe it’s time for municipalities to run those landfills.’”

The Commerce Clause might be an obstacle, but it isn’t something that can’t be overcome, and New Hampshire is behind other states when it follows rules and regulations that are 20 years or older, he said.

Morrison also took aim at Roy’s statement about costs increasing if transporting to a landfill farther away from Dalton, or from Bethlehem, after NCES closes.

“Somehow, the economics seem to work when they ship it hundreds of miles up from Massachusetts and find a home for it in the White Mountains,” said Morrison. “If we allow [a landfill in Dalton] to happen, we’re going to be a magnet that’s going to suck in trash from all over New England. We don’t want that. We don’t need that. There are other solutions.”

Agreeing was state Rep. Joyce Weston, D-Plymouth, who said the whole system in New Hampshire needs to change.

“We should not be having an out-of-state company making money off bringing out-of-state trash to dump here,” she said. “It just doesn’t make sense. This has been brought up in the Legislature before, but we haven’t been able to change it yet. In the meantime, there are a number of pieces of legislation to divert waste ... I agree totally that the state needs to think about why we want to be the depository for all the waste in the entire New England area.”

Whitefield resident and NCABC member, Sarah Doucette said a landfill in Dalton would be in the watershed of the Ammonoosuc River, which flows to Littleton just a few miles away.

Whitefield is expected to see 100 trash-hauling vehicles a day coming in and the same amount going out, and that doesn’t count the leachate tankers, she said.

“My village would be utterly devastated if this project goes through,” said Doucette. “There’s a lot at stake. I look forward to this conversation continuing statewide. North to south, we will all be impacted if this project proceeds.”

Neighbor Helping Neighbor Efforts Look At Collaboration

Two neighbor-helping-neighbor efforts in Bethlehem, the new SmallActs and the half-decade-old Organized Acts of Kindness for Seniors (OAKS), are looking at collaborating and sharing volunteers.

“If anyone has any ideas, we would love to hear them,” said Bethlehem Selectman Bruce Caplain. “We’re open to any and all ideas from people to see what we can do. It’s a blank slate.”

Two months ago, the town of Bethlehem became one of the first

North Country towns to officially become a SmallActs community, an initiative born of the SmallActs North campaign to show small acts of kindness to neighbors and fellow community members, and support and encourage person-to-person generosity in the region and help people in need have their needs met or simply make a neighbor some food, stop by with a warm greeting, or a myriad other ways to express generosity.

Five years ago in Bethlehem, Kay Kerr led the effort to found OAKS, a nonprofit seniors caring for seniors volunteer initiative inspired by a book called “Being Mortal” and based on a national “village to village” movement described in the book.

OAKS, recognizing that many parts of the United States are experiencing increasingly aging populations, was first put into practice two decades ago when some residents in Boston found ways to help their neighbors stay in their homes as they aged.

From there, it spread to other cities and communities.

Kerr, after hearing that Bethlehem is now a SmallActs community and feeling that can fit in well with OAKS, reached out to Caplain.

“It does seem to be a good complement to each other,” said Caplain. “We’re trying to help each other and do good things and just make the community a better place. In that regard, we have similar interests.”

From a SmallActs perspective, the goal is to see what can be done in the community to make it a better place, he said.

Kerr needs more volunteers for OAKS and wants to identify people who are vulnerable, he said.

During the pandemic, before it became a designated SmallActs community, the town of Bethlehem gathered some volunteers to help deliver groceries, medicines, and necessities to those residents staying at home because they are at most risk from the virus.

“We identified those people and had quite a list, and broke it up for volunteers who would call them regularly if they needed anything, run trips to the grocery store, whatever it was,” said Caplain. “For Kay, it was a great place to start if you know who those people are in the community. We have some volunteers who were willing to do it then, so we can reach out to them and ask them if they’d be willing to work with Kay.”

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Fortier Leaves Legacy Of Service

BY PAUL HAYES
Staff Writer

Service above self.

Those words sum up Wayne Fortier.

No matter the role — police officer, elected official, military veteran, community volunteer, church congregant, friend, father, husband — he put other people first.

“He would drop everything in a heartbeat to help anyone,” said his daughter, Windy. “Whether it was a family member, or someone he didn’t know. He would invite people into our house constantly, sometimes off the street, for Thanksgiving if they didn’t have a place to go.”

Fortier, a leader in New Hampshire law enforcement and a respected figure in the Town of Haverhill, died early Wednesday morning of COVID-19 complications. He was 74.

Dave Goldstein, who served with Fortier in the New Hampshire State Police, recalled him as firm but fair. He said Fortier possessed a vice-like handshake, a strong moral compass, and an unmatched work ethic.

During murder investigations, Goldstein recalled, “Wayne worked so hard he actually slept in his cruiser overnight.”

Family members recalled a softer side. A loving husband and devoted father. A gifted storyteller. A man who gave bear hugs, cried at movies, and loudly cheered his five daughters (and later seven grandchildren) at sporting events. His gruff exterior hiding a heart of gold.

“He gave us tough love, but he was such a Teddy bear inside,” said his daughter, Kristy.

CAREER CALLING

Raised in Pike, Fortier graduated from Haverhill Academy in 1966. Ten days later he enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps. He served three years, including 20 months in Da Nang, Vietnam.

He found his calling in 1973 when he joined the Haverhill Police Department. He worked his way from patrol officer to chief in just three years.

Jeff Stiegler, the Grafton County Sheriff, was a teenager at the time.

“We used to run away from him because, if you saw him coming, you knew he meant business,” he said with a laugh.

Fortier joined the New Hampshire State Police in 1976. He served 27 1/2 years, worked in major crimes, and eventually became the barracks commander at Troop C and then Troop F.

Memorably, in 1984, Fortier and Det. Leo “Chuck” Jellison confronted a wanted serial killer, Christopher Wilder, at a Cole-

brook gas station. Jellison was shot and wounded, Wilder committed suicide. Both officers were awarded the Medal of Valor, the highest honor granted by state police.

Goldstein, now the Franklin (Mass.) Police Chief, said Fortier commanded respect, encouraged collaboration, and was a natural leader.

“He was a mentor, a role model for us younger guys,” Goldstein said.

Fortier retired from the state police in 2004, served six years as the Plymouth Police Department’s prosecutor (until 2010), and nine years as Special Services Investigator for the Grafton County Attorney’s office (until 2019).

He was a special investigator for the Grafton County Sheriff’s Department for the past two years.

Working together as peers, Stiegler appreciated Fortier’s toughness and tenacity.

“The demeanor he brought to our office every day was so important,” Stiegler said. “He would turn over every rock, and sometimes a week later he’d go back and turn those rocks over again. The knowledge he passed down, I’ll never forget. He made us better people, and better at what we do.”

During his career in law enforcement, Fortier believed in officer accountability. He conducted internal investigations as part of his work with the Sheriff’s office. He held himself to a high standard and expected the same of others.

“If you had a good moral compass, and you were intent on doing this job, he wanted to help you do it right,” Stiegler said.

Haverhill Police Chief David Appleby, who served under Fortier at Troop F, called him an investigator’s investigator.

“If you needed a case investigated that you were personally involved in, you would want Wayne Fortier on that case. Because you know it would be done right,” Appleby said. “He probably made a lot of people mad in his investigations, because he was so thorough. But that’s what you want, when you want to find out the truth.”

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Fortier was an active member of the Haverhill community.

He served 13 years on the Haverhill Cooperative School Board (7 as chairman), nine years on the Board of Selectmen (8 as chair), eight years with the Haverhill Historical Society (5 as chair), and was a former president of the New Hampshire School Board Association and chairman of the Haverhill Strategic Facilities Committee.

Fortier was also a 53-year member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 5245, and was the driving force behind an under-construction veterans memorial located behind the town building.

Glenn English, the former Haverhill Town Manager, described Fortier as someone who was direct, honest, and sincere. A throw-back to a time when people rolled up their sleeves and worked for the greater good.

“I loved him like a brother,” said former Haverhill Town Manager Glenn English. “He took community very seriously. He volunteered for many posts and always gave 150% to everything he did.”

“People like Wayne come along very rarely. The basis of our relationship was truthfulness and the ability to talk sincerely. You knew his word was good. We could disagree but we were friends.”

State Rep. Rick Ladd is a fellow veteran (U.S. Army) who served alongside Fortier on the Board of Selectmen for several years. He described Fortier as a consensus builder and a leader by example.

“A few times I voted one way and he voted the other way, but we came out of that working together. We respected each other very much,” Ladd said. “This community has a hole in it right now, and the rest of us have to step up and continue working towards positive change.”



Wayne Fortier speaks at the 13th Annual North Country Public Safety Awards at the Omni Mount Washington Resort on Friday, Oct. 29, 2021. (Photo by Paul Hayes)

Over the past year, Fortier’s career came full circle. He returned to the Haverhill Police Department to assist the newly appointed chief, Appleby, with a backlog of cases. And to mentor two incoming detectives.

“It meant a lot to him to finish his career serving the community of Haverhill,” said Appleby, who previously served as a state trooper under Fortier. “Towards the end, he’d come into my offices on a couple of cases he was working. And still, after 40 years of service, he showed the exuberance and dedication of someone just starting off in this profession.”

LEGACY REMEMBERED

Fortier had been the picture of health.

He had completed his 16th consecutive U.S. Marine Corps Marathon, held virtually due to the pandemic, on Nov. 1.

He became sick shortly thereafter and was hospitalized at Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center. Surrounded by family, he died at 2:30 a.m. on Wednesday.

A devout Catholic, and active member of St. Joseph’s church, he passed away on the Day of the Feast of the Immaculate Conception.

Later that day, a column of law enforcement vehicles escorted his body back to Haverhill. Onlookers gathered along the route to show their respects, some with a salute or a hand over their heart.

One of them was Marcie Hornick, the Grafton County Attorney.

She had worked with Fortier on cases, some of them sensitive in nature. She saw first-hand his professionalism, his passion, and his personality.

“He was just a good guy. There’s nobody who can dispute that across the board. He had a wonderfully infectious laugh, and with that laugh was able to cool an otherwise tense situation. He just got it. He had a great read of people,” she said.

Hornick also shared the stage with Fortier at the North Country Public Safety Foundation’s annual awards dinner on Oct. 29. Fortier presented an award named for his friend and former colleague, the late Det. Sgt. Robert Bruno.

Quoting Bruno, Fortier said, “Don’t focus on changing the world, focus on changing the place around you. If everyone did this, the world would change for the better. Those words are very, very relevant today.”

Fortier’s illness and death have triggered an outpouring of support. His wife of 51 years, Sandra, said she has received countless calls, emails, texts and visitors. Some were familiar to her, others were not.

“The first day I returned, there were 28 different calls from people everywhere. It’s been amazing, the number of people he affected,” she said.

Those communications have revealed just how many people Fortier impacted, and how deeply.

“I take a lot of comfort in that, and I’m really proud of him,” she said. “I just think he was amazing, and he really taught a lot of people things. More than we know.”



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Tri-Town Bike Friendly Certification Process Gets Boost

LITTLETON — There's an effort advancing to get the tri-town area of Littleton, Bethlehem, and Franconia certified as a bicycle-friendly community, and to connect the three towns with trails.

During the Littleton Board of Selectmen meeting Monday, David Harkless, owner of Littleton Bike and Fitness and organizer of bicycle efforts in Littleton; Jill Brewer, select board member in Franconia; and Bruce Caplain, a Bethlehem selectmen who got the tri-town certification plan off the ground, presented the vision to Littleton selectmen, who endorsed the idea in a 3-0 vote.

"They reached out to me with a project and a goal of having the League of American Bicyclists certify the tri-town area, including, Littleton, Franconia, and Bethlehem, as a bike-friendly community, with an effort to increase tourism and business and reducing traffic congestion and parking issues," said Caitlin Leverone, director for the Littleton Parks and Recreation Department.

Harkless said certification was something he's thought about, and he noted that if one looks at the certification checklist, Littleton does a lot of it already, with Safe Routes To Schools, bicycle amenities, having a segment of the Cross New Hampshire Adventure Trail, and 25 miles of mountain bike trails at PRKR MTN.

Certification and the work needed to achieve it — such as designating bicycle lanes and making other road safety measures — won't happen overnight, he said, and the League and those with tri-town are not asking for any money.

It's a long-term project that would involve working with the

town and Littleton department heads, he said.

"We're just asking for your endorsement of the concept going forward in trying to obtain that," Harkless said to selectmen.

There are only five communities in New Hampshire that are certified bicycle friendly, and they're all cities, said Caplain.

(They are Keene, Lebanon, Portsmouth, Hanover, and Concord).

"When I started looking into it, across the country there are very few towns that are bicycle friendly communities because it takes money to do it," he said. "Like Dave said, we're not coming to any of the three towns looking for money. We're just saying, give us the endorsement, we'll find the money. There are plenty of grants out there to get the money and it doesn't change a whole lot. But what it does do, in talking to some of these other towns, is really increases tourism a lot. I spoke to one in Colorado and they said they saw a 300-percent increase in people coming in to use the town facilities. It's great for tourism. We're hoping it will reduce congestion, because it get people to ride more, have places for them to put their bikes, and that helps the parking in towns as well. To us, it's a win-win."

The League awards certification to communities that can demonstrate excellence in bicycling through education, encouragement, routes that are safe, and inclusiveness and availability.

Local tri-town supporters said cyclists eat a lot, shop a lot, and stay in lodging establishments in certified communities.

Businesses can also be certified as bicycle friendly, said Harkless.

As the project advances, the New Hampshire Department of Transportation is enabling project leaders to work across all three towns.

Avid bicyclists with the League of American Bicyclists look up certified communities when they're finding an area to visit or move to, said Harkless.

Two years ago, a consultant put together a five-year plan for Littleton that included making road and other improvements for bikers, said Littleton Selectman Milton Bratz.

"This is a great idea because as more towns connect with each other, the resource just gets bigger and the whole thing gets better," he said.

The state bicycle map designates segments of New Hampshire routes 135 and 18, U.S. Route 302, and regional routes that include New Hampshire Route 116 and Industrial Park Road, though, because of the amount of vehicle traffic and turning movements, the corridors are not always friendly for bike riders, particularly in commercial and downtown areas, said Bratz, citing the study.

North Country Council, the regional planning commission, has identified traffic stress areas for bicyclists and pedestrians and has developed an infrastructure improvement plan to address the issue, primarily in town and not between towns, to find a level of comfort bicyclists can have on a given segment of road, he said.

"Part of this is to figure out routes that make it easier and safer for people ... [and] ... to connect Littleton, Bethlehem, and Franconia by trails to get people off the roads," said Caplain. "It's a concerted effort to focus on safety, accessibility, and connectivity between all three towns."

Carrie Gendreau, chair of the Littleton Board of Selectmen, made the motion to support the Tri-Town Bike Friendly Certification process, which was supported by Bratz and Selectman Roger Emerson.

"I think by endorsing an effort like this it might help congeal everything," said Harkless.

COMMUNITY VOICES

Taking It Easy

'Tis the season ... for cookie making, for gift giving, and, at least at our house, for the early winter head cold. It has made the rounds here the past two weeks. My daughter came home from school Wednesday congested and sniffing, and stayed home sick Thursday. She was back to school Friday but my son stayed home, having also come down with it. And then my husband and I got it as well, each of us missing a (different) day of school last week. Thankfully everyone was COVID negative, but we've certainly been a bit of a mess.

Thus, we've been taking it easy.

It's not a bad thing to do, sometimes — taking it easy — regardless of whether you are sick or not. I need to be reminded of that occasionally, and sometimes it takes getting sick to do just that.

Everyone had things they didn't do this week because of the cold. My kids missed some sports practices — nordic skiing for my son, and gymnastics for my daughter. We didn't have friends over for dinner last Friday like we had planned. We did still get our Christmas tree, but everyone was content to choose one nice and close to the road instead of tromping through the woods for ages like we usually do.

Just taking it easy.

It's not like I haven't accomplished anything the last two weeks. I went to work almost every day. I made dinners and breakfasts and whatever else, kept the house from being a disaster zone, etc. But still, I've been taking it easy. I exchanged my morning runs for walks. We got take out a few nights for dinner, pizza one night, sandwiches from the Iron Furnace another. I let the kids have more screen time than usual. We all sat on the couch a lot, and someone was almost always curled up with a dog on the floor in front of the woodstove. We've gone through lots of tea and even more Emergen-C. My daughter and I have made good progress on our puzzle, and I'm pretty sure my son got a new personal



BY AMY LAWTON
McKEEVER

best in some game he is playing, which made him deliriously happy as he and a friend try to outscore each other.

Taking it easy is a way to give ourselves a break once and awhile. Everybody needs that sometimes. I usually need it this time of year, even if I don't have a cold. The weeks between Thanksgiving and Christmas, as we pass over the anniversary of Sandy Hook, are difficult weeks for me, especially juxtaposed as they are with all the trappings of holiday cheer. So, I've learned to take it easy during that time. My lesson plans in the library are full of play and free choice, and I don't stay long after the building empties. I find a good easy read, usually a mystery or some beachy romance, to lose myself in — nothing that requires a lot of brainpower. Instead of climbing a big mountain, I go for long slow walks through our neighbor's field or up around the Gibbs Cabin, soaking in as much light as I can during this dark time. I don't ask very much of myself during these weeks; I feel a bit fragile, and picture myself moving gingerly around in order not to break.

Today, finally, my cold feels better, and the sun came out as well, so we went for a nice long walk in the woods, and then I started doing some yard work: clearing all the debris in the yard from that crazy wind the other day, giving the chickens some fresh water and hay. Nothing too taxing, and I was moving pretty slowly still, but it felt nice to be up off the couch. Later I'll make a big pot of chicken soup, maybe, and we can have that for dinner one night this week. There is, after all, only so much take out one can have!

Wishing the best for you and yours during this holiday season, and hoping that you are able to take it easy when you need.

Amy McKeever lives in Easton with her family. She loves baking, with or without her kids. Current favorite: apple turnovers.

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Obituaries

Continued from Page 7

at home in Jefferson to Victor and Ghislaine (Couture) Dubois on June 28, 1948, and lived his entire life in the Riverton section of Jefferson.

Maurice attended school in Jefferson, Lancaster and Berlin before enlisting in the Army in 1968. He was honorably discharged in 1971.

Upon returning to the North Country, he worked as an auto mechanic for Robert's Motor Sales before moving on as a heavy equipment mechanic for Timberland Machines, Currier Trucking and Pike Industries. He spent more than 30 years as an on-road service mechanic for Pike, retiring in 2012. Not one to sit still, Maurice continued to work full-time in retirement by starting and operating a firewood business which he oversaw until his death. He truly enjoyed this phase of life and valued and appreciated his many loyal customers.

Maurice was a founding member in 1979 of the Waumbek Methna Snowmobile Club. He was a lifetime member of the John W. Weeks VFW Post and the Lancaster Knights of Columbus Bradley Council. Snowmobiling was his passion for many years. He loved to travel hundreds of miles on "short" day trips. Maurice's dedication to the sport helped to build an active snowmobiling community in Jefferson and beyond. Many of the local groomed trails, bridges, and club buildings exist today because of his get-it-done attitude. In the past ten years, he also enjoyed ATV trips with his buddies from the Silver Riders and spending time at his house in Florida. His favorite time of day was swapping stories with the local crew during happy hour at the garage or the clubhouse.

Maurice is survived by his wife of 47 years, Debbie (Wright) Dubois; daughter Jennifer (Andrew) MacDonald and grand-



Maurice Dubois

daughter Elle of New Hampton; son Mark Dubois (Stacey) and granddaughters Reese and Hadley of Jefferson; daughter Amy (Paul) LaRoche and grandsons Patton and Hudson of Vero Beach Florida. Also, four step-grandchildren, Kiana, Kendra, Kelsey and Colton LaRoche. He is survived by sisters Solange Norcross of Vero Beach, Diane (Jeff) Heath of Jefferson and brother Andre Dubois of Lancaster. Extended family members include his mother-in-law, Mary Wright of Lancaster, Tom and Nancy McVetty of Dalton, and Marcia Parkhurst of Columbia. Nieces and nephews are Tammy Heath, Stephen Heath, Nicholas Dubois, Chris McVetty, Eric McVetty, Phil Parkhurst, Jeff Parkhurst and Ashlynn Fogg. He was predeceased by his parents, an infant brother, brothers-in-law Peter Norcross, Jeff Wright, and Garry Parkhurst, sister-in-law Kathy Dubois, and infant niece Christina Norcross.

Friends and family are invited to gather this summer (in warmer weather) to remember and celebrate Maurice's life. The date will be announced at a later time.

Arrangements are entrusted to Bailey Funeral Home, 210 Main St., Lancaster NH 03584. For more information or to send an online condolence, please go to www.baileyfh.net.

Laura Janice Carpenter Morin

Laura Janice Carpenter Morin, 88, of Lake Road, Lunenburg, Vt., passed away early Thursday morning, Dec. 9, 2021, after a time of failing health.

Laura was born in Barre, Vt. on April 11, 1933, the daughter of George and Florence (Magoon) Carpenter. She was a graduate of Spaulding High School in Barre.

Laura worked as an LNA in both private and public care. She was employed for many years at Weeks Medical Center, Lancaster, and also worked at various hospitals in Florida. She was a Communicant of the Gate of Heaven Parish and enjoyed an active social life with friends.

Surviving family members include her daughters, Cheryl Morin Stearns of Davidson, N.C., Sherry Morin Barton and husband Henry of Ocala, Fla., Shelly Hirn of Waxhaw, N.C., Laura Morin-Glover and husband Doug of Sugar Hill, N.H.; siblings, David Carpenter of Cranston, R.I., Norman Carpenter of Jacksonville, Ark, Roberta Buley of Rutland, Vt., Michael Carpenter of Swanton, Vt.; eight grandchildren (Lauren, Patrick, Hannah, Jacob, Sage, Jordan, Alexa and Benjamin), one great-granddaughter (Eleanor), and several nieces and nephews. She was predeceased by her husband Albert "Bert" Morin and siblings Barbara Pliscotsky, George Carpenter and Cynthia Peake.

Laura also leaves behind her treasured friend, Sylvia Doolan and her loving sister-in-law, Sis Moffett.

There are no services at this time. A graveside service will be held in the Spring in Calvary Cemetery, Lancaster. An announcement will be made prior to.

Donations in lieu of flowers may be made in her memory to the Tabernacle Society at the Gate of Heaven Parish.

Arrangements are entrusted to Bailey Funeral Home, 210 Main St., Lancaster NH 03584. For more information or to send an online condolence, please go to www.baileyfh.net.



Laura Morin

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Casella

Continued from Page 2

ture in another part of the state that we have proposed, the cost to New Hampshire will be high both environmentally and economically. This project continues to be of vital importance to New Hampshire's health and environmental safety infrastructure, and we intend to see it through to completion."

A growing number of residents, though, are arguing that landfills in the Granite State would have more capacity if less out-of-state waste was brought into New Hampshire, and it is no sure thing that disposal costs would increase if there is no landfill in Dalton.

On Monday, Eliot Wessler, a Whitefield resident and secretary of the North Country Alliance for Balanced Change, a group opposed to the proposed landfill site, said it's currently unclear what Casella's application withdrawal means, but it seems to imply that the company will not meet DES's deadline and its self-imposed deadline for filing the amended application, and Casella is looking for more time.

The hope is that more time will allow Dalton's wetlands scientist to do more geomorphological analysis on the site, said Wessler.

"For a long time, they had refused to permit him to have access on the site during the growing season, which is exactly the time he needs to do inventory to determine impacts on wetlands and vernal pools," said Wessler. "Another thing that caught my eye is John Casella seems to be saying, 'we have your input already and we're going to get more input, and this gives us a chance to get more input and we'll consider it.' I don't see how Casella couldn't interpret the input that they've already gotten, not only in Dalton, but in the surrounding communities where the impacts will be the greatest."

Syncing up applications for environmental regulators is not unreasonable, but it's wrong to focus just on the first phase of wetlands impacts when there will be multiple phases of landfill expansion with broader impacts, he said.

"There's no question that this is going to be a multi-phased project and therefore making a decision as to whether it's a viable and worthwhile project," said Wessler. "Good for the residents of New Hampshire on the basis of phase one alone is nuts."

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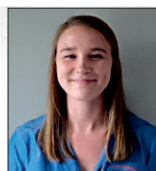
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