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East Brookfield, West Brookfield, North Brookfield, Brookfield, Leicester and Spencer

SEND YOUR NEWS AND PICS TO NEWS@STONEBRIDGEPRESS.NEWS Friday, January 9, 2026

Department of the American Legion names Berthiaume Legislator of the Year



Rep. Donnie Berthiaume

SPENCER — State Rep. Donnie Berthiaume was named Legislator of the Year at the Massachusetts Department of the American Legion Annual Convention.

The legion serves more than 26,000 members from across the Commonwealth, committed to serving veterans and active service members. Among lobbying and promoting education, the legion also helps thousands of veterans with their benefits with the goal of giving each veteran and service member a better quality of life.

Each year, at the single largest gathering of all American Legions from across the State, a Legislator who shows a commitment and dedication to the wellbeing of veterans and their families is presented with the award.

“We honor those who are veteran centric,” said Lisa McPhee, Department Adjutant

at the Department of American Legion “When we have an issue, Representative Berthiaume listens and champions us.”

Berthiaume received the distinguished award from John P. “Jake” Comer, the past National Commander of the American Legion and swore in Spencer’s own Scott Conner as the new State Commander of the American Legion.

“It is an honor to be recognized by The American Legion which is a leader when it comes to veterans issues,” Berthiaume said. “State Commander Conner and the staff in that office tirelessly advocate for our veterans and are the true heroes when it comes to assisting veterans in need.”

As a Navy veteran, Berthiaume continues to be an advocate on Beacon Hill and in the communities, he serves for the betterment of all current and former members of the armed services.

Spencer to assess three dams in 2026

BY JASON BLEAU
CORRESPONDENT

SPENCER — The town of Spencer is proceeding with examining several dams that, according to a third-party contractor, are in need of assessment to determine their condition.

Highway Superintendent Peter Boria revealed three dams that will be the focus of the assessments during a meeting with selectmen in December — the Sugden Reservoir Dam, the Muzzy Meadow Dam, and the Browning Pond Dam. All three will be examined through an ongoing partnership with PARE Engineering.

“The immediate work that we need to complete is an emergency action plan being updated, which is part of their proposal. We also need to complete a phase one inspection report,” Boria told the selectmen.

Dams are often assessed after a certain period of time to determine their structural integrity and any underlying issues that need to be resolved. While Boria did not indicate any specific known issues with these dams, the assessments will give Spencer a more precise idea of the conditions of the structure and what, if any, improvements need to be made.

Boria said his goal was to get the process moving so that the town can prioritize these dams for the new year.

“This is not due until September of 2026, but I wanted to get ahead of it and get it in this proposal so we can go get it funded so the work can be done throughout next spring and summer,” said Boria.

The Board of Selectmen approved an allocation for the project with no debate on the matter. The funds for the assessment will be taken from a dam-specific line item already available in the Highway Department’s budget.

Local food pantries serve as winter lifeline area residents

REGION — As winter settles in across central Massachusetts, local food pantries serving Spencer, Leicester and the Brookfields continue to provide assistance to residents facing food insecurity, a challenge that often becomes more pronounced during the colder months.

In Spencer, the MQR Food Pantry remains a key resource for individuals and families in need residing in Spencer or East Brookfield, open every Thursday from 10 a.m.-noon. Operated by volunteers and supported through donations, the pantry provides groceries to eligible residents on scheduled distribution days throughout the month.

In Leicester, Saint Joseph’s Church (508-859-8083) operates a food pantry Tuesdays from 5-7 p.m., and Greenville Baptist Church in Rochdale (508-892-3100) opens its pantry every Monday from noon to 2 p.m. St. Joseph’s Food Pantry in North Brookfield is open by appointment Wednesdays from 8:30-10 a.m., but it should be noted that if school is not in session on a Monday, they will be closed as well. Residents may call to register for an appointment at (508) 867-6469.

Town and nonprofit officials note that winter can place added strain on household budgets as heating costs rise and seasonal employment fluctuates. While local pantries do not always release detailed usage statistics, food assistance providers consistently report that demand tends to remain steady or increase during the colder months.

Because hours and distribution schedules vary by location, residents are encouraged to check directly with individual pantries before visiting. Some sites operate on a weekly basis, while others distribute food monthly or by appointment. Several pantries also coordinate with regional food banks to supplement local donations, particularly during periods of high demand.

Local officials emphasize that food pantries are available to help households experiencing short-term or ongoing need and that seeking assistance is a common and accepted part of community support networks. Residents do not need to wait for a crisis to reach out, and many pantries provide guidance on additional resources such as fuel assistance or nutrition programs.

Community members interested in helping can support local pantries through food donations, financial contributions, or volunteer time. Winter months are often a critical period for donations, as holiday food drives conclude and supplies need to be replenished.

Those seeking assistance or wishing to contribute are advised to contact their local pantry directly or consult town and community resource listings for the most current information. As winter continues, food pantries across Spencer and the Brookfields remain an essential part of the local safety net, sustained by volunteers and community support.

Carol Hawkins named Artist of the Month by Friends of N. Brookfield Town House



Carol Hawkins

N O R T H
BROOKFIELD — The Friends of the North Brookfield Town house have named Carol Hawkins the Artist of the Month for January.

Originally from Rhode Island, Carol Hawkins enjoyed drawing and painting from a young age. But growing up with twelve siblings, it was not until first grade that she received her first box of watercolors, waiting for her in her school desk.

She describes her

first art teacher, Audrey Blake, as being so animated in teaching art that “she would dance around the room sparking inspiration from everything that was around us.”

Hawkins studied Fine Art at Rhode Island College which helped hone her natural talent. She works in many mediums including watercolors, pastels, and acrylics. Pet portraits are a specialty of hers. Her portfolio includes cats, dogs, ferrets, rabbits, and even horses! All the

animals are so realistically portrayed that you can feel the softness of a kitten’s fur or the sleekness of a horse’s neck.

Now that Hawkins has made North Brookfield her home, she endeavors to inspire would be creators at the North Brookfield Senior center where she gives drawing lessons and teaches arts and crafts. In the two years she has been teaching, the seniors have been introduced to decoupage, floral arranging, and painting among other topics. The classes are free to seniors in the area.

The Friends of the North Brookfield Town House would like to thank Carol Hawkins for helping us put a spotlight on the arts as our “Artist of the Month for January 2026.” You can find examples of her work on our Web site at nbtownhouse.com/all-featured-artists/carol-hawkins.

The Friends of the North Brookfield Town House is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization focused on restoring, preserving, and sustaining the Town House as a cultural center of North Brookfield. Every month this organization recognizes a featured artist in their community.

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North Brookfield publishes snow & ice treatment and removal procedures

BY JASON BLEAU
CORRESPONDENT

NORTH BROOKFIELD — With winter weather already impacting the region in December, snow and ice removal has taken center stage along with how the town manages communication with the public regarding its cleanup efforts.

On Dec. 16, the North Brookfield Board of Selectmen approved a Standard Operating Procedure for Snow and Ice Treatment, which essentially creates a public reference resource laying out how the town’s Highway Department handles snow events and cleanup. The Highway Department is directly responsible for snow removal on public roads and, according to the document, the Highway Superintendent

is charged with determining when and how the town will begin and execute its cleanup efforts and what areas are prioritized first with public safety in mind.

Selectman Jamie Gilman explained that in his conversations with the Highway Department it was noted that typically during the winter there are questions regarding public awareness of how the department performs its duties. This new document provides a written explanation to put those concerns at ease.

“I think it does a pretty good job as far as prioritizing main routes and then arteries off those routes. It gets into private roads and what to expect for those roads,” Gilman said of the document.

He noted that an early snowstorm in

November or December has prompted him to discuss snow removal strategies with the Highway Superintendent, resulting in the written procedure.

“I had my own idea what the strategy was which was to pretreat the roads so the snow didn’t stick, let the snow fall and as the rain came and we tapered off into the end of the rain then go through, plow it up, and take the water and snow off the road to clean it up,” said Gilman. “It kind of left us with something a little more drivable with one pass. Everybody would love to have all the roads in North Brookfield look like the Pike where you have salt and a plow coming every ten minutes, but we just don’t have that.”

The document specifies what happens

and whose responsibility as well as tips for residents regarding driveway openings, who is responsible for cars on the side of the road, and breaks down what the town will manage and what is the responsibility of the homeowners such as mailboxes and private roads as well as where to send questions and concerns regarding the town’s procedures.

Gilman said he sees the procedure as a “living document” that can be updated and adjusted as things change and evolve, or public feedback comes in regarding the procedures. For now, it at least sets a standard for what folks can expect.

Selectmen accepted the procedure unanimously, which has since been posted on the Highway Department page of the town’s Web site.

Local schools return after winter break

REGION — Students and staff in the Spencer-East Brookfield Regional School District returned to classrooms this week following the winter holiday break, marking the start of the second half of the academic year.

According to the district’s published calendar, schools were scheduled to reopen Monday morning, resuming regular instruction and activities across all grade levels. Administrators typically use the post-holiday period to reestablish routines, review expectations, and prepare for the winter months ahead, when weather disruptions and attendance challenges are more common.

The resumption of classes at David

Prouty High School Monday marked a particularly welcome return to routine after a burst sprinkler main caused water damage to the second and third floors of the building, forcing district officials to send students off on their holiday break a week early.

The Spencer-East Brookfield Regional School District serves students in both Spencer and East Brookfield, with elementary, middle, and high school buildings operating on coordinated calendars. District officials remind families each winter to monitor official communication channels for schedule updates, particularly in the event of snow or severe weather.

Winter weather protocols, including

delayed openings or school closures, are communicated through the district website and standard notification systems. Families are encouraged to confirm that their contact information is current to ensure they receive timely alerts.

Beyond daily instruction, the return from winter break also signals the continuation of extracurricular activities and winter athletics. Practices, rehearsals, and club meetings typically resume alongside academic classes, providing students with opportunities for engagement outside the classroom during the colder months.

The second half of the school year is often a busy period academically, particularly for older students. Midyear assessments,

course planning for the following school year, and preparation for spring testing generally take place between January and March. School counselors and administrators typically share guidance with students and families as these milestones approach.

Attendance remains a focus during the winter season, as illness and weather can impact classroom continuity. District materials emphasize the importance of regular attendance while also encouraging families to keep students home when they are ill, balancing health concerns with educational needs.

Families are advised to consult individual school newsletters and the district calendar for important dates, including early dismissals, professional development days, and school events scheduled later in the winter. Updates are posted as information becomes available.

School officials note that the winter months often bring a renewed focus on classroom routines and long-term academic goals as the school year enters its midpoint. With the return to classes, students and staff begin the steady stretch toward spring.

Leicester KOC hosting family dinner

LEICESTER — Leicester Knights of Columbus, 91 Manville St., will have a family dinner on Wednesday, Jan. 14 at 6 p.m. The menu is choice of Italian or Baked Fish. Cost is \$15, and includes salad, entree, dessert and coffee. Call Don at 508-615-8434 or email at ohono7g7@yahoo.com by Monday, Jan. 12 for reservations.

All are welcome for a tasty meal and friendship.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR JANUARY 9–16

- Thursday, Jan. 9
Spencer Select Board Meeting
7 p.m., Spencer Town Hall, 48 Main St., Spencer.
Regular meeting of the Select Board. Agenda and participation details posted on the town website.
- Monday, Jan. 13
Leicester Select Board Meeting
6:30 p.m., Leicester Town Hall, 3 Washburn Square, Leicester.
Regular meeting. Agenda posted in advance on the town website.
- Spencer Planning Board Meeting
7 p.m., Spencer Town Hall, 48 Main St., Spencer.
Public meeting. Agenda available online prior to the meeting.
- Tuesday, Jan. 14
East Brookfield Select Board Meeting
7 p.m., East Brookfield Town Hall, 122 Connie Mack Drive, East Brookfield.
Regular meeting. Agenda posted on the town website.
- Spencer Conservation Commission Meeting
7 p.m., Spencer Town Hall, 48 Main St., Spencer.
Public meeting. Agenda posted in advance.

- Wednesday, Jan. 15
Spencer-East Brookfield Regional School Committee Meeting
6 p.m., location as posted by the district.
Regular meeting. Agenda and location posted by the district.
- Brookfield Select Board Meeting
7 p.m., Brookfield Town Hall, 6 Central St., Brookfield.
Regular meeting. Agenda posted on the town website.
- Thursday, Jan. 16
West Brookfield Select Board Meeting
6:30 p.m., West Brookfield Town Hall, 2 East Main St., West Brookfield.
Regular meeting. Agenda posted in advance.
- Spencer Board of Health Meeting
6 p.m., Spencer Town Hall, 48 Main St., Spencer.
Regular meeting. Agenda posted on the town Web site.

- Please note:
- Dates, times, and locations are subject to change.
 - Agendas and any remote participation information are posted on official town or district websites.
 - Residents are encouraged to check postings on the day of the meeting.



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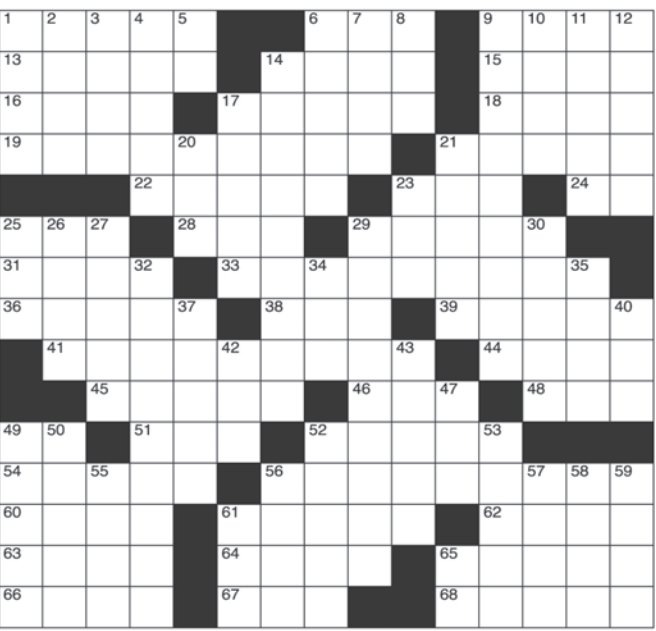
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- CLUES ACROSS**
1. Lakes

6. Electromotive force

9. Invests in little enterprises

13. Longtime Utah Jazz coach

14. Small sailboat

15. Actor Idris

16. Mild yellow Dutch cheese made in balls

17. System that detects objects under water

18. Harsh, grating noise

19. Steward

21. A fencing sword

22. Infections

23. Actress Ryan

24. Sodium

25. Swedish castle

28. A lump of slime

29. African antelope

31. Insurance providers

33. Choosy

36. Ringworm
38. Unpolished

39. Drenches

41. Pant style

44. Son of Noah

45. Spiritual being

46. Upton Sinclair novel

48. Journalist Tarbell

49. Popular sports highlight show

51. Born of

52. Rich tapestry

54. S. China seaport

56. State of being unclothed

60. Surrounded by

61. Residue

62. Away from wind

63. Dried-up

64. Visionary

65. A very large body of water

66. Garden tools

67. Screen type

68. Ancient Scandinavian poet

- CLUES DOWN**
1. Millisecond

2. Spanish city

3. A sudden very loud sound

4. “The Indiana Jones of beer”

5. Tin

6. Sea eagles

7. Volcanic crater

8. Type of coat

9. Women’s apartments in Ottoman palace

10. Divulge a secret

11. Norwegian playwright

12. “It’s a Wonderful Life” director

14. Poisonous perennial plant

17. 18-year astronomical period

20. Clothes

21. Places to sit

23. Family of regulator genes

25. New York ballplayer

26. Impressive in size or scope

27. Jacques ___, French biologist
29. One from the Big Apple

30. Genus of woolly lemurs

32. Songs to one’s beloved

34. Indigenous person of N.E. Thailand

35. Supplemented with difficulty

37. Farewell

40. Investment account (abbr.)

42. One from Utah

43. Begets

47. A male child

49. Break apart

50. Brief appearance

52. Partner to “oohed”

53. A light informal meal

55. Fabric with smooth, shiny surface

56. One billionth of a second

57. Ancient Italian-Greek colony

58. Close tightly

59. Mail out

61. Language

65. Computer characteristic



Cornerstone Bank, Athol Savings Bank finalize merger

WORCESTER — Cornerstone Bank today announced the closing of its merger with Athol Savings Bank (ASB), effective Dec. 31, uniting the two long-standing community institutions. The completed transaction results in an expanded banking network that brings Cornerstone Bank's full suite of digital services to the North Quabbin region while preserving ASB's trusted local identity and five branch locations.

"As of today, our partnership is officially complete, and we are excited to move forward as one organization," said Todd Tallman, CEO of Cornerstone Bank. "This merger strengthens our ability to serve customers with improved technology, expanded products and deeper community investment, while staying true to the values that define both banks."

With the closing, Daniel J. Zona, former President and CEO of ASB, has begun his new role as President of Cornerstone Bank, succeeding the retiring Randal Webber. The Cornerstone Bank Board of Directors has also expanded to include four new members, including Zona, broadening leadership representation across the regions the combined bank now serves.

"This is a meaningful moment for both banks," said Zona. "Our teams share a strong commitment to customers, employees and the communities we call home. With the merger now finalized, we can begin fully delivering the enhanced services and opportunities that come with joining forces."

All ASB employees have been retained, ensuring continuity for customers. Customers can expect

ongoing communications and a smooth transition as Cornerstone and ASB align systems and expand access to digital banking tools, financial planning resources and new product offerings.

Luse Gorman, P.C. served as legal counsel for Cornerstone Bank while Piper, Sandler & Co. served as Financial Advisor. Updike, Kelly & Spellacy, P.C. served as legal counsel for Athol Savings Bank.

About Cornerstone Bank

Cornerstone Bank was formed in 2017, born of a long history of supporting the community, and providing a strong foundation to help people and businesses thrive. Serving Worcester County, Massachusetts, Cornerstone Bank's local presence and community-based banking model enables a unique ability

to deliver outstanding service, with a personal touch. Cornerstone, which is a subsidiary of PeoplesBancorp, MHC, operating independently under its own name and brand, provides the highest level of service and expertise for individuals, businesses, and community organizations with branch locations throughout Central Massachusetts. Cornerstone works to connect customers with opportunities through a broad range of deposit and loan products and services. Built on Trust is not just a tagline, but also one of our guiding corporate values. Whether a business or personal partnership, Cornerstone stands on the foundation that relationships are built on trust. To learn about Cornerstone Bank's personal and business banking offerings, please visit cornerstonebank.com or call 800-939-9103.

Spencer boards, committees seek volunteers as new year begins

SPENCER — As the calendar turns to a new year, the Town of Spencer is beginning its annual process of filling seats on municipal boards and committees, offering residents an opportunity to take a more direct role in local government.

Each year, the Select Board reviews upcoming vacancies and expiring terms across dozens of appointed boards, committees, and commissions that help guide town policy, oversee services, and advise elected officials. The process typically begins in the winter months, with appointments made in the spring for terms that begin July 1.

According to information posted by the Town of Spencer, boards and committees play a critical role in the day-to-day operation of the town. These bodies include groups focused on planning and zoning, conservation, finance, public safety oversight, recreation, housing, and historic preservation, among others.

While specific vacancies can change from year to year, many boards operate on staggered terms, meaning several seats often come up for appointment annually. In addition to full-term appointments, the Select Board may also fill unexpired terms when members step down mid-term due to relocation or personal commitments.

Town officials encourage residents with an interest in civic affairs to consider volunteering, noting that many boards welcome applicants with a wide range of backgrounds. Prior experience in municipal government is not required for most positions, and training is often provided once appointments are made.

Appointments are typically made by the Select Board after reviewing applications submitted to the Town Clerk's Office. In some cases, boards may make recommendations to the Select Board regarding prospective members, but final authority rests with the board of selectmen.

Residents interested in serving are generally asked to submit a letter of interest or complete a volunteer application form indicating the boards on which they would like to serve. Applicants may also be asked to attend a Select Board meeting to introduce themselves or answer questions before appointments are finalized.

In addition to formal boards and committees, Spencer periodically seeks volunteers for ad hoc committees and working groups created to address specific projects or initiatives. These temporary committees may focus on matters such as facility planning, bylaw review, or long-range studies and typically dissolve once their work is complete.

Town officials note that serving on a board or committee can be a meaningful way for residents to contribute to the community while gaining a deeper understanding of how local government functions. Meetings are generally held in the evening, though schedules vary by board.

Information about available appointments, application procedures, and deadlines is posted on the town's Web site and through notices from the Town Clerk. Residents are encouraged to check those listings regularly, as updates are made throughout the appointment season.

Those interested in volunteering may also contact the Town Clerk's Office for guidance on the process and to learn more about the responsibilities associated with specific boards and committees.

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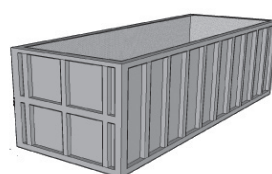
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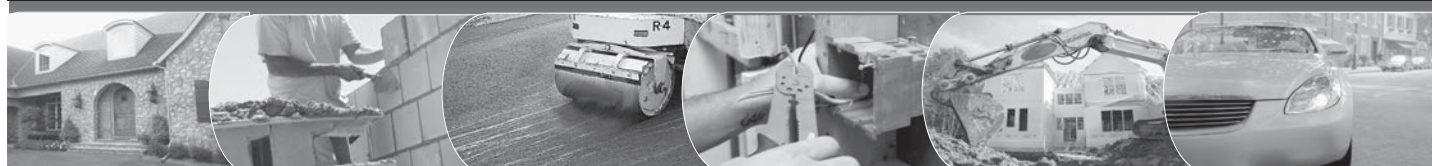
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PRESIDENT AND PUBLISHER

BRENDAN BERUBE
EDITOR

EDITORIAL

A new year
does not
require a
new v
ersion of
ourselves

January has a way of making people feel as though they should suddenly become someone else.

New calendars hang on kitchen walls. Fresh planners open to blank pages. The language of self-improvement arrives right on schedule, urging better habits, bigger goals, and immediate transformation.

There is nothing wrong with wanting to improve. But there is also something to be said for resisting the pressure to reinvent ourselves simply because the calendar has turned.

For many people in Spencer and surrounding communities, the start of the year is not a blank slate at all. It is a continuation of work already underway. Families are juggling jobs, school schedules, rising costs, and winter weather. Local volunteers are still serving on boards and committees. Teachers and students are heading into the heart of the school year, not the beginning.

Progress, in real life, rarely arrives in dramatic January gestures. It tends to show up quietly, in smaller decisions made consistently over time.

That might mean finally making the phone call that has been put off for months. It might mean attending a meeting, lending a hand, or simply staying the course on something already going reasonably well. Sometimes the most meaningful resolution is deciding not to abandon good habits just because they are no longer new.

There is also value in acknowledging what does not need fixing. Communities like ours run on people who show up, often without fanfare, week after week. Parents, grandparents, neighbors, volunteers, and town employees keep things moving not through bold resolutions, but through reliability.

January can be a good time for reflection, but reflection does not require harsh self-judgment. It does not demand dramatic change. It can simply be an opportunity to notice what matters, what is working, and what deserves a little more attention.

As the new year settles in, perhaps the most realistic approach is not to promise transformation, but to recommit to steadiness. To do the next right thing. To keep going.

That kind of resolution may not fit neatly on a checklist, but it tends to last far longer than most.

Letter submission
policy

Letters to the Editor must include the author's name, address, and a daytime phone number for purposes of verification in order to be considered for publication. Only the author's name and the town in which they reside will be published. Letters submitted without all of the required information will not be accepted. It is the sole prerogative of the Editor to determine whether a submission satisfies our requirements and decency standards, and any submission may be rejected at any time for any reason he or she might deem appropriate.

VIEWPOINT
OPINION AND COMMENTARY FROM SPENCER, LEICESTER AND THE BROOKFIELDS

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The people in the arena

To the Editor:

Dec. 16, a catastrophe struck the David Prouty High School when a capped but charged sprinkler main failed, sending thousands of gallons of water rushing through the fully completed and occupied new building. The resulting damage required the evacuation of the school and its subsequent closure prior to the Christmas break.

No one doubts this should not have happened. Whether by human error, product failure or unforeseen circumstances, the fact is, it happened, and from that moment forward, the goal has been to restore the building to full and safe usage in time for students and staff to return by Jan. 5 after the holiday break. All parties, including our general contractor, Fontaine Brothers; our project manager, Colliers International; our architect, Jones-Whitsett; and the wide range of subcontractors on site responded in exemplary fashion.

The critics, haters and naysayers have jumped all over this unfortunate event in typical uninformed and negative fashion. Allegations of shoddy work, inadequate oversight, incompetence and outright malfeasance have all been leveled without any direct knowledge of what actually occurred. They will never let the facts get in the way of their “truth!”

The facts are that proper repairs are being made, there will be no cost to the towns and the building will be completely safe after repairs are completed. No black mold, ruined finishes or other damage, just a building fully restored to excellence. All this coming at a cost of great personal sacrifice by those working exhausting hours and under great pressures to bring everyone back to school on time. The crit-

ics have had their voice but now its time to consider another viewpoint.

I am reminded of a quote from the great Theodore Roosevelt where he said, “It is not the critic who counts: not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles or where the doer of deeds could have done better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually **in the arena**, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood, who strives valiantly, who errs and comes up short again and again, because there is no effort without error or shortcoming, but who knows the great enthusiasms, the great devotions, who spends himself in a worthy cause; who, at the best, knows, in the end, the triumph of high achievement, and who, at the worst, if he fails, at least he fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who knew neither victory nor defeat.”

The good and dedicated men and women working to build our new David Prouty High School are the people in the arena. They are the doers. It is their thoughtfulness, skill, sweat and hard work that, in the end, will provide us all with their high achievement; a wonderful place of learning for our children, grandchildren and generations to come. Critics, those timid and cold souls who know neither victory nor defeat, do not count. You know who you are. I, for one, applaud the people in the arena for working to do great things and daring greatly to succeed. Thank you to our building team and to all who support them.

Respectfully submitted,

MARK CARPENTIER
PROUTY BUILDING COMMITTEE
EAST BROOKFIELD

Trump’s “moral slum of an Administration”

To the Editor:

The very conservative newspaper columnist George Will not so long ago used the above term to describe Donald Trump and the people around him.

Especially after Sunday’s attack in Venezuela and what came before it, I think another phrase even better describes it — “Toxic.” This means poisonous and capable of causing serious harm or death to those around it. This includes our families, our country, our government and our Constitution. You could also use words such as manipulative, malicious, undermining or attacking those that disagree, and causing emotional exhaustion and stress.

We are a country where most Americans — economists say about 80 percent — continue to suffer an affordability crisis, managing from life from paycheck to paycheck, with grocery, housing and medical costs rising higher and higher with higher yet to come.

So what does George Will’s “Moral

Slum of an administration” do? On false facts it attacka Venezuela with a taxpayer cost of something like a \$500 million a month. (Never mind just now how much it will cost us down the road.)

Now the government of Venezuela has few, if any, good qualities but so do many other countries near and far. And despite the Trump administration manipulative statements , unlike the ex-president of Honduras who Trump recently pardoned, Maduro and Venezuela sent relatively few drugs to the USA.

Trump, since he mentioned it 20 times in a recent meeting, rather has a great interest in Venezuela’s oil, and “running the country” directly or indirectly — like we did so expensively (in blood and cost) and badly in, for example, Iraq and Afghanistan.

2026 can and needs to and can be the year when person by person and community by community we turn our country around.

KEVIN KANE
SPENCER

No kings or queens in Mass.

To the Editor:

After watching a “year in review” on one of the local Boston news stations, the reporting of the nation-wide protests of President Trump’s “No Kings” rally raised a few questions with me. What were the policies President Trump was ignoring to be accused of leading like a king? Furthermore, where did President Trump get the idea he could do whatever he wants & ignore the will of the people? To answer the last question, he didn’t have to look any further than good ole Taxachusetts.

The Mass Turnpike was created around 1957, running from New York state to Boston, and was to be paid for by funds collected by users of the Mass. Pike until the project was paid for, which was in the 1980’s. However, to this day tolls are still collected by the State, estimated to be over \$400 million in 2023. When are the legislators of this state going to keep their word & end the tolls? Why is it only the east-west users of Mass. highways paying extra while the majority of Mass. highway users in the greater Boston metro area travel north-south & paying nothing? I guess that’s a question for our kings & queens to avoid for another day.

During his term as governor, Mike Dukakis created what was known as the “Dukakis Surtax,” a tax on top of a tax. Only a Democrat could tax your taxes. This “temporary tax” was created in 1975 to “address a budget shortfall” (too much state spending) & was to be eliminated when the shortfall was taken care of. It only took 11

years and a ballot question initiative to end this “temporary tax.”

Recently here in Mass., the state legislature has passed “Chapter 135 of the Acts of 2024” some the most strict gun control measures in the country without any required statehouse hearings or debates on the subject, as required by law. Many parts of this law are presently being questioned and challenged about their violating the Constitution’s 2nd Amendment. Great way to respect the law abiding residents they work for.

There’s also “Question 1” on the 2024 ballot, which allows the State Auditor to basically audit any State agency including the State Legislature. This question passed by almost 72% of Mass. Voters, but for whatever reason the Legislature is ignoring the will of the State Auditor and the will of the people who voted for this hoping to make transparent the business of this State. For whatever reason the House & Senate Presidents are refusing to “answer to the people” who they work for. These are the very same politicians crying “King Trump” wants to take away your rights!

The most ironic thing with the protestors of “King Trump” is all the national & state leaders who oppose him want to eliminate & erode the rights, laws, privileges & freedoms we now possess & enjoy under the Constitution & President Trump. Remember that the next time you see Democrats on the news defending criminals instead of law-abiding citizens.

JOHN SHOCK
CHERRY VALLEY

Putting
your aging
parents’
wishes first



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As your parents grow older, it may be time to talk with them about financial and aging issues, which may involve difficult conversations.

You’ll want to be careful how you approach this. Mention ahead of time that you’d like to talk to them about their future plans and reassure them that you want to understand their wishes, so their affairs will be taken care of as they would like.

If your parents are agreeable, choose a comfortable location and ask whom to invite (or not invite). Then, think about how to open the conversation, preferably not with what they want to do with their money, as this could be interpreted as your seeking information about your inheritance or being skeptical about their financial decisions. Instead, build a broader discussion about their vision for their aging years. A series of shorter conversations may allow you to cover topics more comfortably rather than trying to solve everything at once.

Try to address these areas:

Health care — Seek to learn whether your parents have established appropriate health-related legal documents such as a health care power of attorney, which gives someone the authority to make decisions about their medical care if they become unable, and a living will, which spells out the extraordinary medical treatments they may or may not want.

Independence — As people age, they may begin to lose their independence. Have your parents considered options for long-term care, such as an assisted living community, a nursing home or a home health aide? If they plan to receive support from family members, do your parents’ expectations match yours?

Financial goals — Focusing on the personal and financial aspects of the legacy your parents want to leave can be a valuable conversation. Have they updated their will or other estate documents, such as a living trust? Have they created a durable power of attorney for a trusted family member to make financial decisions for them if they become incapacitated? Do they have the proper beneficiary designations on their insurance policies, retirement plan and bank accounts? If you position these issues around your parents having control over transferring their assets, rather than curiosity over “who will get what,” you’ll more likely have a productive conversation.

Last wishes — You’ll want to learn whether your parents have instructions in their will about their funerals and last wishes. Express that you or another close family member should know who is responsible for making sure their wishes are met in a timely fashion.

Money, independence, and aging can be sensitive topics. You don’t have to go it alone, though — enlist help from another close family member. Or, if your parents work with an attorney, financial professional or other trusted advisor, consider asking if they’re interested in having them participate in your talks. You might even be able to introduce your parents to one of your advisors.

In any case, keep talking. These conversations can be challenging, but if handled correctly can be of great benefit to your parents and your entire family.

This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor. Please contact Trevor Nielsen, your local Edward Jones Advisor in Sturbridge at 508-347-1420 or trevor.nielsen@edwardjones.com.

Lanterns Along Main Street

There is a particular moment most evenings when the house settles into itself. The dishes are done, the day’s noise has burned off, and the television hums more out of habit than interest. It is in that quiet stretch that I find myself paying attention to small, almost unnoticed things. The kind of things you don’t put on a calendar or make plans around, but that somehow shape a day all the same.

One of those things is light.

Not the bright kind. Not the glare from screens or headlights or store signs blinking at us from every corner. I mean the steady, ordinary light that shows up when it is supposed to. A porch lamp clicked on at dusk. A kitchen window glowing softly against the dark. The faint shine from a streetlight that has been standing in the same place longer than most of us have lived on the block.

I do not remember anyone ever talking about light when I was growing up. It was simply there, or it wasn’t. You flipped a switch, and life went on. But lately I’ve noticed how much comfort comes from knowing it will be there when you expect it.

On winter evenings especially, when the cold presses in early and the daylight gives up before it feels fair, those small lights do real work. They tell us someone is home. They tell us the day isn’t quite finished yet. They give shape to streets that would otherwise feel empty and unwelcoming.

I have walked through town many nights when the sidewalks were quiet and the stores long closed, and I have found myself slowing down without realizing it. There is something grounding about seeing the same lights you saw yesterday, and the day before that, and the year before that. The hardware store sign still glowing. The corner house still lighting the same window. The library’s exterior lamps still shining over the steps, even when the doors are locked.

It is not nostalgia exactly. It is steadiness.

So much of life now feels temporary. Apps update overnight. Buildings change names. Businesses come and go so fast that by the time you remember what used to be there, it has already been replaced by something else. In the middle of all that motion, there is comfort in the things that quietly stay put.

Light does that. It doesn’t ask for attention. It doesn’t demand praise. It simply

LANTERNS
ALONG
MAIN
STREET
By CHARLES

does its job.

I think that is why I have grown more appreciative of routines as I have gotten older. Not exciting routines. Plain ones. The same walk. The same drive. The same chair by the window. These habits act like small lanterns of their own, marking time and place when everything else feels like it is rushing past.

There was a time when I thought routine meant giving up something. Youth, possibility, adventure. Now I see it differently. Routine is what gives those things a place to land. Without it, everything floats.

Even the people we rely on most often show up this way. The neighbor who always waves. The clerk who remembers your name. The librarian who knows where to find what you’re looking for without checking the computer. None of them make speeches. They just show up, day after day, like a porch light at dusk.

I suspect that is how communities really hold together. Not through grand gestures or big announcements, but through small, dependable acts repeated over time. Lights turned on when they are supposed to be. Doors opened when promised. People doing what they said they would do.

There is something reassuring about driving home after dark and recognizing where you are by the pattern of lights alone. The curve in the road marked by three houses close together. The long stretch of trees broken by a single lamp. The center of town announced not by noise, but by glow.

You know where you are. You know you belong there.

I don’t know when I started noticing these things. Maybe it happens slowly, without permission. Or maybe it happens the first time you realize how unsettling it feels when a familiar light doesn’t come on. When a house goes dark for good. When a storefront stays empty longer than expected.

That is when you understand how much those quiet, ordinary lights mattered all along.

So if tonight feels unremarkable, that might be because it is doing exactly what it should. The lights are on. The street looks the way it always has. The town is steady, at least for the moment. And sometimes, that is more than enough.

Donations as of 12/26/2025

12/12/2025	St. Joseph's Abby	\$400.00
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12/13/2025	The Lake Inn at MT. Sunapee, INC.	\$100.00
12/14/2025	Lamoureux Ford	\$1,000.00
12/15/2025	Susan Anderson	\$75.00
12/15/2025	Young's Tree Service	\$500.00
12/16/2025	J. Henri Morin & Son, Inc.	\$150.00
12/16/2025	Donald & Deborah Pellegrino	\$100.00
12/16/2025	Knights of Columbus	\$500.00
12/16/2025	Joseph & Susan LaCroix	\$100.00
12/17/2025	In Memory of Mike	\$100.00

Monetary Donations may be sent to: Spencer Toys for Kids, P.O. Box 186, Spencer, MA 01562.

New, unwrapped toys can be dropped off at: Spencer Fire Dept & ERA Key Realty Services (415B Main St), Cornerstone Bank (Spencer office), Choice Physical Therapy.

If you would like to sponsor a child, please contact Donna at donnaflannery@erakey.net or call 508-885-6336. If you are in need of assistance, applications can be picked up at: Spencer Post Office, Mary Queen of the Rosary Food Pantry, Town clerk's office in the town hall, or ERA Key Realty Services (outside mailbox). You can see updates on Facebook at Spencer Toys for Kids.

WEEKLY POLICE BLOTTER

Spencer
The Spencer Police Department reported the following arrests during the week of Dec. 24-30.

Shane Curtis Chabot, age 35, of Spencer was arrested on Dec. 27 for Negligent Operation of a Motor Vehicle, Leaving the Scene of Property Damage, and Operating Under the Influence (Drugs).

Leicester
The Leicester Police Department reported the following arrests during the week Dec. 25-31.

Benjamin Wayne Larson, age 21, of Leicester was arrested on Dec. 25 for Vandalization of Property.

Francisco Roman Roman, age 61, of Oxford was arrested on Dec. 27 for Failure to Stop for Police, Operating a Motor Vehicle after suspension of license for OUI/CDL/MVH, operating an Unregistered and Uninsured Motor Vehicle, driving at a rate of speed greater than was reasonable and proper, a Number Plate Violation to Conceal ID, a Marked Lanes Violation, Reckless Operation of a Motor Vehicle, a Passing Violation, Receiving Stolen Property valued at \$1,200 or less, and Forgery and/or Misuse of an RMV Document.

An individual whose identity has been withheld from publication received a summons in lieu of arrest on Dec. 27 for Unlicensed Operation of a Motor Vehicle, Negligent Operation of a Motor Vehicle, and driving at a rate of speed greater than was reasonable and proper.



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Members of Spencer Fire & Emergency Services conducted ice rescue training on Thompson Pond Sunday afternoon. Photo courtesy of the department's Facebook page.

Courtesy

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Courtesy

Congratulations to the following students who were selected as November Students of the Month at St. Joseph School — Pre-K 3-year-old: Natalia Santos; Pre-K 4-year-old: Cameron LaFlash; Kindergarten: Robert Thrun; Grade 1: Kaya Sudol; Grade 2: Rayna Parslow; Grade 3: Kamila Biela; Grade 4: Callum Bergman; Grade 5: Luke Zeglen; Grade 6: Cameron Tremblay; Grade 7: Evelyn Macko; Grade 8: Neli Kuznecki. Students are awarded Student of the Month for their outstanding exemplification of Religion, Respect, and Responsibility. Keep up the great work!

Police offer reminders to help residents avoid winter scams

SPENCER — The Spencer Police Department is reminding residents to remain alert for scams and fraudulent activity during the winter months, a time when post-holiday transactions, utility payments, and online activity often increase.

Police departments across the region routinely report an uptick in scam attempts during winter, including phone calls, emails, and text messages designed to pressure residents into providing personal information or sending payments. Common tactics include impersonation of utility companies, government agencies, or delivery services.

Local officials advise residents to be cautious of unsolicited communications that demand immediate action, threaten service shutoffs, or request payment through gift cards, wire transfers, or cryptocurrency. Legitimate agencies do not typically request payment through those methods or pressure residents to act without providing written documentation.

Residents are also encouraged to monitor online purchases and package deliveries carefully. Porch theft and fraudulent delivery notices can occur year-round but may increase following the holiday season when shipping activity remains high.

The department advises residents to avoid sharing personal or financial information over the phone or online unless they have independently verified the source. Suspicious messages should be ignored or reported, rather than responded to.

Anyone who believes they have been targeted by a scam is encouraged to contact the Spencer Police Department through its non-emergency line. Prompt reporting can help law enforcement identify patterns and alert the community to emerging threats.

Police officials note that staying informed and skeptical is often the best defense. Residents are encouraged to share scam warnings with family members, particularly older adults who may be more frequently targeted.

East Brookfield Library hosting baking class

EAST BROOKFIELD — Come learn how to decorate cookies, cupcakes and cakes. We are looking for supplies for this program which include the following. Cupcake wrappers, Cake decorating supplies such as decorating tips, bags, jimmies, cake mixes, cookie mixes, confectioners sugar, food coloring. This program will be held on the last Tuesday of the month at 1:30 p.m., starting in February. Donations for this program are greatly appreciated. Registration is required one week prior to the program. Please speak to Carolann at the library for more details.



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LEGALS

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NOTICE OF ADJUDICATION
AND PUBLIC COMMENT HEARING



Central-Western
MA
Energy Project I
Mass.gov

EFSB 25-01/D.P.U. 25-16 – New England Power Company d/b/a National Grid (Central to Western Massachusetts Energy Replacement Project)

Project Summary and Public Comment Hearing Overview

New England Power Company d/b/a National Grid (“National Grid” or the “Company”) has asked the Energy Facilities Siting Board (“Siting Board”) to approve its proposal to replace two existing overhead 69 kilovolt (“kV”) transmission lines, three associated tap lines, and their supporting structures (“Existing Lines”) with new overhead 115 kV transmission lines, tap lines, and structures (“Rebuilt Lines”) in an existing transmission corridor through Millbury, Auburn, Leicester, Spencer, East Brookfield, North Brookfield, West Brookfield, Ware, Belchertown, Pelham, Shutesbury, Leverett, Sunderland, Deerfield, Conway, Shelburne, and Buckland, Massachusetts (the “Project”). The Project would be capable of operating at 115 kV, although it would initially operate at 69 kV, as does the existing line.

The Siting Board will conduct three hybrid public comment hearings with both in-person and remote participation options, as follows:
Tuesday, January 13, 2026, at 6:00 p.m.

**Leicester Town Hall Gym
3 Washburn Square
Leicester, MA 01524
Deerfield Town Hall Main
Meeting Room
8 Conway St**

Wednesday, January 14, 2026, at 12:00 p.m.

**South Deerfield, MA 01373
Belchertown Town Hall
Auditorium
2 Jabish St
Belchertown, MA 01007**

Wednesday, January 14, 2026, at 6:00 p.m.

Remote attendees: join by using this link – <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87391827695> from a computer, tablet, or smart device. For audio-only participation attendees can dial in at (646) 558-8656 (not a toll-free number) and then enter the Webinar ID: 873-9182-7695.

See additional comment instructions and Severe Weather Notification below.

To provide oral comments at a public comment hearing (in person, on Zoom, or by telephone), notify Yonathan Mengesha at Yonathan.Mengesha@mass.gov or (617) 305-3544. Provide your name, email address, mailing address, and docket number (“EFSB 25-01”) by 5:00 p.m. the **day before the meeting**. You can also sign up in person the day of the hearing beginning an hour before the hearing. Pre-registered commenters will speak first, and others will speak next.

The Siting Board also invites written comments on the Project. Written comments will be most useful to the Siting Board if submitted by **January 28, 2026**. Persons or groups who wish to be involved in the Siting Board proceeding (beyond providing comments at the public comment hearing or in writing) may seek to intervene as a party or to participate as a limited participant. Any petition to intervene or participate must likewise be filed no later than **January 28, 2026**, and must follow the instructions below.

Severe Weather Notification and Alternative Dates

In the event of severe weather, the Siting Board may postpone the public comment hearing(s). Any postponement will be announced on the Siting Board’s Project website (accessible via the URL link or QR code at the top of this notice’s first page) and the Zoom link for the public comment hearing. If any of the hearings is postponed, it will be rescheduled at the location and on the planned alternate date indicated below, and the deadlines for submitting public comments and filing for intervention or limited participant status will be extended as indicated below.

Important Dates:

Leicester Public Comment Hearing: Tuesday, January 13, 2026, at 6:00 p.m.
Alternate: January 28, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. (Belchertown)
Deerfield Public Comment Hearing
Wednesday, January 14, 2026, at 12:00 p.m.
Alternate: January 28, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. (in Belchertown)
Belchertown Public Comment Hearing
Wednesday, January 14, 2026, at 6:00 p.m.
Alternate: January 28, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. (in Belchertown)
Written Public Comment Deadline
Wednesday, January 28, 2026, at 5:00 p.m. (Wednesday, February 11, 2026, at 5:00 p.m. if any of the public comment hearings is postponed)
Deadline to file for intervention or limited participant status
Wednesday, January 28, 2026, at 5:00 p.m. (Wednesday, February 11, 2026, at 5:00 p.m. if any of the public comment hearings is postponed)

Public Review of the Company’s Petitions

A description of the Project, links to the Company’s petitions, attachments and analysis, and periodic updates are electronically available on the Siting Board’s webpage for the Project at Central-Western MA Energy Project I Mass.gov. The Company also maintains a webpage for the Project at <https://www.cmatow-maenergy.com/>. Hard copies of the Company’s petitions and attachments are available for public inspection at the following locations:

Millbury
• Town Clerk’s Office, 127 Elm St., Millbury, MA 01527
• Millbury Public Library, 128 Elm St., Millbury, MA 01527
Auburn
• Town Clerk’s Office, 104 Central St., Auburn, MA 01501
• Auburn Public Library, 369 Southbridge St., Auburn, MA 01501
Leicester
• Town Clerk’s Office, 3 Washburn Sq., Leicester, MA 01524
• Leicester Public Library, 1136 Main St., Leicester, MA 01524
Spencer
• Town Clerk’s Office, 157 Main St., Spencer, MA 01562
• Richard Sugden Library, 8 Pleasant St., Spencer, MA 01562
East Brookfield
• Town Clerk, Memorial Town Complex, 122 Connie Mack Dr., East Brookfield, MA 01515
• East Brookfield Public Library, 122 Connie Mack Dr., East Brookfield, MA 01515
North Brookfield
• Town Clerk’s Office, 215 N Main St., North Brookfield, MA 01535
• Haston Free Public Library, 161 N Main St., North Brookfield, MA 01535
West Brookfield
• Town Clerk’s Office, 2 E Main St., West Brookfield, MA 01585
• Merriam-Gilbert Public Library, 3 W Main St., West Brookfield, MA 01585
Ware
• Town Clerk’s Office, 126 Main Street, Suite F, Ware, MA 01082
• Ware Library, 37 Main St., Ware, MA 01082
Belchertown
• Town Clerk’s Office, 2 Jabish St., Belchertown, MA 01007
• Clapp Memorial Library, 19 S Main St., Belchertown, MA 01007
Pelham
• Pelham Town Office Building, 351 Amherst Rd., Pelham, MA 01002
• Pelham Public Library, 2 S Valley Rd., Pelham, MA 01002
Shutesbury
• Town Clerk’s Office, 1 Cooleyville Rd., Shutesbury, MA 01072
• M.N. Spear Memorial Library, 10 Cooleyville Rd., Shutesbury, MA 01072
Leverett
• Leverett Town Hall, 9 Montague Rd., Leverett, MA 01054
• Leverett Public Library, 75 Montague Rd., Leverett, MA 01054
Sunderland

• Town Clerk’s Office, 12 School St., Sunderland, MA 01375
• Sunderland Public Library, 20 School St., Sunderland, MA 01375
Deerfield
• Deerfield Town Hall, 8 Conway St., South Deerfield, MA 01373
• Tilton Public Library, 71 N Main St., South Deerfield, MA 01373
Conway
• Conway Town Hall, 5 Academy Hill Rd., Conway, MA 01341
• Field Memorial Library, 1 Elm St., Conway, MA 01341
Shelburne
• Town Clerk’s Office, 51 Bridge St., Shelburne Falls, MA 01370
• Shelburne Free Public Library, 233 Shelburne Center Rd., Shelburne Falls, MA 01370
Buckland
• Buckland Town Hall, 17 State St., Shelburne Falls, MA 01370
• Buckland Public Library, 30 Upper St., Buckland, MA 01338

Public Comment Hearings

At each public comment hearing, National Grid will present an overview of the Project. Public officials and members of the public will have an opportunity to ask questions and comment on the Project. The public comment hearings will be transcribed by a court reporter. A recording of each public comment hearing will be posted to the Siting Board’s YouTube channel after that hearing, at https://www.youtube.com/@MaDPU_hearing.

The public comment hearings mark the beginning of a formal, state-level decision-making process in which the Siting Board will; (1) review National Grid’s proposed Project to ensure that it will provide a reliable energy supply with a minimum impact on the environment at the lowest possible cost, pursuant to G.L. c. 164, § 69J; and (2) determine whether the proposed Project is necessary, serves the public convenience, and is consistent with the public interest, pursuant to G.L. c. 164, § 72.

Intervention and Participation

Persons or groups who wish to participate in the Siting Board proceeding beyond providing comments at the public comment hearings or submitting written comments, may seek to intervene as a party or to participate as a limited participant. **“Intervenor” or “Party” Status:** An **intervenor** can participate fully in the evidentiary phase of the proceeding, including participating in discovery (information gathering), participating in the evidentiary hearing, filing a brief, presenting comments to the Siting Board on the Tentative Decision, and appealing the Final Decision.

“Limited Participant” Status: A **limited participant** receives documents during the proceeding and may file a brief and present comments regarding the Tentative Decision to the Siting Board.

Instructions for Filing Written Comments and Requesting to Participate in the Proceeding

Any written comments on the Project and any petition to intervene or to participate as a limited participant in this proceeding must be sent to the following four email addresses: dpufiling@mass.gov; Daniel.W.Keleher@mass.gov; ckeuthen@keeganwerlin.com; and cblaine@keeganwerlin.com. The filing deadline is **January 28, 2026** (unless one of the public comment hearings is postponed, in which case the filing deadline will be February 11, 2026).

The e-mail accompanying the written comment or petition must specify: (1) the docket number of the proceeding (EFSB 25-01/D.P.U. 25-16); (2) the name of the person or entity submitting the request; (3) a brief description of the document; and (4) the name, title, and telephone number of a person to contact with questions about the filing. Any petition for intervention must state and explain the way or ways in which the requester may be specifically and substantially affected by the Project. Any petition for limited participation must describe the manner in which the petitioner is interested and the purpose for which participation is requested.

For more information on the Siting Board’s procedural rules, please see the following link:

<https://www.mass.gov/doc/980-cmr-105/download>.

Accommodation Requests and Language Services Requests

Reasonable accommodation for people with disabilities (e.g., Braille, large print, electronic files, audio format) is available upon request. To request an accommodation, please contact:

Melixza Esenyie - Non-Discrimination Coordinator and Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion,
Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, Human Resources, 9th Floor
100 Cambridge Street, Boston, MA 02114,
eeadiversity@mass.gov, 617-626-1282.

In your communication, state the accommodation you need and why you need it. Provide contact information in case the Coordinator needs more information. Provide one week’s advance notice. The Coordinator will consider but may not be able to fulfill late requests.

Language interpretation services are available upon request to Yonathan Mengesha at (617) 305-3544 or Yonathan.Mengesha@mass.gov. Include in your request the language required and your contact information. To assist us in accommodating your request, please submit it as soon as possible and at least one week before the date of the public comment hearing.

Non-discrimination Notice

The Siting Board does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, disability, age, sex, income, ethnicity, class, disability, religious creed or belief, gender identity, sexual orientation, genetic information, English language proficiency, or ancestry in administration of its programs or activities. See the Siting Board’s Non-Discrimination Notice at: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/efsb-non-discrimination-notice-and-grievance-procedure>.

If you have any questions about this notice or any of the Siting Board’s non-discrimination programs, policies, or procedures or believe the Siting Board has discriminated against you, you may contact Melixza Esenyie (see above for contact information) for more information.

Contact

For further information about the proceeding, please contact the Presiding Officer at the address or telephone number below:

Daniel Keleher, Co-Presiding Officer Energy Facilities Siting Board
One South Station Boston, MA 02110
Daniel.W.Keleher@mass.gov (617) 305-3623

For periodic updates, please visit the Siting Board’s webpage for this proceeding (accessible via the URL link or QR code at the top of this notice’s first page).

Project Description

National Grid asserts that the Project, with projected costs of \$896.9 million, is needed to ensure reliable electric service to approximately 24,000 customers across twelve municipalities in Massachusetts. National Grid states that the Existing Lines were constructed in 1900, reconductored in 2001, and reinsulated in 2020 and that they are among the oldest transmission lines in New England. National Grid contends that the Existing Lines are also among the Company’s worst performing transmission lines, due in large part to the lattice design of the transmission line supporting structures. The Existing Lines, each approximately 67 miles long, pass through the towns of Millbury, Auburn, Leicester, Spencer, East Brookfield, North Brookfield, West Brookfield, Ware, Belchertown, Pelham, Shutesbury, Leverett, Sunderland, Deerfield, Conway, Shelburne, and Buckland. The Company expects to start constructing the Project in April of 2029 and conclude in April of 2035.

The Project consists of: (1) removing existing 69 kV transmission lines and rebuilding them to a 115 kV design within the existing electric transmission right-of-way between the Millbury

#305 Substation and the Deerfield #4 Substation; (2) reconstructing the Quabbin Switch Tap Line, the Shutesbury Tap Line, and the Deerfield #3 Tap Lines; and (3) improving, establishing, and constructing access roads. Future operation of the Rebuilt Lines at 115 kV would require substation upgrades that are not part of the Project. An interactive map of the Project is available at the following link: New England Power Company - National Grid Central to Western Mass.

Route Descriptions

Millbury: The Rebuilt Lines would begin near Branch River at the Millbury Station in Millbury, run along Providence Street, cross the Blackstone River Bikeway intersecting the Providence and Worcester Railroad, and continue along South Main Street (intersecting Woodland Street, Sycamore Street, and Singletary Brook). The Rebuilt Lines would continue north through Elm Street, where

Filing period opens for North Brookfield election

NORTH BROOKFIELD — The North Brookfield Annual Town Election will be held on Monday, May 4.

The last day to submit nomination papers is Monday, March 16 at 5 p.m.

The following offices are up for election:

- Board of Selectmen – 1 seat, 3-year term
- Board of Assessors – 1 seat, 3-year term
- Board of Assessors – 1 seat, 2-year term (to fill a vacancy)
- Board of Assessors – 1 seat, 1 year term (to fill a vacancy)
- School Committee – 2 seats, 3-year terms
- School Committee – 1 seat, 1-year term (to fill a vacancy)
- Water Commissioner – 1 seat, 3-year term
- Water Commissioner – 1 seat, 2-year term (to fill a vacancy)
- Board of Health – 1 seat, 3-year term
- Cemetery Commissioner – 1 seat, 3-year term
- Library Trustees – 2 seats, 3-year terms
- Planning Board – 1 seat, 5-year term
- Planning Board – 1 seat, 4-year term (to fill a vacancy)
- Housing Authority – 1 seat, 5-year term
- Southern Worcester County Regional Vocational School District (Bay Path) – 1 seat, 3-year term

We strongly encourage anyone interested in serving to become familiar with the work and responsibilities of these boards, committees, and commissions.

Nomination papers are available from the Town Clerk's Office.

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Nathan
Age 15
Registration #6472

Nathan is a happy boy who loves to smile and give high fives! He enjoys Dora the Explorer, Mickey Mouse, and Jake and the Neverland Pirates. Nathan likes watching these shows, looking at books featuring his favorite characters, and having those books read to him. He is a talented young artist who loves to draw and color—especially when an adult joins in and draws with him. Nathan also enjoys sensory play with Play-Doh or putty, and he gets especially excited when adults engage with him during these activities. He has a great time building with blocks and Magnaformers, using his creativity to make all kinds of fun structures.

<https://www.mareinc.org/child/22554628740>

If you're at least 18 years old, have a stable source of income, and room in your heart, you may be a perfect match to adopt a waiting child. Adoptive parents can be single, married, or partnered; experienced or not; renters or homeowners; LGBTQ+ singles and couples. As an adoptive parent, you won't have to pay any fees, adoption from foster care is completely free in Massachusetts.

The process to adopt a child from foster care includes training, interviews, and home visits to determine if adoption is right for you. These steps will help match you with a child or sibling group that your family will fit well with. To learn more about adoption from foster care visit www.mareinc.org . Massachusetts Adoption Resource Exchange (MARE) can give you guidance and information on the adoption process. Reach out today to find out all the ways you can help children and teens in foster care.

LOCAL FOOD PANTRIES

BROOKFIELD

Brookfield Ecumenical Food Pantry
St. Mary's Church
4 Howard Street, Brookfield, MA 01506
Distribution: Wednesday 9:30 AM-11 AM:
Saturday 9:30 AM-11AM

CHARLTON

Chip - In Food Pantry
McKinstry Building
37 Main Street, Charlton, MA 01507
Distribution: 3rd Saturday 9 AM-12 Noon

St. Joseph's Church, Charlton
Tuesday 6:30-7:30 p.m.
Wednesday 9-11 a.m.
Everyone is welcome.

LEICESTER

Leicester Food Pantry
St. Joseph-St. Pius X Parish
759 Main Street, Leicester, MA 01524
Distribution: Tuesday 5 PM-7 PM

NORTH BROOKFIELD

St. Joseph's Food Pantry
Located in the church hall at 296 North Main St. North Brookfield
Distribution is the 1st Thursday of the month from 5:00-6:30PM
the 3rd Thursday of the month from 12 Noon-1:15PM
Any questions should be directed to the Rectory office 508 867-6469.
St. Joseph's Food Pantry is a community partner affiliated with the Worcester County Food Bank.

OXFORD

Oxford Ecumenical Food Shelf
Oxford Community Center
4 Maple Road
Oxford, MA 01540
Distribution: Thursday 4:30 PM - 6:30 PM

ROCHDALE

The Lord's Cupboard Food Pantry
Greenville Baptist Church
674 Pleasant St.
Rochdale, MA
Distribution: Every Monday from 12:00 - 2:00 p.m. Open to everyone.

SOUTHBRIDGE

St. John Paul II Parish Food Pantry
279 Hamilton St., Southbridge
Tuesday 3-5 p.m., Wednesday 9-11 a.m.
(508) 765-0245

Southbridge Food Share
Located at Holy Trinity Episcopal Church, lower level
446 Hamilton St,
Southbridge, MA 01550
Email: Southbridgefoodshare.org@gmail.com
Phone: 508-764-6583
Open Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, from 10:00 am to 11:15 am.

SPENCER- EAST BROOKFIELD - RESIDENTS ONLY

Mary Queen of the Rosary Food Pantry
60 Maple St, Spencer, MA 01562
Distribution: Thursday 10 AM-12 Noon

STURBRIDGE

Saint Vincent de Paul Society Food Pantry,
Located in the St. Anne Church basement,
16 Church Street, Fiskdale, MA 01518
Stocked by donations
Contact: 508-347-6398

WEBSTER

Webster-Dudley Food Share
4 Church St #2
Webster, MA 0570
Distribution: Tuesday and Thursday from 8:30 -11:00 am. Open to Webster and Dudley residents.
Please call ahead: 508-943-9171

WEST BROOKFIELD

Sharing Cupboard Food Pantry
First Congregational Church
36 North Main Street,
W.Bookfield, MA 01585
Distribution: Wednesday 10 AM-11:30 AM
Thursday 7 PM- 8 PM



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DUDLEY - 13 OXFORD AVE

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* June Cazeault * Laurie Sullivan* Lori Johnson-Chausse * William Gilmore II * Maureen Cimoch * Bryan Pelletier

*Webster Lake -
302 Killdeer Island*



SORRY, SOLD!

Renovated + move-in ready lakefront home w/1,700+/- sq ft. Open kitchen/dining/living w/ cathedral ceilings + wall of windows. Primary suite w/private bath! 2 add'l bedrooms, 2nd Full bath. Lower level family room w/walkout to water. Wraparound deck, new vinyl railings, terraced yard, sandy beach, professional landscaping. Many updates. \$775,000

*Featured New
Webster Lake Waterfront Listing!!
On Indian Point # 10 "Private Rd"*



Astounding Panoramic Views across mid-section of Webster Lake! Sun drenched from early morning sunrise till sunset! View the lake from all windows. Located on a peninsula providing 2 Shorelines. Fireplaced Living Room! Recent Kitchen & Bath! Primary Bedroom w/walk-in closet. Hardwood Floors. 2 Baths. FHW Oil Heat! Central Air. Garage. \$ 900,000.



WEBSTER - 24 COOPER RD

NEW CONSTRUCTION Craftsman Style Home! Tucked away on Cooper Rd, Webster Lake w/Access at Lakeside Beach/ Boat Ramp. 3rd of 4 Homes being built at this Site. Offers 2,155 SF +/- of Living Area, 7 Rms, 4 BRs, 2-1/2 Baths, 9' Ceilings. Wood Flooring Throughout w/Ceramic Tile Floors in the Baths. Spacious Main BR Suite w/Walk-in Closet & Private Full Bath, Double-Sink Vanity! Finished Lower level walkout w/Slider. Basement-rough plumbed Central AC! Garage \$649,900.

WEBSTER - 19 FIRST STREET



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Webster Lake Waterfront - 31 Bayview!!



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Webster Lake - 53 Colonial Rd



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**Webster Lake Waterfront
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