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COMMUNITY NEWS

EVENTS

REAL ESTATE

Vol. 1, Issue 4

Winter Edition - February-April 2024

FREE

Hooksett Memorial School Class of 1974 reunites

By Sarah Lambert Derian
Hooksett Bridge

HOOKSETT – Kim (Adams) Duckless sits at the locally owned New England's Tap House Grille surrounded by 20 classmates at her 50-year junior high school reunion from Hooksett Memorial Junior High School.

She pores over memorabilia lovingly saved by her mother, who became a Hooksett resident in 1964. She wears a green cap from her days on the Hooksett Hawkettes softball team, reads valentines written to her by her second-grade classmates, several of whom surround her over 50 years later, and reviews comments



The Hooksett Memorial School Class of 1974 gathered at New England's Tap House Grille to celebrate their 50-year reunion on Dec. 28. (Bridge photo)

from teachers scrawled on her report cards, a few of whom later became friends when they taught her own children during her time as a school volunteer.

The Class of 1974 decided to improvise a Junior High School reunion when Craig Schmidt wished his grade school classmate Duckless a happy birthday on Facebook.

"It took on a life of its own," said Duckless. "I had never heard of a junior high school reunion before, and now we have a private group chat."

"Our class was the centerfold in The Hooksett Banner," said Duckless, proudly holding up a carefully saved copy of

See REUNITE Page 6

Hometown Hero - Johnny T

HOOKSETT – John "Johnny" Tsirovakas inspired Hooksett to treat each other like family. He established a restaurant in Hooksett where his family could publicly share their passion for teamwork, hospitality, and home-cooking. Johnny's Pizza of Hooksett fueled local schools, departments, and events



Tsirovakas

for years through generous donations and became a place where everyone knows your name.

"Hometown, fami-

See HERO Page 7

Town, school elections set for March 12

By Ginger Kozlowski
Hooksett Bridge

HOOKSETT – Distress over increased property values and the higher tax bills that followed resulted in voters slashing the school's proposed operating budget by \$750,000 and zeroing out the \$13.3 million proposed maintenance project at the deliberative sessions of School District Meeting on Feb. 3.

The town's operating bud-

get was cut by \$817,903 with a 35-32 vote at the deliberative session of Town Meeting earlier in the day.

Resident Ray Miclette kicked off deliberations with a passionate speech on the difficulties presented by ever-increasing taxes.

"What kind of insanity is going on with these budgets and our taxes?" he asked.

Todd Lizotte, who is town moderator but spoke as a citizen at the school meeting, pro-

posed the \$750,000 cut to the school budget after lengthy discussion on the amount of money left in the fund balance for the schools, some of which gets spent on what school officials consider necessary items but which are not presented to voters in advance. The school had a fund balance of \$1,720,911 at the end of the current budget year.

After an hour and a half

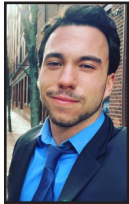
See VOTE Page 4

PUBLISHER'S PAGE

Meet your Hooksett Bridge community news team

LETTER FROM THE PUBLISHER

Tony LaCasse
Founder
The Hooksett
Bridge
Community
News LLC



It is with great pleasure and a sense of deep pride that I extend a warm welcome to you all to The Hooksett Bridge!

As the founder of this local newspaper, I am honored to embark on this journey alongside fellow Hooksett residents, Ginger Kozlowski, Anita Wolcott, Sarah Lambert Derian, Linda Battalagine, and Allentown resident Michael Frascinella, proprietor of Allentown Alt. Together, we have woven the fabric of The Hooksett Bridge Community News LLC, a venture born out of a shared vision to revive the spirit of community journalism in our cherished towns.

Reflecting on the beginnings of this endeavor, I recall the pivotal moment in 2022 when the seed of the idea was sown, and subsequent meetings with Ginger, a former editor of The Hooksett Banner, further fueled my determination to make this dream a reality. We reminisced about the bygone era when our town was served by a publication that truly resonated with its residents, before it faded into obscurity, and dissipated into a mere handful of pages buried beneath many advertisements. Our aspiration was clear—to resurrect a publication that not only informs

but truly connects the people of Hooksett- TO CONNECT THE COMMUNITY! Hence the name.

In envisioning The Hooksett Bridge, Ginger and I were unwavering in our commitment to authenticity and quality. We are adamant on publishing a paper that transcends the digital realm, touching every corner of our community through the tangible medium of print. This dedication to inclusivity is reflected in our distribution strategy, ensuring that every doorstep and business in Hooksett receives the essence of our publication.

For those who prefer a digital experience or reside beyond our printed distribution area, we extend the option to subscribe online through our website, thehooksettbridge.com. This ensures that our community's stories reach far and wide, fostering connections beyond geographical boundaries.

The evolution of The Hooksett Bridge has been nothing short of remarkable. From our humble beginnings (still very humble), we now proudly announce the delivery of our winter edition to every home and business in Hooksett—a testament to our growth and unwavering dedication to serving our community.

As we have expanded our horizons to encompass Pembroke and Allentown, our mission remains steadfast—to bridge the gap in local news coverage and provide a trusted platform for community engagement. Through verified and accurate reporting, we endeavor to keep you informed

and connected, weaving the narrative of our towns with every page. We do need your help though!

I am thrilled to invite local businesses to join us in this endeavor, offering advertising opportunities that not only promote their services but also sustain the very fabric of independent journalism. Your support fuels our ambition to grow, with aspirations of expanding our publication to a 32-page spectacle by our upcoming spring edition—a testament to the enduring spirit of community-driven journalism.

As we embark on this journey together, I extend an open invitation to contribute in any capacity you see fit. Whether through monetary support, advertising opportunities, writing or sharing your stories, your involvement is pivotal to our success.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to each and every one of you and would like to spotlight and introduce you to the rest of my amazing team here at The Hooksett Bridge!

See you around town!

Tony LaCasse

The team

Ginger Kozlowski is the editor for The Hooksett Bridge. She quickly rose to become the editor of the old Hooksett Banner, working there from 1993 to 2013. Following that, she was editor of the now defunct Laconia Citizen from 2014 to 2015, and managing editor for The Laconia Daily Sun from 2015 to 2018.



In earlier days, she worked as a newscaster for several radio stations. Along with the Bridge, she is the communications and public relations manager for Girl Scouts of the Green and White Mountains. Ginger is also a Zumba Gold and line dance instructor. She has a passion for community journalism and is involved in The Hooksett Bridge to provide truthful and accurate information that citizens of Hooksett, Allentown and Pembroke need to be able to vote intelligently, get to know their community, and appreciate their neighbors.

Sarah Lambert Derian

wrote for her first newspaper at Hooksett Village School in fourth grade. She served on publications throughout high school and college, including a Boston-based internship at Teen Voices Magazine. As an educator, artist, and fourth generation Hooksett resident, she believes everyone has a story to tell and is passionate about bringing those stories to life.



Linda Battalagine has been a Hooksett resident since March 2021. She has degrees in liberal arts and biochemistry, and a partial degree in philosophy. She has worked in the research biotech field for 17 years. Writing is her passion and learning about my community is her reason for joining the Hooksett Bridge



team.

Michael Frascinella honed his skills during his 36-year career in commercial software and hardware technical writing to benefit Allentown. The 2021 Town Report honored him for working on a major rewrite of the 200-page Town Ordinance, saving the town an estimated \$12,000. As chairman of the Economic Development Committee and a Planning Board member, his goals have been to attract new business and offer community-oriented activities.



Anita Wolcott leads The Hooksett Bridge's Digital Marketing Department, overseeing the online subscription service and managing the newspaper's website. With extensive experience in digital marketing, Anita brings a high level of expertise to the team. She also excels in fundraising and dedicates



her free time to coordinating events that support local causes and benefit nonprofit organizations in the area. Alongside her professional pursuits, Anita is a foster parent. She works full time for Devine Millimet in Manchester, where she holds a key position of Business Development and Marketing Coordinator. Anita resides in Hooksett and is excited to contribute to the success of The Hooksett Bridge.

NO CONTESTED RACES IN HOOKSETT

HOOKSETT – There are no contested races in Hooksett for either town or school offices. The following people filed for office and will be elected unless there are write-in candidates to challenge them. Town and school elections and voting on warrant articles will take place Tuesday, March 12, 6 a.m. to 7 p.m. at Cawley Middle School.

TOWN

Town Councilor at Large - one seat for a three-year term. Must reside in Districts 1, 3 or 6 - **Jodi Pinard**.

Town Councilor at Large - one seat for a one-year term. Must reside in Districts 4 or 5 - **Alexander Walczyk**.

Town Councilor District 1 - one seat for a three-year term - **Timothy Tsantoulis**.

Town Councilor District 4 - one seat for a three-year term - **Vincent Lembo**.

Budget Committee - three seats for three-year terms - **Elizabeth Spitzer, Alyssa Ehl, one vacancy**.

Cemetery Commission - one seat for a

three-year term - **Michael Horne**.

Library Trustee - two seats for three-year terms - **Mary Farwell and Sandra Calfee Mack**.

Town Moderator - one seat for a two-year term - **Todd Lizotte**.

Sewer Commission - one seat for a three-year term - **Robert Duhaime**.

Supervisor of the Checklist - one seat for a six-year term - **vacant**.

Trustee of the Trust Funds - one seat for a three-year term - **Donald Winterton**.

SCHOOL

School Board - two three-year terms - **Amy Tremblay and Vanessa Gelinis**.

School Board - one one-year term - **vacant**.

School District Moderator – one two-year term - **vacant**

School District Clerk – one two-year term - **vacant**.

School District Treasurer –one two-year term - **vacant**

IMPORTANT DATES FOR HOOKSETT VOTERS

March 12 (Tuesday) - Town and school elections and voting on town and school warrant articles. At Cawley School from 6 a.m. to 7 p.m.

June 4 (Tuesday) - last day to change political parties until Sept. 11.

Last day for voters already registered to change or declare a party affiliation. Only undeclared voters may declare a party and

vote on primary election day. Voters who register subsequent to this date may declare a party when they register.

Sept. 10 (Tuesday) - State primary elections. At Cawley School from 6 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Nov. 5 (Tuesday) - Presidential and state general elections. At Cawley School from 6 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Mark your calendar - Vote March 12 for town and school issues



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VOTE - cont.

Continued from Page 1

of discussion, a vote was taken on the amendment to cut the budget, and it passed 24-22. That led to a request to re-vote by secret ballot, which threw the meeting into recess while the voter checklist was retrieved and paper ballots could be generated. During the recess, more residents showed up to vote and the cut was reaffirmed at 52-34.

That means the proposed operating budget of \$41,422,137 will appear on the ballot at \$40,672,137. The default budget will be higher at \$40,846,130.

“A \$750,000 reduction would be people,” school Superintendent William Rearick warned during the discussions.

“You’re only going to hurt the kids more,” said resident Sarah Mackie.

Lizotte defended the cut on Facebook.

“It was clear to me that a few people didn’t understand what the deliberative session is about,” he said. “It is the session dedicated to the citizens that



Residents at the deliberative session of Hooksett School District Meeting stretched while waiting for secret ballot vote to take place on a \$750,000 cut to the school budget. The amended budget was passed by a vote of 52-34. A \$13.3 million article to pay for repairs at the schools was later zeroed out. (Bridge photo)

don’t get to attend budget meetings or town council meetings and those who get their property tax bill and think, ‘Hey, this is out of control.’ Love it or not, it is the best way to speak truth

of power. If people were serious, they would always rally friends and fellow citizens to come to the deliberative session. But, most say, nope not on my free time and then complain when

something happens, understand it is not a rubber stamp meeting, but is the last pitch by the government to justify their budgets.”

Continued on next page

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VOTE - cont.

Continued from previous page

The town's proposed operating budget was amended to \$23,657,820 with a total tax impact of \$4.31.

Hooksett voters will consider 27 town warrant articles at the March 12 polls and six school warrants, along with zoning amendments, charter amendments that will reduce the number of town councilors from nine to seven and provide a raise in compensation to \$2,000 per year, as well as elect town and school officials.

Town Finance Director Christine Tewksbury said the estimated town share of the tax rate would be \$5.03 or a 42-cent increase in the town tax rate if all articles are approved. If all the town articles failed, including the operating budget, the town share of the tax rate is estimated to be \$4.34 or a 27-cent decrease in

the tax rate. A similar comparison for the school portion was unavailable at press time.

Town warrants

Article 6 asks for \$1.5 million to reconstruct the intersection of Martins Ferry Road and North River Road, including a bridge replacement. The tax impact is estimated at 3 cents, or \$15 for a property valued at \$500,000.

Article 7 is the town operating budget, set at \$24,45,753, which is estimated to add 27 cents to the tax rate, or \$135 for a \$500,000 home. The default budget is set at \$23,693,487, which is \$782,266 lower.

Articles 8-32 address town union and non-union contracts; capital reserve funds to save for purchases like fire trucks, police radios and cameras, digital mapping; revaluation expenses; upgrading IT technology; and repair to headstones at local cemeteries.

School warrants

Article 2 is the school operating budget. With the cut to the proposed budget, the default budget will be the higher number. The proposed budget, as cut, will be \$40,672,137. The default budget is \$40,846,130.

Article 3 asks for approval of a collective bargaining agreement with the Hooksett Education Support Professionals Association. It is estimated to have a 5-cent impact on the tax rate, which would come to an extra \$25 for a property valued at \$500,000.

Article 4 asked for approval of a 15-year lease/purchase agreement totalling \$13,342,119 to upgrade the three schools' HVAC systems, roof replacements, and other improvements. It was estimated to have a tax impact of 40 cents, or \$200 for a \$500,000 home for the first year. This article was effectively voted down by those at the School

District Meeting by amending the request to \$0.

Article 5 asks for \$100,000 to be added to a technology trust fund. Tax impact to be 3 cents, or \$15 for a \$500,000 home.

Article 6 asks for \$150,000 to be added to a special education trust fund, to come from fund balance, with no impact to the tax rate.

Article 7 asks for \$100,000 to be added to a building maintenance trust fund, again to come from fund balance, with no impact to the tax rate.

How to figure your tax impact

Tewksbury expressed concern that there is confusion about tax bills. She has added the following to the voter's guide to help people better understand:

The estimated tax impact shown in each article is the cost of that article for the tax

year 2024. If you add up all the estimated tax rate impacts in each article, the total would be \$5.03. That is a 42-cent increase over the 2023 tax year, which was \$4.61. Your tax bill increase can be calculated as follows:

Start with the assessed value of your property and divide that amount by 1,000. Then multiply that by the proposed increase of 42 cents. (Property assessment/1000)x.42 = increase in tax bill.

Example: Property assessment at \$516,300 would pay \$216.85 more in taxes for the year. (\$516,300/1000) x .42 = \$216.85.

Editor's note:

This story has been corrected since printing to fix an error in the reporting on the town operating budget.

We regret the error.

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REUNITE - cont.

Continued from Page 1

her printed class photo.

Local businesses in Hooksett sponsored a two-page spread advertisement so that the class of 1974 could be prominently featured in the June 6, 1974, edition. Fifteen sponsoring businesses were included at the bottom of the page, some with well wishes to the class.

Businesses included Robie's Country Store, Mr. Bee's, The Brick House, Riley's Sporting Goods, and D. Donati & Sons.

The Tap House was bustling with trips down memory lane the rainy Dec. 28, 2023, evening.

"We were field day captains together in sixth grade. It was a big to-do. I wanted the fast, great athlete, and I got tall, slow, nice Dean," said Duckless, "I remember years later apologizing to Dean."

"She said she got stuck with me," said Donati.

Donati Field is named after his uncle, Arthur J. Donati, in honor of his service to the town.

"My son and I love playing sports but none of us were really that good. We just enjoyed it," said Donati, "I was pretty involved with HYAA when



This is the Hooksett Memorial School Class of 1974. They reunited recently and shared memories of their grade-school days. (Courtesy photo)

my kids were growing up. I coached baseball, softball, basketball, and I was commissioner of the basketball league for two years."

"I remember you from the bus!" said Lori Uncles Sweeney, reminiscing on long bus rides and the fun Richard Lambert would have during the rides.

"Richard always had cool cars," said Duckless. "His family owned the junkyard."

Lambert served Hooksett as a volunteer firefighter and as a bus driver, and his 1929

Chevy is featured in many Hooksett Memorial School graduation photos.

"I liked driving the bus when I was raising my kids. I got to know everybody," said Lambert.

"Our friends' mothers were serving the lunches and driving the buses when we were in school," said Duckless, "The mothers were driving the buses. Not just Richard."

The school system provided many opportunities for parents to work.

"When (the mothers) went back to work, they worked for the school system in some capacity and volunteerism was really big," said Duckless, "My

mother was a volunteer at the VA hospital. That was important to her. She didn't work. She played cards with the veterans. We were volunteers. All of us that were stay-at-home moms, really, we volunteered. We had a big group."

Duckless served as a den mother, a room mother, and was a member of the PTA.

Dean Donati said, "Anything you do, you can have a great time doing it. You don't have to be the star."

"You're not just living here," said Duckless, "you're supporting businesses and giving back. It's probably because you liked it here when you were a kid."

A quarter of the reunion participants are current Hooksett residents.

"The times were simpler," said Duckless. "We had bicycles. We ice skated on the pond, we kicked the can. If we were thirsty, we drank from the hose. We didn't venture far. My parents had one car. We didn't know anything outside of the neighborhood until we met the Manchester kids in high school. We were what they call hicks."

"People didn't want to leave (the reunion)," said Duckless. The Class of 1974 is planning a follow up reunion for this summer.

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HOOKSETT – Dog licenses are now available for 2024. All dogs must be registered by April 30. You may request registration at www.hooksett.org.

It may take seven to 14 business days after processing

to receive a license.

As of June 1, a \$1 per month late fee will be added.

If you no longer have your dog or there has been a change, please contact the town clerk at ktowne@hooksett.org or

during business hours: Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. and Wednesday from 1:30 to 6:30 p.m.

This page sponsored by Tokyo Joe's Studios of Self Defense/Team Link NH



Hometown Hero – Military Moment



First Lt. Jackson Lyscars and the 307th Airborne Engineer Battalion. (Courtesy photo)

Jackson Lyscars honors family history

The Hooksett Bridge will now regularly honor our hometown heroes serving in the military.

HOOKSETT – First Lt. Jackson Joseph Lyscars, United States Army, Echo Company, 307th Airborne Engineer Battalion, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, is proud to say he is from Hooksett!

Lyscars was born June 30, 1999, to John and Debbie Lyscars. He was very interested in school and sports and enjoyed all of what HYAA had to offer. He attended Hooksett schools and was part of the first graduating class at Cawley who experienced high school choice and chose Londonderry High School. After high school, Lyscars graduated from the University of Colorado in Colorado Springs in 2021 with a bachelor's degree in criminal justice with a minor in sociology.

Like other men and women from Hooksett who serve their country, Lyscars had teachers, coaches and military mentors in his life whom he admired. One special one was his grandfather, Robert Lyscars, who served in the Army during the Korean War.

That influence would propel Lyscars to serve his country. When deciding

which branch to serve, he told his father "Dad, I think I'm more of an Army guy!"

Traveling to Fort Benning, Georgia, Lyscars earned his Airborne wings as a sophomore in college.

"It is an unbelievable site to see your child jump out of a perfectly functioning aircraft. His mom cried with tears of joy and pride!" said John Lyscars.

Arriving in 2021 at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, home of the 82nd Airborne Division, Jackson Lyscars quickly excelled as a 2nd lieutenant within the logistics operation. With less than one year under his belt, he went to school and trained to become a Jump Master, a prestigious position that few obtain in their career, while serving as a platoon leader for over 60 troops.

The military gives young men and women lots of responsibility at a young age and Lyscars enjoys the challenges.

"We are so proud of our son and all the Hooksett children who grew up and decided to serve our country.," said John Lyscars. "God bless America, and may God continue to bless and keep safe our Hooksett men and women soldiers, sailors and airmen!"

HERO - cont.

Continued from Page 1

ly-owned restaurants are like your family. They care about you," said lunch regular Lynn Denbow. "We would love to see more family-owned businesses. We like to see local people succeed. Locally owned people tend to give back to the community because they are invested in the community and the community is invested in them. It just goes both ways."

"He gets fan mail," said 9-year-old Amelia Cote.

"We do get a lot of fan mail," said Constantina "Nina" Tsirovakas, Johnny's daughter. "We especially love hearing from the schools."

Tsirovakas is known for supporting countless Hooksett causes over the years, including sponsoring HYAA Little League, donating food to Hooksett schools, the Hooksett police and fire department, Water Works, town attorney, state Department of Transportation, and local events, including the National Night Out in Hooksett and Old Home Day.

"I gave, they gave. It's not a one-way ticket," said Tsirovakas. "You don't give and not receive. You give and give and give, and they give back tenfold. You give an inch, they give you a mile."

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BUSINESS

It's end of an era as three family-owned businesses close

Johny's Pizza ends 15-year run at Great Woods Landing Plaza

By Sarah Lambert Derian
Hooksett Bridge

HOOKSETT – At Johny's Pizza of Hooksett, customer after customer cited trivia about the establishment, including all eight family members, as if they are their favorite cast members of a TV show. They list Johny's history in the pizza business and how long they have personally known him.

"Johny's is a combination of 'Cheers' and 'Friends,'" said Thursday night regular Denise Rice. "They know everyone's name and everyone is like family to them. They are special people."

John "Johny" Tsirovakas, a second-generation Greek pizza restaurateur, opened Johny's Pizza in 2008 in the Great Woods Landing Plaza on Hooksett Road.

His father, Hercules "Papou" Tsirovakas immigrated here from Kastraki, Greece, in 1963 when he was 16 years old, where worked at Elm Street House of Pizza and Second Street House of Pizza and later owned Luigi's in Suncook. They co-owned Elm Street Village Pizza in Pittsfield.

Johny started working at his parents' pizza restaurant

when he was 9 years old.

"Once I got involved in this, I never wanted to do anything else," he said.

The legacy continued as his three children, Hercules "Eric" Tsirovakas Jr., 26, Constantina "Nina" Tsirovakas, 23, and Demetrios "Demitri" Tsirovakas, 19, began working in his shop at early ages.

"I was 10 years old and answering phones," said Constantina.

Eight family members worked together in this shop, 14 hours a day. They once worked seven days a week, but adjusted the schedule to five days a week so that they could enjoy rest and relaxation as a family.

"We eat family style on the weekends and we all live together," said Constantina.

Lunch regular Phil Denbow said, "They are very family oriented. They do everything as a family. They stopped working weekends just to get a break as a family. We always looked forward to hearing about their weekends when they returned. Just as an example, we love to hike, so we loved to hear about their weekend hiking trips."

"We're gonna miss the



FAMILY AFFAIR – All eight members of the all-star "cast" of Johny's Pizza pose for a final photo in front of their famous pizza oven on the business's last day. From left are Lucas Tsirovakas, Hercules Tsirovakas Jr., Johny Tsirovakas, Constantina "Nina" Tsirovakas, Hercules "Papou" Tsirovakas Sr., Demetrios Tsirovakas, Constance Tsirovakas, and Christine Tsirovakas. (Bridge photo)

people, not the pizzas," said Papou Tsirovakas. "I wish I was younger so I could step in and help them."

Johny's Pizza did not suffer from a lack of customers,

"(We had) no decrease in business since Domino's opened up," said Christine Tsirovakas, his wife. "Our regular crew hasn't fluctuated. We couldn't ask for better customers."

Instead, they struggled with recruiting a new generation of committed employees. Because maintaining the busi-

ness required such an all-encompassing commitment from the family, after 15 years of committed service, they decided it was no longer sustainable to keep the business open.

"It's bittersweet," said Constantina. "Honestly the customers kept us here longer because they are so loyal and so loving. They feel like family to us. It's like leaving family."

After a day of an outpouring of support and gratitude from the public, including a 200-person lunch crowd, handmade cards from chil-

dren, visits from local town departments, a presentation of a plaque by the police department, and a cake presented by Thursday night regular Mike Lavigne and family, Johny's Pizza of Hooksett turned off its open sign for the last time on Dec. 28 at 8 p.m.

Johny Tsirovakas is looking forward to a long list of activities during his retirement including hunting, fishing, hiking, training his beagles for rabbit season, tinkering around his garage, and spending more time with family.

Customers travel to say farewell to R&R Public Wholesalers

By Tony LaCasse
Hooksett Bridge

HOOKSETT – After four decades of serving the Hooksett community with discounted goods, R&R Public

Wholesalers, a family-owned discount store, closed its doors for the final time on December 31 at 5 p.m.

The store, founded by the Renfrew family of Hooksett and Candia, had been a fix-

ture in the area, providing affordable options for a variety of hardware, household items, and miscellaneous goods, not just to Hooksett residents but also to many people across southern New Hampshire.

Owners Melissa and Jim Renfrew mentioned that Jim's parents started the store in a small house that used to be a flower shop in South Hooksett back in 1982. The store moved to several locations before set-

ting at its final location in central Hooksett in 1993.

The owners, reflecting on the journey, reminisced about the store's growth in the early

Continued on next page

BUSINESS

R&R - cont.

Continued from previous page

days. They moved from the small house in South Hooksett to a large green dome structure that was behind the Ambrose Equipment Property. Both buildings are no longer around. Over the years, the business expanded, becoming a cornerstone of the community.

On the store's last day, Melissa, her husband Jim and her daughter, who managed the store together, shared insights into the decision to close. They explained that while the business had been successful, they found themselves pulled in another direction due to their involvement in another venture—selling race car parts. The growing demands of their other business made it increasingly challenging to manage both effectively.

Another factor in the decision was the emotional attachment to the store.

"If we couldn't be here to manage it ourselves, we wouldn't want to have it still running with our name on it," Melissa added.

"It is bittersweet," they said. "We just don't have the time anymore. Our son drives a race car, and so we bought into the race car part business. That business grew, and so we have decided to focus on that."

Contrary to speculation, the closure was not due to economic factors, but rather a

strategic decision prompted by time constraints. The owners expressed gratitude for the unwavering support of the community over the years, emphasizing that it was not an easy decision to make.

With the closure, the owners plan to lease the property. While they have not yet secured a tenant, they have received significant interest and are in no rush to fill the space, given their ownership of the building.

The store's final day was marked by an outpouring of support from loyal customers, many of whom had patronized the store since its early days. Melissa mentioned that they had customers from as far away as Quebec, Canada, come down to patronize the store before they shut the doors. Tears were shed as customers bid farewell, reflecting the deep connection between the business and the community it served.

Among the flurry of final purchases and teary goodbyes, customers took a moment to share their reflections on the store that had been a staple in their lives for years. One longtime customer reminisced about the countless trips made to R&R Wholesalers with his father.

"It was an awesome bonding experience," he said, recalling the excitement of discovering new tools and goods

at the store. Despite his father's passing four years ago, he continued to frequent the store, keeping the tradition alive.

Kelly Boylan and Anthony Rogers, who traveled all the way from Haverhill, Massachusetts, shared their decade-long connection with R&R Wholesalers. Kelly fondly remembered finding unique items at the store that couldn't be found anywhere else, including a crucial furnace part and we stocked up on them because we couldn't find them anywhere else.

"If we came in, they had them," she recalled gratefully.

Another couple, Clara and Evan Eastman, shared their bittersweet feelings about the closure, emphasizing the special bond they had formed with the store over the years.

Clara revealed that one of their first dates had been at R&R Wholesalers, where Evan had shown her "the good stuff." For them, the closure marked the end of an era filled with cherished memories.

As these loyal customers bid farewell to R&R Wholesalers, their stories serve as a testament to the impact the store had on Hooksett.

With the closure of R&R Wholesalers, Hooksett says goodbye to more than just a discount store—it bids farewell to a cherished piece of its history and the countless memories shared by its residents.

Eaton's Cake and Candy ends 46 years in business

By Sarah Lambert Derian
Hooksett Bridge

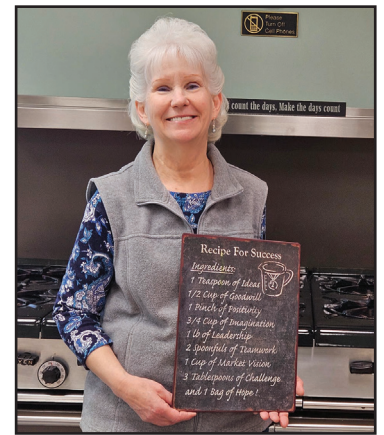
HOOKSETT – After 46 years of intergenerational teaching, themed parties, and delicious treats, family-owned Eaton's Cake and Candy Supplies has closed. Once dismissed as "a housewife's whim" by a lender, Eaton's grew to support generations of family bakers and bakeries.

"We don't bake to sell, we just teach. We're not a bakery. We sell supplies to make your own," said Linda Ducharme. "The love that goes into it the quality is going to be what you want. The love that goes into it makes a huge difference. You can personalize it just the way the person you're doing it for wants it. If you're buying it... It's just not as special."

Ducharme has owned Eaton's since 2006 when she bought the business from founder, employer, mentor and friend, Diane Eaton.

Lexi Guttman, 15, was hired at a bakery after Ducharme wrote her a letter of recommendation.

"I took as many classes (from Linda) as I could. Each time, she made sure my work was to my standards and not hers. She wanted to make sure



Linda Ducharme stands inside her kitchen classroom holding her favorite recipe - the recipe for success. (Bridge photo)

I learned: Take your time. Cleaning up is a part of baking. Don't worry if it doesn't look pretty, it will still taste amazing. The memories are what's important."

Ducharme speaks fondly of all the people who have worked at Eaton's over the years. Each one of them has taken classes there, including herself.

When asked to share about notable students, Ducharme said, "I would never want to put one in front of another, because everybody is different. I truly enjoyed making the relationships with them and helping them to go on their journey of what they love."

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REAL ESTATE

Tri-Town area real estate year in review 2023

By Tony LaCasse
Hooksett Bridge

As we reflect on the real estate market dynamics of Hooksett, Pembroke and Allenstown in 2023, it becomes evident that despite fluctuations in interest rates and market conditions, the Tri-Town area has maintained resilience and demonstrated notable trends throughout the seasons, particularly in Allenstown, where we see consistent appreciation throughout the last year. Explore the local real estate markets with the Main Street Man, your local real estate expert!

Winter real estate market January - March

The winter months typically set the tone for the year, and 2023 was no exception. While interest rates saw a notable increase, hovering in the mid sixes compared to the previous year, the market remained active, defying expectations. In Hooksett, 39 properties, comprising single-family homes, condos, and mobile homes, changed hands with a median list price of \$449,900. The median closed price settled at \$445,000, with properties spending an average of just one week on the market. In Allenstown, seven properties were sold with a median list price of \$300,000 and a median closed price of \$305,000, while Pembroke witnessed 18 property transactions with a median list price of \$355,000, culminating in a median closed price of \$355,350.



Hooksett is expanding its available housing with construction like this project at the old Park Place lot. Townhome condos are part of the flexible performance zone. (Bridge Photo)

Spring Real Estate Market April - June

Spring brought renewed energy to the market, with increased inventory in all three towns. In Hooksett, 55 properties were sold, offering buyers a diverse range of options across single-family homes, condos, and mobile homes. The median sales price stood at \$450,000. Allenstown saw 11 properties changing hands with a median closed price of \$350,000, and Pembroke experienced 16 property sales, witnessing an 8 percent increase in median closed price compared to the list price.

Summer real estate market July - September

The summer months continued to see robust activity, particularly in Hooksett, where 62 properties were listed, with a median closed price of \$449,950, showcasing an increase of 5.8 percent above the asking price. In Allenstown, 20

properties were sold with a median closed price slightly below the list price at \$202,750, while Pembroke saw 22 properties sold, with sellers obtaining 11 percent more than their asking price.

Fall real estate market October - December

The fall market witnessed fluctuating interest rates, peaking at 8 percent in October before settling around 6 percent in November. Despite this, buyer activity surged, particularly towards the holiday season. In Hooksett, 35 properties were listed, experiencing a median closed price of \$405,000, marking a 2.3 percent decrease from the list price. Allenstown saw 11 properties listed with sellers receiving 7.1 percent above the listing price, while Pembroke observed 12 properties sold, with sellers obtaining 7.9 percent more than the asking price.

Market insights

and outlook

Throughout 2023, the real estate market in the Tri-Town area showcased resilience and adaptability in the face of changing interest rates and market conditions. Despite initial concerns regarding increased interest rates throughout 2023, buyer demand remained strong, driving competition and often resulting in properties selling above asking prices in all three towns - notably Allenstown and Pembroke, based on median data.

Hooksett emerged as the major hub for real estate activity, boasting consistently higher median prices and rapid turnover, particularly during the summer months. Pembroke and Allenstown also demonstrated steady growth and resilience, with sellers often realizing substantial returns on their investments.

Looking ahead to 2024, it's essential for both buyers

and sellers to remain vigilant of market trends and interest rate fluctuations. While buyer demand is expected to remain robust, potential decreases in interest rates will impact affordability and buying power for all future buyers who are looking to get into the market this spring.

I would recommend to any buyer thinking to buy to not wait until the spring. Interest rates are expected to come down to as low as 5 percent come the swing of the spring market. This means that there will be a mass migration into the market as affordability opens up with the drop-in rates.

That must mean good things for buyers right? Unfortunately it's not that simple. With that decrease in rates, a significant increase in buyers will offset that affordability as there will be stiffer competition and more buyers.

With that, I expect similar bidding wars and stiff competition like we saw during COVID-19. The Tri-Town area's enduring appeal and diverse housing options position it favorably for continued growth and stability in the real estate market. If you have considered selling, this spring might be the best opportunity for you!

As a local real estate expert, I remain committed to providing comprehensive guidance and support to my clients, ensuring seamless transactions and informed decision-making in every step of the buying and selling process.

This page sponsored by Paul Godbout of the Godbout Group at Guild Mortgage



REAL ESTATE

Surge in construction with focus on apartments

By **Tony Lacasse**
Hooksett Bridge

HOOKSETT – Hooksett’s growth was characterized by a flurry of mixed use developments along the Route 3 corridor thanks to the revitalization zone enacted this past year.

The zoning and planning boards approved a few condo and apartment-style developments. Apartments include City to Mountain Estates in South Hooksett off of the bypass.

The Hooksett Zoning Board granted a variance to local real estate developer David Scarpetti in April 2023 for up to 72 market-rate apartments to be built as long as he maintains a commercial use on the front of the 25-acre parcel that has frontage on Londonderry Turnpike (By-Pass 28), which is mostly commercial real estate.

The City to Mountain Estates is a planned apartment complex that is expected to consist of three apartment buildings with 24 units each. There will be a wooded area between the other neighbors and will be set back away from the bypass and the commercial suites. The zoning board was adamant on the commercial use in the front.

Commercial contingency is the theme in Hooksett for 2023 as this was another request of the Hooksett Zoning Board when asked for a variance from property owner Wayne Kenney in the

flexible performance zone for the other new project at 1385 Hooksett Road now deemed a revitalization zone. This area is by the Brick House Drive-In restaurant and Granite Brook Village Co-op Trailer Park in Central Hooksett.

Townhome-style condos were approved in the back of this parcel where the former Park Place Motel and Fred Goodnight’s Trailer Park once stood for many years.

This project was made contingent on the front parcel with road frontage on busy Hooksett Road (US Route 3) zoned for commercial/mixed use to be developed as a commercial property. The developer was not allowed to continue phase 2 of the residential condos until the commercial building was completed on Hooksett Road.

The buyer, local builder Kenney of Bedford, has gotten approvals and already started the work on phase 1 of the condos where there will be two nine-unit townhome-style condos available for rent once complete. These are expected to be available for market rent.

Scarpetti, the local real estate broker and developer helping with this project, said “These units are going to be two-bed 1.5 bath and approximately 1,300-1,500 finished square feet. The second phase will be completed once the 15,000-square-foot two-story commercial warehouse is completed in the front of the parcel.”

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Manchester

Median Home Value in 2023: **\$411,000**
Median Condo Value 2023: **\$284,500**
Median Mobile Value 2023: **\$218,000**



Hooksett

Median Home Value in 2023: **\$555,000**
Median Condo Value 2023: **\$340,000**
Median Mobile Value 2023: **\$160,000**



Allenstown

Median Home Value in 2023: **\$375,000**
Median Condo Value 2023: **\$191,750**
Median Mobile Value 2023: **\$125,000**



Pembroke

Median Home Value in 2023: **\$428,750**
Median Condo Value 2023: **\$342,450**
Median Mobile Value 2023: **\$67,000**



Concord

Median Home Value in 2023: **\$420,000**
Median Condo Value 2023: **\$280,000**
Median Mobile Value 2023: **\$152,500**



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REAL ESTATE

Hooksett grapples with future of former Cigna building

By Tony LaCasse
Hooksett Bridge

HOOKSETT – Despite pleas from the owner of the former Cigna Health building to change its zoning as carrying costs pile up, Hooksett town councilors are deferring any action until a Master Plan is completed in March.

In a Hooksett Town Council meeting held on Jan. 24, 2024, attorney John Bisson, representing Chelmsford Hooksett Properties, LLC, stirred discussions regarding the fate of properties located at the intersection of Hooksett Road and College Park Drive. Bisson's presence aimed to address the issue of the highest and best use of these parcels, known as Map/Lot 9/34 and 34/1, and to explore the town of Hooksett's interest in potentially acquiring them.

Bisson began by outlining the predicament surrounding the Brady Sullivan property, which comprises



The former Cigna Health building sits unused on College Park Drive in Hooksett. Brady Sullivan would like to rezone the property to allow a conversion to housing. (Bridge photo)

approximately 100,000 square feet of commercial space, vacant for an extended period. He underscored the significant carrying costs associated with

maintaining the property in its current state, amounting to \$200,000 per year. The zoning for these parcels falls under the MU1 zone, which imposes strict restrictions, limiting usage to retail, labs, hotels, motels, movie theaters, banks, personal services, offices, and restaurants without drive-through facilities.

Brady Sullivan Properties, recognized as experienced developers in the area, have expressed dissatisfaction with the existing zoning restrictions, deeming them financially unviable. Bisson highlighted the company's failed attempt, nearly two years ago, to obtain variances allowing the conversion of the space into apartments. The rejection, based on a hardship analysis, has left the property development plans in limbo.

Seeking a resolution, Bisson implored the council for assistance, citing previous unsuccessful engagements

with various town bodies, including the Economic Development Committee, Planning Board, and Zoning Board of Adjustment. Efforts to secure support for rezoning or variances have faced resistance, leaving the property in a state of uncertainty.

Bisson proposed the establishment of a steering committee comprising stakeholders to collaboratively devise a master plan for the property's development. Additionally, he requested the council's endorsement for the proposed residential and mixed-use development, despite it being incompatible with the current zoning regulations.

Council members deliberated on the matter, acknowledging the complexities involved and the necessity for collaboration between different town entities. Concerns were raised regarding jurisdictional boundaries and the need to respect the ongoing master planning process led by the Planning Board.

The meeting concluded with a decision to defer further action until the completion of the town's Master Plan, expected in March. Council members emphasized the importance of synchronizing efforts and ensuring comprehensive consideration of all aspects before proceeding with any decisions regarding the Brady Sullivan properties.

Despite Bisson's plea, the council remained cautious, emphasizing the importance of adhering to established procedures and respecting the authority of town planning bodies. As discussions continue, the fate of the Brady Sullivan properties hangs in the balance, awaiting a resolution that balances economic viability with town planning principles.

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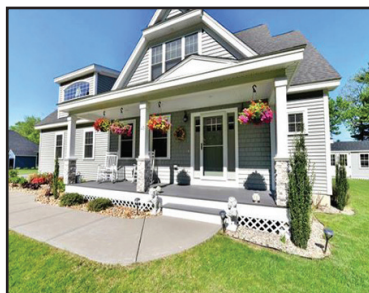
Most expensive real estate sales of 2023

The highest prices paid for homes in Hooksett, Allenstown and Pembroke topped a million dollars in 2023.



The most expensive home sale was for **441 Sixth Range Road in Pembroke, for \$1,260,000**. This five-bedroom, three-bath home was built in 2012 and was on the market for 30 days. It is a duplex property on 65 acres with a brook and 4-acre pond, and has a two-story living room. Listed by Shirl Kula of NHHS

Verani Londonderry.



In Hooksett, 45 Falcon Way sold for \$1,225,000 after 15 days on the market. It was built in 2018 and has three bedrooms and three bathrooms. Features include waterfront on the northern edge of Hooksett and Bow in a private gated community on the Merrimack River. Listed by Kenneth Scarpetti of Sierra Realty.



In Allenstown, 52 Chestnut Drive sold for \$590,000 in five days. It was built in 2021 and is a three-bedroom, three-bath home. It sits on a two-acre lot in Woodridge Estates and features an HGTV interior, gas fireplace, and open concept layout. Listed by Matthew-John G. Graves of Re/Max Synergy.

What's going in the old Kmart?

HOOKSETT – Climate-controlled storage is planned for the old Kmart department store if approvals come through.

At a January planning board meeting, an application by property owner Brady Sullivan to use the building for an allowed use per the current zoning in this area of town was discussed. This use was

requested without a full site plan review.

They said there will be no increase in traffic, noise, etc., and plan to do minimal work to the exterior of the building, such as fresh paint.

The planning board asked Brady Sullivan to come back with more details and design requirements.



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REAL ESTATE TRANSFERS

The following property transfers took place between Jan. 1 and Feb. 10:

Hooksett

Jan. 3 - \$450,000
Adams, Lisa D. & Adams, Craig to Crean, Michele Z. & Thibault, Edward D.

Jan. 10 - \$450,000
Wood, Joseph C. & Wood, Linda to Upton, Joseph A.

Jan. 16 - \$585,000
Daprato, Ft & Daprato, Arthur A. to Zimmerle, Alan & Zimmerle, Joanne

Jan. 16 - \$580,000
Sebastien, Allistair A. & Sebastien, Britney J. to Cabreja, Modesto & Cabreja, Maria V.

Jan. 16 - \$655,133
Karen J. Martel Ret & Martel Karen J. to Edwards, Ft & Edwards, Priscille T.

Jan. 17 - \$125,000
Green Realty LLC to Barcelos, Bianca

Jan. 19 - \$650,000
Liu, Shixi & Wong, Yin to Gill, Ft. & Gill, Hilary S.

Jan. 26 - \$415,000
Olson, Cynthia J. to Bouraphael, Valerie

Jan. 26 - \$540,000
Lawrence, W., Smith T. & Smith, Joy L. to Pfeiffer, Margaret M. & Kirwan, John

Allenstown

Jan. 17 - \$350,000
Bouffard, Evelyn & Bouffard, David H. to Bouffard, Kris

Jan. 22 - \$350,000
York, Marie & Spivack, Amy to Brashears, Jerome R.

Pembroke

Jan. 12 - \$412,000
Jeb LLC to Link, Dennis C.

Jan. 3 - \$850,000
Hartley Mgmt Group LLC to Green Mountain Realty LLC

Jan. 16 - \$401,000
Stg LLC to Landry, Joshua R & Landry, Olivia J.

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Hooksett Conservation Commission

A vision realized – Hooksett and Allenstown connect by Riverwalk

HOOKSETT – Mark your calendars! The grand opening of the Hooksett Riverwalk Trail has been scheduled for Thursday, May 16, from 4 to 5:30 p.m.

“A Vision Realized—Two Communities Connected,” will celebrate the fourth and final phase of this decade-long project.

All of Hooksett is invited to commemorate this achievement. The complete trail includes nearly 1.5 miles of trails, bridges and boardwalks over streams and wetlands. The new trail connects Hooksett to Allenstown, where it meets up with the Allenstown trail system.

The new trail is already open in parts, but please beware of construction and areas that may be closed while crews are finishing an agricultural bridge.

Remember, pets must be leashed and the entire trail is carry-in/carry-out for trash and pet waste.

This conservation area provides a beautiful landscape for visitors to enjoy along the Merrimack River, while protecting state-endangered and threatened species.

For details, contact JoCarol Woodburn at jocarolg@gmail.com or Bridgette Grotheer at bgrotheer@hooksett.org.

Kindness rules on Facebook page

HOOKSETT – Hooksett Kind is a Facebook group started by Chet Dupont five months ago and now has over 1,300 members. The group’s focus is on inspiring more love, kindness and generosity within the Hooksett community and beyond. Unlike other groups there is zero tolerance for anything less than respectful and kindhearted discourse by members.

In the short life of this group, it has already shown financial and moral support to individuals and organizations

in need, including the local food bank, Salvation Army and Granite State Dog Recovery.

They plan to create an “Adopt a Grandparent” program as well as raising funds to pay for overdue student lunch balances for local kids whose families are in need. Additionally, work is underway to partner with local schools to develop kindness clubs.

If you would like to be part of this local Kindness “tsunami,” search for Hooksett Kind on Facebook.

School marms needed for historic Head School

HOOKSETT – The Head School Society and The Hooksett Heritage Commission are actively recruiting for new School Marms for the Head School.

Look for a special video on all

Hooksett Community Facebook pages to be revealed early February. If you are intrigued by the video and this notice, then come join an informational meeting at the Hooksett Library on Feb. 29th at 6 p.m.

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Hooksett celebrates winter at annual carnival

The annual Hooksett Winter Carnival, hosted by the Kiwanis Club, took place at Hooksett Memorial School on Jan. 27.

Top, the gym filled with vendors and offered a variety of performances on the stage.

Middle left, Boy Scouts had a fire going to toast marshmallows and offer a look at camping gear.

Bottom left, Hooksett police and fire departments offered safety tips.

Right, families enjoyed a giant game of Connect Four.



Bridge photos



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HOOKSETT LIBRARY NEWS *by Mark Glisson*

HOOKSETT – The following events are taking place at the Hooksett Public Library:

For Adults

Having an “Appy” New Year with Your Shiny New Gear – Feb. 20, 2-3 p.m.

We can show you how to install the library’s free mobile apps and with them to find thousands of free eBooks, eAudiobooks, eMagazines, local newspapers, consumer news and reviews, genealogy tools, and much more!

Cookbook Club – Feb. 21, 6:30-7:30 p.m.

This month’s cookbook is “One: Simple One-Pan Wonders,” by Jamie Oliver.

An Evening with Romance Authors Ali Hazelwood, Nikki Payne and Denise Williams – Feb. 26, 7-8 p.m.

Authors Ali Hazelwood, Nikki Payne, and Denise Williams will discuss their latest romance novels in this unforgettable panel discussion followed by audience Q&A.

Health Benefits of Tea – Feb. 28, 6:30-7:30 p.m.

Learn about the health benefits of adding whole-leaf tea to your daily diet.

Read Local & National News with this Free Resource – March 1, 11 a.m.- noon.

We’ll show you how you can explore and stay informed on local and national topics, people and events in areas such as business, health, education, jobs and careers, political and social issues and more.

History and Mystery: A Genealogy Starter Guide – March 6, 6:30-7:30 p.m.

Join us to explore useful methods for research planning through the case study of Elsie Gaskin (an eccentric librarian from New Hampshire) and become a better researcher along the way.

Eleanor Roosevelt: The First Lady in the World – March 12, 6:30-7:30 p.m.

Eleanor Roosevelt is performed by Sheryl Faye.



Evening Book Club: “The First Ladies” – March 13, 6:30-7:30 p.m. This month we will discuss “The First Ladies” by Marie Benedict and Victoria Christopher.

Q&A with Author, Producer, Director and Screenwriter Stan Zimmerman on “The Girls: From Golden to Gilmore” – March 13, 7-8 p.m.

Talk to producer, director, screenwriter, and debut author Stan Zimmerman at this virtual meeting.

Cookbook Club – March 20, 6:30-7:30 p.m.

This month’s cookbook is “Baking Yesteryear: The Best Recipes from the 1900s to the 1980s” by Dylan Hollis.

Haunted Happenings with Jeff DePaoli: The Dark Woods with Owner Chad Zingales – March 21, 6:30-7:30 p.m.

The Dark Woods is a haunted Halloween event located at Trombly Gardens in Milford. Guests take a self-guided (walking) tour through dimly-lit woodlands while being met by an unusual cast of creeps and misfits.

Backyard Birdscaping – March 27, 6:30-7:30 p.m.

Step up your game and attract more birds and more species of birds to your backyard.

100 Classic Hikes: New England – April 3, 6:30-7:30 p.m.

Join author Jeff Romano for a slideshow presentation highlighting hiking opportunities throughout New England.

Natural Allergy Relief – April 8, 6-7:30 p.m.

By tending to your allergies before they start you can reduce or eliminate them!

Minimizing (or Eliminating!) Food Wastage for Families – April 11, 7-8 p.m.

Join Sarah Robert-

son-Barnes to discuss how to minimize or eliminate food waste in your family, especially with kids.

“Cooking with Scraps” Baking Demonstration and Discussion – April 17, 7-8 p.m.

Learn how we can make use of food scraps, keep them out of landfills, and still have enough left over for our compost pile.

From Field to Table: Foraging and Identifying Wild Edibles – April 24, 6:30-7:30 p.m.

Learn how to identify and select wild edibles (e.g. mushrooms, berries, greens, or even trees) via a slideshow and in person samples to see and feel.

For youth

Role-playing – Feb. 26, 5:30-7:45 p.m.

Join us for the start of a new campaign this winter playing the world’s most popular role-playing game! Recommended for ages 13 and under.

“Elemental” – Feb. 27, noon-1:45 p.m.

Bring a blanket and a lunch and join us for a family movie event showing “Elemental,” Disney and Pixar’s all-new, original feature film set in Element City, where fire, water, land and air residents live together.

“The Super Mario Bros. Movie” – Feb. 29, noon-1:45 p.m. Bring a blanket and a lunch and join us for the family movie. The animated film follows Mario on his adventures with his friends.

Easter Egg Hunt - March 30, 9:30-11:30 a.m.

- 9:30 a.m. - Babies and toddlers

- 10:15 a.m. - Preschoolers (3-5)

- 11 a.m. - School-aged children



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AREA EVENTS

HOOKSETT

Crochet Meet Up

Dog Agility Café
1328 Hooksett Road, Suite 16
Every Saturday, Feb. 15 - May 15, from 11 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Pet Parent Support Group

Dog Agility Café
1328 Hooksett Rd, Ste 16
Feb. 16, 4-5:15 p.m.

Songs of old New Hampshire

Hooksett Public Library,
31 Mount Saint Mary's Way
Feb. 16, 11 a.m.

Pet Loss Group

Dog Agility Café
1328 Hooksett Road, Suite 16
Feb. 21, 6-8 p.m.

WorkStayPlay NH presentation

New England Tap House Grille
1292 Hooksett Road
Feb. 27, 5:30-6:30 p.m.

Kids Paint 101 with Kryz

Dog Agility Café
1328 Hooksett Road, Suite 16
Feb. 28, 2-4 p.m.
\$30 per child
Register: ChaosArt2024@gmail.com

Game Night in the Café

Dog Agility Café
1328 Hooksett Road, Suite 16
Feb. 29, from 6-8 p.m.

Painting 101 with Kryz Chaos

Dog Agility Café
1328 Hooksett Road, Suite 16
March 23, 6-8:30 p.m.
\$40 per person
Register: ChaosArt2024@gmail.com

For the City – Easter Egg Hunt

Donati Memorial Field, Hooksett
March 30, 10:30 a.m.

ALL YOU CAN EAT Hooksett Kiwanis Pancake Breakfast
Saturday April 20

8:30-10 a.m.
Hooksett Congregational Church
5 Veterans Drive, Hooksett

Beautify Hooksett Day

Saturday April 20
10 a.m. - 1 p.m.
Activities will include roadside trash pick-up, planting flowers, and other clean up projects. Post clean up gathering at Lambert Park for light refreshments.)
Contact Bob Willey for more info at hooksettkiwanis@gmail.com

Hooksett Lions Club Railroad Show

Cawley Middle School
89 Whitehall Road
April 21, 9 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.

Hooksett Garden Club

Hooksett Public Library
31 Mount Saint Mary's Way (lower level)
4th Wednesday of the month February through October, 6 p.m.

Hooksett Community Kitchen FREE Community Supper

Every third Monday of the month
5-6 p.m.
Hooksett Congregational Church
5 Veterans Drive, Hooksett

ALLENSTOWN

Learn CPR & First Aid

Allenstown Fire Station
1 Ferry St.
Feb. 17, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Ninja Mountain Bike Clinics

30 Main St., Allenstown
April 27, 11:45 a.m. – April 28, 7 p.m.

PEMBROKE

Meet Me in Suncook Meeting

4 Union St, Pembroke
March 5, April 2, May 7, 6-8 p.m.

Have an event? Let us know. Send your event information to editor@thehooksettbridge.org.

Cemetery care up for vote



The Hooksett Cemetery Commission was hoping to bring attention to stone repairs needed in the two main town cemeteries, Martins Cemetery and Head Cemetery. Head Cemetery has a far worse problem with old broken stones, ones fallen or falling over. Voters will have a chance to approve repairs by voting yes on Warrant Article 32 on March 12. The article requests that \$10,000 be appropriated for repairs in Head, Martins and Riverside cemeteries. The tax impact would total about \$1.50 on the average homeowner's tax bill.

(Courtesy photo)

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CLUBS AND GROUPS

HARC - Hooksett Area Rotary Club

HOOKSETT – Service Above Self is more than a motto to HARC; it drives our engagement locally and globally! We are a community service organization based out of Hooksett, Pembroke, Suncook, and Allenstown that strives to bring diverse people together who want to improve their society while having some fun along the way. Everyone is welcome to join each Monday from 5:30-6:30 p.m. online, at local restaurants, or even around a firepit. Check out our events calendar to find out what we're doing this week! See more at www.hooksettarearotary.org.

Kiwanis welcomes new board members



The Kiwanis Club of Hooksett gathered at the Taphouse on Oct. 18 and welcomed a new board of officers and directors while congratulating and thanking the outgoing members for the work they have accomplished and the time they have committed to the club over the past year. The annual installation dinner is a significant event for the club as it is a time to reflect on accomplishments and to reinvigorate and focus on goals for the upcoming year. Past Lt. Gov. Matt Barrett did the honor of recognizing the outgoing directors and officers and introducing the new ones. Pictured from left are Vice President Amy Merrow, President Elect Shannon Ketcham, President Tim Sweeney, and outgoing President Tom Lavery. (Courtesy photo)

Hooksett Area
Rotary
Club



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Learn more by visiting
www.hooksettarearotary.org

Nominations open for Kiwanis Club's Community Leaders Awards program

HOOKSETT – The Hooksett Kiwanis Foundation announces its 2024 Community Leaders Awards program. Last year's event was a huge success and provided much public recognition for many deserving individuals. The 2024 event, to be held at the Dining Center at Southern New Hampshire University on May 15.

There will be six award categories:

1. Small Hooksett Business of the Year (less than 50 Hooksett employees).
2. Large Hooksett Business of the Year (50 or more Hooksett employees).
3. Hooksett Educator/Employee of the Year (grades K-8).

4. Hooksett Municipal Employee of the Year.

5. Hooksett Adult Volunteer of the Year (over age of 18 on December 31, 2023).

6. Hooksett Youth Volunteer of the Year (under age of 19 on December 31, 2023).

The Community Recognition Awards enables Kiwanis to recognize several leaders for their contributions in making Hooksett an outstanding community.

Nomination applications are available online www.hooksettkiwanis.org or in person at the Hooksett Public Library and town offices.

Nominations will close on February 29. Nominations must be submitted by a third

party in the individual categories. Businesses can nominate themselves, however, and must follow the size (number of employees in Hooksett) noted above.

An independent panel of judges, none of whom are Kiwanis members, will evaluate the nominations and announce their selections by March 15.

Below is the link for direct access to nominate someone for one of the awards listed above: <https://bit.ly/kiwaniscle2023-24>

For more information, contact committee chair Mike Horne at hornemw@gmail.com or 603-540-9608.

Kiwanis Club celebrates the holidays

HOOKSETT - Hooksett Kiwanis held its annual Christmas Auction on Dec. 6. Over 50 people attended. The event was held at the Oscar Barn, which was done up with the finest holiday décor. It was another successful event with members donating many prizes to be raffled off. The proceeds help to defray cost of all the programs which the club sponsors.

Some of the raffle prizes included Red Sox tickets, Yankee-Red Sox tickets, Celtics tickets, a New Hampshire Fisher Cats suite package, beautiful poinsettias, a beach bicycle, piggybanks made from old post office boxes, as well as many handmade crafts and several local gift certificates.

Many thanks to our members for their generous donations and thanks to those who purchased the prizes. In addition to the auction the Hook-



Hooksett Kiwanis inducted several new members at their holiday gathering. From left are new member Keara Bartlett, new member Luis Colon, President Tim Sweeney, Past Lt. Gov. Matt Barrett, club secretary and new member sponsor Stephanie Andruss, new member sponsor Phil Denbow, new member Terry Crotty, and new member chair and Vice President Amy Merrow. (Courtesy photo)

sett Kiwanis Club also inducted three new members, at this event.

Hooksett Kiwanis is the largest service organization in Hooksett with over 80 members and it is also the largest

Kiwanis Club in New England.

If you would like to read more about the club or are interested in attending a future meeting or event, see www.hooksettkiwanis.org or email hooksettkiwanis@gmail.com.

CLUBS AND GROUPS

Girl Scouts begin cookie sale, Cookie Weekend proclaimed

Now is the time to stock up on your favorite Girl Scout Cookies, as Girl Scouts across New Hampshire begin their sales at cookie booths.

Girl Scouts across the U.S. are celebrating National Cookie Weekend Feb. 16-18, with special attention from New Hampshire, as Gov. Chris Sununu has honored the 107th anniversary of the Girl Scout Cookie program in New Hampshire with a proclamation of Girl Scout Cookie Weekend in the state.

In-person sales at cookie booths run through March 17. Talk to a Girl Scout you know or find a Girl Scout through our Cookie Finder at www.girlscoutcookies.org. You can also text “Cookies” to 59618. This link can be used to find a local booth, purchase cookies and/or to donate cookies for local community causes.

This season, cookie lovers can enjoy the full assortment of Girl Scout Cookies, including fan favorites such as Thin Mints, Samoas, Do-si-dos and



Girl Scouts Cookie season is in full swing, with cookies available through March 17. See www.girlscoutcookies.com to find a cookie booth near you. (Courtesy photo)

more. Each package of cookies costs \$6, with all proceeds staying local.

During this highly anticipated time of the year, girls flex their entrepreneurial muscles and acquire important life skills like money management, team building, public speaking and decision

making. All proceeds from cookie sales stay with local councils and troops to power Girl Scouts’ amazing experiences year-round.

This year’s theme, Unbox the Fu-

ture, aims to remove social barriers that often keep girls boxed in. Girl Scouts do more than sell delicious treats—they’re entrepreneurial powerhouses creating a more equitable future for themselves and the world. Every box of cookies sold provides invaluable experiences for Girl Scouts such as service projects, troop travel and summer camp.

Nearly 700,000 Girl Scouts participate in the Girl Scout Cookie Program, which provides vital girl-led entrepreneurial skills that build courage, confidence and character. As a result, girls obtain limitless barrier-breaking futures outside the box with transferable life skills. Girl Scouts can earn a variety of badges and awards to develop valuable business skills including Cookie Business badges, Financial Literacy badges, Cookie Entrepreneur Family pins and Entrepreneur badges.

Girl Scouts earn Bronze Award



Girl Scout Troop 58754 of Hooksett has been working on two Bronze Award projects. For one, the girls used the theme of inclusion and dismantled and old rotted picnic table at their school and replaced it with an 18-foot pressure-treated table that was handicap-accessible at the end. For their second Bronze Award project, they built a foot bridge at another school so students can easily access their outdoor classroom. They are also adding information boxes on differences to label and give information on the different trees in the outside classroom. They also held bridging ceremony at Great Wolf Lodge in Fitchburg, Mass. (Courtesy photo)




Your Year of Wonder

Be a Girl Scout.

- ✓ Discover new worlds.
- ✓ Tap into a hidden talent.
- ✓ Get up close and personal with nature.



Explore all the possibilities that await you this year. Join your local Girl Scout community today!

girl scouts
of the green and white mountains

SUNCOOK

Allenstown to vote on candidates, budgets

By Michael Frascinella
Hooksett Bridge

ALLENSTOWN – Voters at the deliberative sessions of Town Meeting and School District Meeting on Feb. 3 resulted in an elimination of curbside recycling and criticism of town and school budgets.

There are five people running for two selectmen's slots, two people running for town clerk, two people running for school clerk, and two people running for school board. All the other positions are uncontested.

The proposed town budget is increasing by 16.9% to \$5,516,375. The proposed school budget is increasing by 5.5% to \$13,658,612. The Sewer Department budget is increasing by 1.2% to \$2,707,225. Residents must decide on three budgets and numerous warrant articles.

From November 2023 to January 2024, the Selectmen reviewed budgets with town, sewer, and school department heads, and approved a warrant article to raise and appropriate \$11,500,000 for new clarifier tanks at the Allenstown Wastewater Treatment Facility.

Town

One resident gained approval from most of the 70 attendees at Town Meeting to eliminate curbside recycling for a \$25,000 reduction in Solid Waste Collection costs.

Warrant articles meant to minimize service interruptions by separating the town clerk and tax collector positions met opposition by status quo proponents whose rewording forced the selectmen and town attorney into a sudden huddle.



A voting machine in Allenstown. (Bridge photo)

A majority of selectmen and a few other officials criticized the 15-12 vote on Article 12 as mangling a simple yes/no question into an ineffective one.

The default town budget is \$4,819,200 but selectmen insist that the town cannot function on that lower amount. They said that a vote for the default budget could lead to severe cuts in services. Residents get to decide on these budgets and several warrant articles on March 12.

If the proposed town budget is approved, the town tax rate will increase from \$6.34 to \$7.66/\$1,000, a \$1.32 increase over 2023.

In the past several years, the town has used the unassigned fund balance and non-property tax revenue to help reduce budget increases. The state Department of Revenue Administration advises keeping 5 to 17% of general operating revenues on hand for critical cash flow needs.

Allenstown Elementary School is being considered for conversion to town hall offices. A proposal to put \$225,000

from unspent funds could be used toward that conversion. There is already \$100,000 in that capital reserve fund.

Several town officials have opposed the haste to increase that funding, preferring a proposal to sell Armand R. Dupont School as soon as possible and use those proceeds to renovate the elementary school.

An increase of \$131,200 (+48%) for health insurance resulted from increased insurance rates and hiring four new fire and ambulance personnel. There was a mandated increase of \$45,000 for fire department retirement.

Two items totaling \$43,050 for both Allenstown Elementary and Dupont schools are needed to cover the cost of utilities and maintenance once the town takes over the two schools in May.

In 2022, selectmen reviewed the rising costs of the Tri-Town EMS Service, which had more than doubled in 10 years from \$562,794 to \$1,203,998 per year. This provided one 24-hour ambulance and one part-time ambulance. To better serve Allenstown,

selectmen voted to leave Tri-Town and transition to a fire department-based ambulance service, where ambulance staff is cross-trained to operate fire apparatus. This will provide firefighters and EMTs for both services at a lower cost and allow direct collection of revenue for ambulance transports.

Part of the 2024 budget increase pays for the final six months of Tri-Town (until July 1) concurrent with the first half year of the new Allenstown service. With the recent growth of the town due to new residents at Hillsbrook Village and 25 Canal, the town will experience more service needs and more revenue.

Fire Chief Eric Lambert said that, with this budget, "you get full-time 24/7 coverage from your fire department for a lower cost."

The 10-year contract with Casella ends Aug. 31. Post-contract disposal costs of about \$110/ton for trash and even more for recycling had resulted in an increase of \$134,405 (+55%). A cost-cutting measure to eliminate curbside recycling for a savings of \$25,000 this year was approved at the deliberative session.

A budget entry of \$40,000 is to replace old software at Town Hall but the Building Capital Reserve Fund may be an alternative source.

The town warrant contains 13 articles for zoning ordinances, the town budget, sewer budget, the \$11.5 million bond for new sewer dept. clarifiers, funding for capital reserve funds, an ordinance to regulate the Pelissier Boat Launch, and three articles dealing with the treasurer and tax collector.

School

The proposed 2024-25 operating budget for the school district is \$13,658,612, while the default budget is \$13,613,467. This includes an increase of \$709,146 or 5.5% with the default budget only \$45,000 less. The major increases are for special education (+\$414,042) and the tuition rate to Pembroke Academy for high schoolers (+\$141,710). An unanswered question is why are 25% of the students coded for special education. Three warrant articles add money for various trust funds.

Current enrollment is 487, which is a cost of \$26,590 per student per year, including an \$811,000 bond payment for the new K-8 school building. In contrast, tuition at nearby private schools averages \$5,600-\$14,000 per year, with Trinity High School at \$5,600 per year.

If the proposed school budget is approved, it will raise the school tax rate from \$13.19 to about \$13.91 per \$1,000 of property value, a 72-cent increase in the tax rate over 2023.

Important Budget and Election Dates

Town and school elections are set for Tuesday, March 12, from 8 a.m.-7 p.m. at St. John the Baptist Parish Hall, 10 School St. Outside the hall, you will probably be greeted by local candidates seeking one more chance to get your vote. Inside you can vote for the best qualified candidates. Afterward you can chat with town officials or with friends and neighbors you might meet.

By the next day, the Town Clerk will post the election results on the town website.

SUNCOOK

NO CONTESTED RACES IN PEMBROKE

PEMBROKE – There are no contested races in Pembroke for either town offices. The following people filed for office and will be elected unless there are write-in candidates to challenge them. Town and school elections will take place Tuesday, March 12, 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. at Pembroke Academy.

Pembroke School District Meeting is set for Saturday, March 9, 10 a.m., at Pembroke Academy.

Pembroke Town Meeting is set for Saturday, March 16, at 10 a.m. at Pembroke Academy.

TOWN

Town Clerk, for one year – James F. Goff
 Moderator, for two years – Thomas Serafin
 Treasurer, for one year – Jillian McNeil
 Selectman, for three years – Matt Miller

SCHOOL

Sew Commissioner, for two years – **no one filed
 Sewer Commissioner, for three years – Paulette Malo
 Water Commissioner, for five years – Lawrence A. Plourde
 Library Trustee, for one year – Michael Leviss
 Library Trustee, for three years – Shelley Fowler
 Trust Fund Trustee, for three years – Courtney H. Eschbach
 Checklist Supervisor, for six years – **no one filed
 School District Moderator, for one year – Thomas Serafin
 School District Clerk, for one year – Cynthia Menard
 School District Treasurer, for one year – Jennifer Dorr
 School Board Member, for three years – Eugene Gauss

WHO'S RUNNING IN ALLENSTOWN

ALLENSTOWN – The following people have filed for town or school offices. Town and school elections will take place Tuesday, March 12, 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. at St. John the Baptist parish hall.

Contested races are in bold.

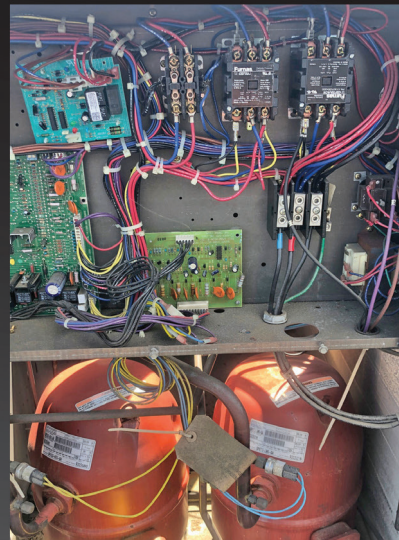
TOWN

Town Moderator – Judy Silva
 Town Treasurer – Carol Andersen
Two Select Board Members - Sandra McKenney, Keith Klawes, Kathleen Pelissier, Patricia Caruso, Timothy Sylvernale
 Sewer Commissioner – Jim Rodger
One Trustee of Trust Funds – George Lemire, Richard Caruso
One Trustee of Cemeteries Fund - George Lemire, Richard Caruso
 Four Budget Committee Members

- Irene (Melaine) Boisvert, John Childs, Joel Goulet, Timothy Sylvernale
 Supervisor of the Checklist – Evelyn Bouffard
 Supervisor of the Checklist – Jennifer Lee Letendre
One Town Clerk/Tax Collector – Jacqueline (Jackie) Tate, Paul St. Germain
 Library Trustee – Jeffrey Venegas
SCHOOL
 School Board Members (two) - Jody Moore, Cheryl McDonald
One School District Clerk – Jackie Tate, Paul St. Germain
 School District Treasurer - Barbara Bilodeau
 School District Moderator - Judy Silva



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SUNCOOK - News of Allenstown and Pembroke

Allenstown Community School to open this spring

By Michael Frascinella
Hooksett Bridge

“The new Community School on is on time and under budget” according to Gordon Bristol, the owner’s project manager. He forecast that there will be a late April move from Allenstown Elementary School and Armand R. Dupont School to this new K-8 school on River Road.

Shannon Kruger, Allenstown School District supervising school principal, pinpointed the opening date as Friday, May 3.

Bristol said “workers are doing final painting, installing ceiling tiles, installing cafeteria equipment, and installing flooring for the new gymnasium. That will take place from now into February.”

He added that “in March, we will focus on the final detail work, making sure everything is working properly, and buttoning up loose ends.”



Allenstown’s new K-8 school, Allenstown Community School, is expected to open May 3. (Bridge photo)

When asked how the transition will occur, Bristol said “while the schools are closed for spring vacation from April 19 to May 2, the Sterling Moving Company will remove all school

furniture and equipment from the elementary and middle schools and install it all in the new school. Students will leave their old schools one day and, after spring break, take buses to the new school.”

Kruger was quite upbeat that “the students and teachers are getting excited about the move as the date approaches.” She further explained that she has sent teachers information to help them plan how to get their items moved to their classrooms, and that the moving company has delivered packing labels.

When asked about bus schedules and school hours, she said that, “Daily Transportation will continue to provide three buses. The start and end of the

school day will probably be within a few minutes of the current schedule but the school board will have to approve the final pickup and drop-off times for buses and the new routes.”

When asked about parents who line up their cars to drop off or pick up children, she said “That has been an ongoing challenge in our current buildings due to their locations, but we don’t anticipate it continuing at the new school.”

She was enthusiastic when she spoke of a live video event on February 2, called “Magical Mystery Tour of ACS – On Location.”

Principal Kruger further elaborated, “I will be at the new school filming and walking around to show off places like the library, gym, and cafeteria. Students will be able to watch from their classrooms at the town’s two existing schools.”

When asked if they are planning an open house, she said there will be two public events scheduled in May.

“We will host a Family Night for students and parents on May 2 and then a Community Night for town residents on May 3.”

Once vacated, the town will take possession of the old schools based on warrant articles approved last year. The town is investigating conversion of the elementary school into new town offices and leased office space and has set up a capital reserve fund for renovation expenses. The other school will be put up for sale.

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Hooksett, NH 03106
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Presents



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5:30 - 10:30pm
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Corey’s Closet



For more information please visit our website at

www.coreyscloset.org

email: coreyscloset@outlook.com

Find The Hooksett Bridge
at Sully’s in Allenstown and
Shirley’s Kitchen in Pembroke

SUNCOOK - News of Allenstown and Pembroke

Allenstown to vote on sewer facility improvements

By Michael Frascinella
Hooksett Bridge

ALLENSTOWN – A warrant article for \$11.5 million for new clarifier tanks for the Allenstown Wastewater Treatment Facility was approved Jan. 8 by selectmen for inclusion in the town warrant.

The selectmen asked Michael Trainque, engineer for Hoyle Tanner & Associates, about the effect on the sewer rate. Trainque said until they receive approval for loans from the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, they could not answer that concern. Once funding is secured, they will make the effective sewer rate public before

the March 12 vote.

Jeffrey Backman, supervisor for the Allenstown Wastewater Treatment Facility, said the existing secondary clarifiers at the Wastewater Treatment Facility are almost 50 years old, have greatly exceeded their useful life of about 20 years, do not meet current design standards, and are a significant bottleneck in the ability of the treatment plant to properly process future flows and loadings.

“We expect a response from USDA in June of this year, said Backman. “Repayment of the loan will be funded by both Allenstown and Pembroke. The parties have



Voters in Allenstown will consider a warrant article in March to spend \$11.5 million for new clarifier tanks for the Allenstown Wastewater Treatment Facility. (Courtesy photo)

agreed on the language of a new intermunicipal agreement, which has been sent to the NH Attorney General’s office for review. Once the agreement is finalized, Allenstown’s portion of the \$11.5 million will be 45 percent, or \$5.175 million.

Without the loan offer from the USDA, the impact on sewer rates is challenging to estimate, he said, since grant funding would reduce the overall loan repayment amount.

Allenstown can complete the project with minimal impacts on its sewer rates, according to Backman, who added that construction is estimated to take two years (two construction seasons). Second-

ary clarifiers play a critical role in wastewater treatment plants. Their main purpose is to separate treated wastewater from the biological mass, a process known as secondary clarification.

The primary task of secondary clarifiers is clarification and thickening. They remove suspended solids or solid particulates from the liquid, which are then settled down by gravity. The concentrated solids are known as biosolids, while those that float to the surface of the liquid are called scum. Clarifiers are large settling tanks with built-in mechanical means like scraper blades to continuously remove solids to-

wards the pipe or place where sludge and scum collection occurs.

The performance of a wastewater treatment plant and the ability to meet required discharge permit requirements depends on the proper functioning of the secondary clarifiers. Hydraulic and solids loading has a significant impact on the performance of secondary clarifiers in wastewater treatment plants.

Allenstown’s secondary clarifiers are inefficient at providing adequate separation of the biological mass, which lead to several operational challenges and increased costs.

We have submitted an application to the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture for a Clean Water State Revolving Fund Loan and a USDA/Rural Development Loan to fund the construction and engineering of the project. Grants or principal forgiveness on the loans may be offered in the loan package from the USDA. The amount of the grant or principal forgiveness could be as high as 40 percent or as low as 0 percent.

Summer concert series planned

ALLENSTOWN – The Economic Development Committee has signed up a slate of four local music groups to perform concerts during the summer months to help build community spirit and provide residents with an enjoyable time together.

All concerts will be held outside the Allenstown Town Hall on Sunday afternoons from 3-6 p.m., weather permitting.

In tandem, a Cruise Night will be held for classic car buffs. A fire truck for youngsters to explore has been invited.

• May 19, Out on Bail – A local five-piece band with many family members in law enforcement (hence the name) performs classic rock, country,

oldies and blues from the ’60s, ’70s, ’80s and ’90s.

• June 23, Jennifer Mitchell Band – A professional four-piece band with pro sound equipment that plays a variety of music from today’s hits to some of the oldies. Jennifer is an award winning singer/songwriter.

• Aug. 11, BoneShakerz – A local three-piece band playing hard rock including Bowie, U2, Zappa and Zeppelin.

• Sept. 15, Bob DePaolo – By combining the flute, keyboard, conga drums, and harmonica, DePaolo interprets the music of Jethro Tull, Dylan, Santana, Vanity Fair, Eric Clapton, the Beatles, and others in a one-man band format.

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