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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 2, 2026



Courtesy
The Spencer Police Department would like to congratulate Stephen LeBrun on his well-earned retirement after more than 25 years of dedicated service as the department's Court Officer. Stephen's professionalism, reliability, and commitment to the department and the courts have left a lasting impact. His steady presence and dedication to Spencer will truly be missed by his colleagues and all those he worked with over the years. The department thanks LeBrun for his many years of service to the Town of Spencer and wish him nothing but health, happiness, and enjoyment in this next chapter of life. Photo courtesy of the department's Facebook page.

Spencer selectmen render verdict on tabled stop sign requests

BY JASON BLEAU
CORRESPONDENT

SPENCER — A pair of stop sign requests yielded different results during the Dec. 8 meeting of the Spencer Board of Selectmen.

Proposals for all-way stops at the Greenville Road and Chickering Road and Wilson Road and Hastings Road intersections were previously tabled in November. They finally saw some resolution in December when the Board of Selectmen voted to send the Wilson and Hastings request to the Massachusetts Department of Transportation for further study but denied a request to explore new stop signs at the Greenville and Chickering intersection.

Selectman Gary Woodbury expressed two separate opinions on the respective requests, agreeing with the need for stop signs at Wilson and Hastings but arguing against adding new stops at the Chickering and Greenville crossing.

“That’s a hazard waiting to happen. There’s been many close calls,” Woodbury said of the Wilson and Hastings proposal.

However, he felt a change at the other intersection would cause more problems than it would solve, noting that Greenville already has a sign where drivers often fail to stop.

“I’m dead against when you take a right of way. On Chickering Road it is a continuation and now you’re going to make them stop because people can’t stop at Greenville. That’s more of a hazard to me than what’s going on now,” added Woodbury.

The justification for added stop signs at Chickering and Greenville came from a complaint by a local resident who has experienced issues with traffic due to the position of their driveway. Police Chief Michael Befford confirmed that many people miss the stop sign already in place at Greenville which has been the cause of most of the recently recorded incidents at the intersection.

Peter Boria, Spencer’s Utilities and Facilities Superintendent, said that selectmen could decide to send either road sign request to MassDOT who would perform a feasibility study to determine the true need for any new signage at the intersections. Selectmen eventually decided to send the Wilson and Hasting request to MassDOT but voted against the new stop signs at the Chickering and Greenville intersection. Instead, the board considered the origins of the request and asked Boria to explore adding a “blind driveway” sign to the intersection.

“If the board isn’t going to consider an all-way stop there, I think that would be a good fall back to at least do something to help with that issue,” Boria said before the official vote was taken.

Brookfield Water Superintendent resigns

BROOKFIELD — To the residents of Brookfield and the Brookfield water customers, the Water Commissioners unfortunately has to report to you that on Friday, Dec. 19, the Commissioners received a letter of resignation from Dennis Clarke, the Water Superintendent, effective as of Friday, Jan. 2 at 3 p.m.

Clarke has been our Water Superintendent for almost seven years, and in that time he has dedicated his attention on providing exemplary water service to the town, which has been recognized by Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MA DEP) for its outstanding operation of a public drinking water supply system operations. Dennis has been a Water Department employee who has always been ready, willing and able to help or assist any town department. His attitude, attention to detail, dedication, knowledge and physical help, will be sorely missed in Brookfield.

As far as the Water Department is concerned, the Water Commissioners are working diligently to insure that our system continues to be operated and managed in a professional manner with no interruptions in customer water services. The Commissioners would like to thank Clarke for his service, for his knowledge and caring for the Town of Brookfield. It has been a pleasure to work with him, and they wish him the very best in his next job.

Lake Lashaway Association seeks funds for invasive weed treatment
BY JASON BLEAU
CORRESPONDENT

NORTH BROOKFIELD — The residents of Lake Lashaway are turning to local towns to help offset the cost of mitigating invasive plant species as they plan to begin treatment in the spring of 2026.

The Lake Lashaway Community Association has officially put forth a request to North Brookfield for an allocation to help pay for the treatment. The association had previously received funds from East Brookfield, and does not intend taxpayer dollars to cover the entire price tag but is hoping to see North Brookfield join the effort with some kind of financial commitment.

Marco Rodrigues, a resident of the lake and a member of the association’s Board of Directors, told selectmen that the past five years have put an increased focus on water quality and managing invasive weeds. The first survey was performed in 2019, and the first treatment was conducted in 2021. Since then, they have focused on treating specific problem areas, but this past year has exposed a bigger issue that will require a more involved treatment process.

“We did a survey sometime in late spring. As we conducted our survey this past summer, we have realized that the area on the cove at the basing of the Five Mile River before

Turn To LAKE LASHAWAY page A6

LES chorus brings holiday cheer to Leicester Senior Center

LEICESTER — The Leicester Elementary School Chorus recently had the pleasure of visiting the Leicester Senior Center to celebrate the holiday season through music and community connection. Chorus members delighted the audience by singing holiday songs and carols in a joyful sing-along style, creating a warm and festive atmosphere for all in attendance.

The celebration included a special visit from Santa and Mrs. Claus, who arrived in true style aboard a Leicester Fire Truck to the excitement of students waiting outside. Each student received a stocking filled with thoughtful gifts, as well as a beautiful hand-knitted winter hat.

A special thank you goes to the Golden Needles, a knitting group based at the Leicester Senior Center, who generously knitted approximately 100 winter hats for students and staff attending the event. In addition, the group donated hand-knitted mittens to support students in need.

Leicester Elementary School Chorus Director Alyssa Hiltz states, “Our chorus students were grateful for the extra opportunity to represent our school and sing for our community. Caroling with the seniors was a beautiful intergenerational experience, and showed how music connected us all, spreading holiday cheer to students and seniors alike.”

Leicester Elementary School is deeply grateful for the opportunity to share this holiday tradition with the Leicester Senior Center. We value this meaningful partnership and appreciate their continued generosity, support, and collaboration within our school community.



Varnum & Charbonneau Funeral Homes is seeking Funeral Attendants and Funeral Assistants to work independently and with our team on transfers, calling hours, and funeral services.

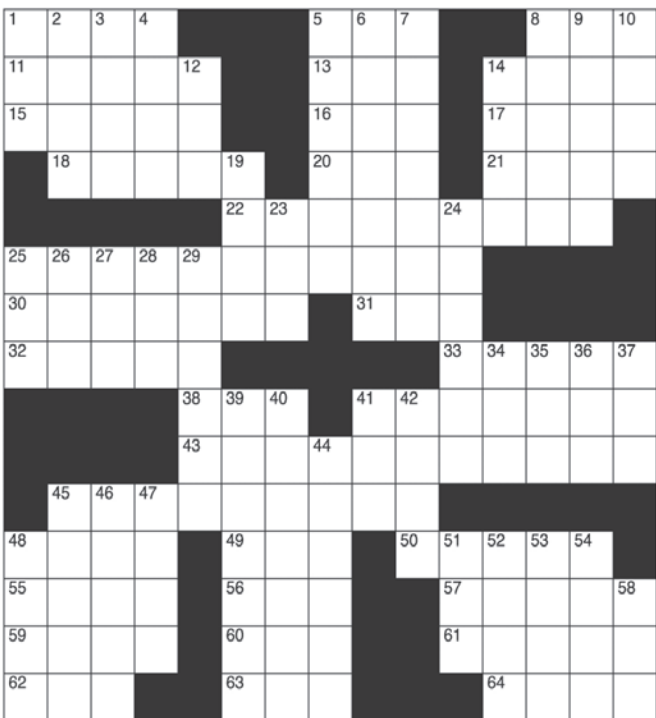
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5. Sunscreen rating
8. Very fast airplane
11. Immune responses
13. "Partner" to feather
14. New England river
15. Longest river in New Guinea
16. Midway between east and southeast
17. Israeli politician
18. Back bones
20. Consumed
21. One you can rely on
22. Dressed up gaudily
25. Representatives
30. Dog breed
31. Pitching statistic
32. Manpower
33. S. Korean entertainer
38. Outsourcing firm
41. Viceroy of Egypt under Turkish rule
43. One who removes antlers from a flower
45. Potluck dish
48. Discount
49. Airborne (abbr.)
50. Cavalry sword
55. Basics
56. Hollywood director Howard
57. Afflicted in mind or body
59. Horsley and Majors are two
60. Midway between northeast and east
61. Spiritual leader of a Jewish congregation
62. Malaysian isthmus
63. Fall back
64. Cheek

CLUES DOWN

1. Former CIA
2. Baseball's best pitchers
3. __ Nui, Easter Island
4. Invests in little enterprises
5. Constant
6. Hobby
7. A place to store food
8. Short-tail marten
9. Burn with a hot liquid
10. Left his heart in San Francisco
12. Swedish krona
14. Legendary actor Connery
19. French cleric
23. Former measure of length for textiles
24. Opaque glassy substance
25. Residue of burned item
26. A place to unwind
27. Japanese honorific
28. Terminus
29. Fails to make a shot
34. Journalist Tarbell
35. College hoops tournament
36. Monetary unit of Macao
37. Of she
39. Spoke ill of
40. Elements
41. Kilocalorie (abbr.)
42. Shades
44. Poem of fourteen lines
45. Pole used in Scottish sport
46. Hollyhocks genus
47. Street name for marijuana
48. Polio vaccine developer
51. Swiss river
52. Prejudice
53. Actor Idris
54. Confederate soldiers
58. Criticize

PUZZLE SOLUTION



Webster Five Foundation sets new annual giving record with \$286,000 in grants to community nonprofits

AUBURN — Capping off a year of meaningful community support, the Webster Five Foundation is proud to announce it has broken its annual record for charitable giving. In 2025, the Foundation awarded a total of \$286,334 through 82 grants to support nonprofit organizations and community-based initiatives throughout the Central Massachusetts region, surpassing last year's total by more than \$21,000.

The Foundation awards grants on a quarterly basis to nonprofit organizations and programs that expand or improve access to education, culture and the arts, social services, charitable activities and community development.

In the fourth and final grant cycle of 2025, the Webster Five Foundation awarded \$50,500 to the following 17 nonprofit organizations:

Abby Kelley Foster House, Inc. — \$2,500 for the Shelter Services Program.

Ascentria Care Alliance — \$2,000 to support its Lighthouse Capital Campaign.

Auburn Youth and Family Services — \$10,000 for operational support.

Care Central VNA & Hospice,

Inc. — \$5,000 to purchase a communication platform called Storicare.

Edward Street — \$10,000 over 4 years to support the Master Teacher Coaching Program.

Entrepreneurship for All (EforAll) — \$1,500 to support EforAll EparaTodos in Greater Worcester.

Fresh Start Furniture Bank — \$1,000 and a match of up to \$1,000 toward its Sweet Dreams Mattress Program.

Horizons for Homeless Children — \$1,000 and a match of up to \$1,000 for the Central Massachusetts Playspace Program.

NEADS, Inc. — \$1,500 toward its Breeding, Raising, Training, Placing and Supporting Service Dogs with Children with Autism and Other Developmental Disabilities programming.

New England Botanic Garden (Worcester County Horticultural Society) — \$2,500 for Project Bloom.

Open Door Arts — \$1,000 to support the Open Door Gallery at the Worcester Art Museum.

Rachel's Table — \$5,000 for its Children's Milk Fund.

VNA Care Network — \$1,000 toward its Community Liaison

Nurses - Supporting Patients with Accessing Home-based Health Care programming.

WCDSA Charitable Foundation — \$1,000 toward WCDSA's Annual Winter Coat Drive.

Worcester Community Housing Resources (WCHR) — \$8,000 for the organization's Resident Services and Support programming.

Worcester Historical Museum dba Museum of Worcester — \$1,500 to support the organization's 2025 Harvey Ball.

YOU, Inc. — \$10,000 to support the Dynamy John S. Laws Youth Academy.

"Central Massachusetts is home to extraordinary nonprofits doing transformative work every day," said Brian Westerlind, President/CEO, Webster Five. "The Webster Five Foundation's record giving in 2025 reflects our ongoing commitment to supporting programs that strengthen our communities and improve quality of life across the region."

Planning Board to convene Jan. 20 for subdivision reviews and other items

SPENCER — The Spencer Planning Board is set to meet at 6 p.m. on Tuesday, Jan. 20 at Memorial Town Hall, according to the town's official public calendar.

The meeting is designated as a public hearing, meaning members of the public may attend and participate in any items that are noticed as hearings. A meeting notice on the town's Planning Board page outlines general procedures for hearings, including how evidence is presented and how participants may offer comment, noting that attendees joining remotely should mute their phones until recognized by the chair.

The Planning Board handles reviews of subdivisions, site plan reviews, and updates to the town's planning documents, including its master plan and zoning bylaws. The board also plays a role in shaping longer-term priorities such as road improvements, complete streets initiatives, and downtown revitalization plans.

The meeting's agenda has not yet been published online, and it is not clear which specific applications or proposals will appear. When released, the agenda will be available through the Minutes & Agendas section of the town Web site, where official planning board agendas and supporting documents are posted.

Residents interested in observing or participating can attend in person or join remotely using the access details listed on the board's notice page.

Spencer
The Spencer Police Department reported the following arrests from Dec. 10-24.

Adam Donald Lacroix, age 47, of Warren was arrested on Dec. 22 for Possession of a Class B Drug (subsequent offense).

Leicester
The Leicester Police Department reported the following arrests from Dec. 11-24.

Alexis Batista Gonzalez, age 24, of Worcester was arrested on Dec. 13 for Failure to Appear Upon Recognizance.

An individual whose identity has been withheld from publication received a summons in lieu of arrest on Dec. 13 for Reckless Operation of a Motor Vehicle, a Marked Lanes Violation, Possession and/or Use of a False and/or Stolen RMV Signature, Obstruction of Justice, Identity Fraud, Unlicensed Operation of a Motor Vehicle, a Passing Violation, and Refusal by the Operator of a Motor Vehicle to Identify Themselves to law

enforcement.

Christopher F. Goodney, Jr., age 33, of Leicester was arrested on Dec. 20 for Unarmed Robbery, Intimidation of a Witness, Juror, Police Officer, or Court Official, Vandalization of Property, Carrying a Firearm while Intoxicated, Threatening to Commit a Crime (Murder), and Withholding Evidence from a Criminal Proceeding.

Michael D. Burnette, age 59, of Southbridge was arrested on Dec. 20 for Possession of a Class B Drug and Attempted Breaking & Entering.

Kyle Daniel Ryan, age 38, of Leicester was arrested on Dec. 21 for Operating Under the Influence (Liquor), Negligent Operation of a Motor Vehicle, and Possession of an Open Container of Alcohol in a Motor Vehicle.

Two individuals whose identities have been withheld from publication received summonses in lieu of arrest on Dec. 23 for Shoplifting By Asportation.

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SPENCER ALMANAC

REAL ESTATE

BROOKFIELD

\$515,000, 26 Town Farm Rd, Audette, Tamara A, to Gorman, Alyssa M, and Berg, Andrew M.

EAST BROOKFIELD

None

LEICESTER

\$515,000, 26 Town Farm Rd, Audette, Tamara A, to Gorman, Alyssa M, and Berg, Andrew M.

NORTH BROOKFIELD

\$425,000, 77 Ward St, Winters, Connie L, to Carlson, Colin, and Chalfoux, Jillian.

\$390,000, 3 Pine Rd, Lopolito, Jamie, to Burdett, Michael.

\$290,000, 82 Grove St, Splaine, Michael, and Splaine, Tabitha, to Best, Robyn L.

SPENCER

\$4,025,000, Town House Ct, Srec Townhouse Propco LLC, to North HI Cap Partners LLC.

\$170,000, 1 Linden St, Spencer Town Of, to Schiltz, Nicholas.

WARREN

\$90,000, 830 Main St, 830 Main Street Rt, and Mundell, Louise A, to Colonial Stone Inc.

WEST BROOKFIELD

\$70,000, Gilbertville Rd (off), Legacy Land Co LLC, to Delvalle, Ingrid, and Delvalle, Miguel.

OBITUARIES

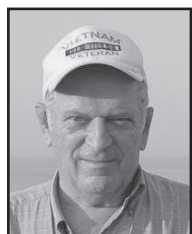
Rita D. Ramaska, 96



N O R T H B R O O K F I E L D - Rita D. (Shamarack) Ramaska, 96, passed away at home on Friday, December 19, 2025. She was born in Millbury, MA, and was a graduate of Millbury High School. Rita married Joseph Ramaska in 1950 and they lived in North Brookfield for many years. Rita worked as a secretary for various businesses in the Worcester area until she retired. Rita leaves her children Robert, Thomas & his wife Sharon, Karen & her husband Richard, Joanne & her husband Patrick and Roxane & her partner Lisa; 6 grandchildren; 8 great grandchildren; many nieces,

nephews and a good friend and helper to her, Linda. She was predeceased by her husband Joseph; a daughter Nancy who died a day or two after birth; a son Anthony who died in 1980; a daughter in law Edith who died in 2019; 4 sisters and 2 bothers. She was a longtime communicant of St. Joseph's church in North Brookfield. She loved her family and her family loved her. She also enjoyed bingo and word search books. The funeral for Rita was held on Tuesday, December 30, 2025 with an 11:00AM Mass in St Joseph's Church 296 N. Main St North Brookfield. Please omit flowers. Burial will be private for the family in the parish cemetery. Arrangements are under the care of Pillsbury Funeral Home 44 Gilbert St North Brookfield.

Robert L. Potvin



W E S T B R O O K F I E L D - Robert L. Potvin of West Brookfield, MA passed away peacefully at Brookhaven Rest Home on December 18, 2025.

Deeply saddened by his passing, Bob leaves behind his beloved sons Benjamin Potvin and wife Allison, Joshua Potvin and wife Heidi, adored grandchildren Chase, Lily, Madeline, Evelyn and Savannah, as well as sister Janet Morin (Potvin) and husband Raymond and nieces/nephews Susan, Steve, Rob, Tricia and Debbie Boyd.

Bob was the son of Joseph E. Potvin and Rita I. Potvin (Poulin) of North Brookfield, MA. The Potvin family was hardworking and resilient. Joe was a humble builder of homes, while Rita was a housewife who kept everything in perfect order.

Bobby was a very inquisitive child. Stories reveal that he was full of energy and always asked questions. It was evident at a very early age that Bobby had an adventurous spirit. Bobby's favorite hobbies were collecting stamps, coins and pocket watches. As a teenager Bob worked at Cooke's garage where he became infatuated with Rolls Royce automobiles. Bob was very civic-minded, being named Boys State Representative in 1959 and American Legion Good Citizen in 1960. Bob graduated from North Brookfield High School in 1960 and earned an associate's degree from Worcester Junior College in 1962.

In August of 1962, Bob boarded a Greyhound Bus for Missouri. Sight unseen, he attended St. Louis University earning a bachelor's degree. Bob's ambition was to become a meteorologist, like his idol Don Kent, however he had to change majors from Meteorology to Geography because "I couldn't differentiate equations".

In early 1964 Bob lobbied Senator Ted Kennedy's office to secure a position as a US Park Ranger at Cape Cod National Seashore in Provincetown, MA. Bob spent the summer in uniform patrolling the sand dunes in a Dodge Power Wagon. This is when Bob developed a love for Cape Cod.

Later the following year Bob received draft papers to serve in the United States Army. A frightening proposition, but Bob embraced the opportunity to serve his country.

After completing basic training at Fort Dix and specialist training at Fort Sam Houston, Bob received orders for Vietnam. Bob spent 12 months stationed in Vung Tau. Bob achieved E5 rank and was part of the medical unit serving as an X-Ray technician. Bob spent a week of military R&R on the beach in Melbourne, Australia which is when he fell in love with the land down under.

After being honorably discharged from the US Army, Bob returned home to North Brookfield. He recounted how his father broke down crying when he walked through the door upon his return from Vietnam. As Bob settled into civilian life, he began working as a claims adjuster for Aetna Life & Casualty. Shortly after he met Beverly Roteth from Webster, MA. They married in April 1969, and a new adventure began.

Benjamin was born first, followed by Joshua a few years later. As Bob's career advanced, the family moved to Scituate, MA and then Windsor, CT. After 10 successful years at Aetna, Bob became restless and was ready for a new adventure. It was time to return home again to fulfill his dream of being an antique dealer. With Bev, Ben and Josh by his side, the Potvin family settled at The Blaire House on Route 9 in West Brookfield, MA.

Bob was exhilarated to pursue his entrepreneurial dreams. In 1979 "Blair House Antiques" was established and his dream became a reality. Bob found immediate

success trading silver and gold. Bob was a hustler, traveling to New York City multiple times per week to sell gold because "they paid the highest prices".

Bob's business evolved to "Potvin Auction & Realty". Bob graduated from Missouri Auction School (1981) and Indiana University's Certified Auctioneer Institute (1987). For over 20 years Potvin Auction & Realty prospered. Specializing in estate liquidation, auctions and appraisals. Bob had expert knowledge of antiques, US stamps and coins, clocks and watches, and American collectibles. Bob's auctions were a family affair. Bev, Ben, Josh, Janet, Ray, nieces, nephews, neighbors and friends were part of the team. As auctioneer, Bob was a showman. With a variety of hats and an auctioneer's gavel in hand, he entertained the crowd. Bob loved auctions and said bidders get "auction fever" creating a buying frenzy.

Bob always recognized his family as his greatest accomplishment. Through the 1980's and 90's Bob made it a priority to show the world to Ben and Josh. Potvin family vacations were frequent and often included attending Major League Baseball events - World Series (1987, 1992, 1993) and All-Star games (1988, 1991, 1993). A highlight of Bob's life was taking the entire family (including mother Rita) to Sydney, Australia in 1990. This was the 2nd of 3 trips Bob took to Australia.

Bob always stressed the importance of getting an education. Ben and Josh both graduated from Seton Hall University in South Orange, NJ. Bob took great pride in their "Big East education" and passionately cheered for the Pirates basketball team over the past 30 years.

The greatest joy of Bob's life was being a grandfather. This grounded him and gave him purpose. Pops adored Chase, Lily, Madeline, Evelyn and Savannah. He referred to them as his "rock stars" and showered them with praise. He never missed an opportunity to recognize their accomplishments. When recently asked by a healthcare professional "what gives you joy?", Pops reflected for a moment and said with a smile, "giving my grandchildren money". That was how Pops expressed his love. With a smile he'd subtly slip the kids a \$50 or \$100 bill. Pops had a deep bond with his grandchildren and will be dearly missed.

As travel became challenging, Bob found inspiration in blogging. For nearly 20 years Bob wrote a daily blog recounting historical events, local landmarks, past adventures and daily activities. This was a window into his soul and gave Bob the audience that he needed. Bob's stories were almost too far-fetched to be true, but every word he spoke was the truth. No exaggeration needed.

Bob lived an incredible life, and he knew it. He lived every day to its fullest. He traveled the world and back, had lifelong friendships with people from around the world, had interactions with multiple US Presidents and dignitaries, but there was no place he'd rather be than The Brookfields.

The Potvin family would like to express their heartfelt gratitude to everyone who treated Pops with dignity and respect in recent years, especially friends at WB Post Office, Country Corner, American Legion Post 244, Mass General Cancer Center and Brookhaven Rest Home.

Friends and family were invited to attend calling hours on Saturday, December 27, 2025 from 9:30am-11:30am in Pillsbury Funeral Home 44 Gilbert St North Brookfield. The funeral followed at 11:30am in the funeral home. Burial will be in the spring at St Josephs Cemetery, North Brookfield.

Spencer Highway Department focuses on winter road safety and services

SPENCER — With colder temperatures and winter storms already affecting central Massachusetts, the Spencer Highway Department is continuing its seasonal snow and ice operations and reminding residents of expectations for road safety and winter maintenance. The department's responsibilities include plowing public roads, treating surfaces with salt and sand, and maintaining related infrastructure throughout the winter season.

Under its published snow and ice procedures, the Highway Department monitors weather forecasts to determine when to begin pretreatment of streets. The early application of salt is intended to prevent snow and ice from bonding to the pavement surface, improving traction as conditions develop. When snowfall reaches about two inches or more, or as determined by weather conditions, crews begin plowing according to predetermined routes that prioritize main and high-volume roads.

After storms, crews continue to monitor road conditions for icy patches and drifting snow, applying additional sand or salt as needed. The department also reminds residents that plow operators are not permitted by state law to clear private driveways, and efforts concentrate on public ways to ensure safe access for all motorists.

The Highway Department's broader mission includes pavement maintenance, stormwater management, and sidewalk upkeep in addition to winter operations. Its work supports year-round public safety and the overall condition of Spencer's road network.

Officials urge drivers to plan for longer travel times, maintain safe distances from other vehicles, and reduce speeds on snow-covered or icy roads. Historically, departments like Spencer's begin winter operations by ensuring vehicles and equipment are prepared before storms and that salt and sand supplies are stocked to handle inclement weather events efficiently.

Residents are encouraged to be patient during active snow removal and to avoid unnecessary travel during severe conditions. Additional information about winter road policies, including sand and salt availability for residents, is available through the Highway Department's pages on the town website.

P.E.T. of the Week

Sponsored by Leicester Veterinary Clinic, LLC

Meet Loki

Loki requires a stable, low-stress home. He will not succeed in a busy, chaotic, or frequently changing environment. He needs time to build trust, but once that trust is established, he forms a strong bond and is very affectionate with his person. Loki is not a small dog—he weighs around 70 pounds and doesn't always realize his size. For his age, he is very active and physically strong. Loki enjoys daily walks and will let you know when it's time to go. Despite being around 8 years old, he remains strong on leash and needs a confident handler. He loves hiking, tug-of-war, and spending time outdoors especially sunbathing in the summer. Loki's requirements: Adult-only household, No other pets, Fully fenced yard (required), Stable, low-stress environment, Patient, experienced adopters willing to move at his pace. Multiple meet-and-greets and a home visit required to ensure the right fit for his forever home. Loki does best with routine, clear boundaries, and limited visitors. Given time, consistency, and the right match, he becomes a devoted companion who bonds closely with his person. Loki is not for everyone—but for the right home, he will be an incredibly loyal dog.



Second Chance Animal Services
www.secondchanceanimals.org
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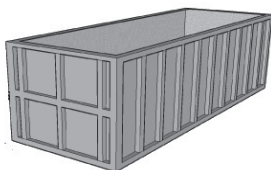
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FRANK G. CHILINSKI
PRESIDENT AND PUBLISHER

BRENDAN BERUBE
EDITOR

EDITORIAL

Resolutions worth keeping

The arrival of a new year brings with it a familiar ritual. We pause, look back, and promise ourselves that this time will be different. We will eat better. We will worry less. We will finally tackle that project we have been putting off since last winter, or the one before that.

New Year’s resolutions have a mixed reputation. Many do not last past January. Some are abandoned quietly, without ceremony, as daily routines reassert themselves. But that does not make the practice itself pointless. In fact, there is something deeply practical about the instinct to reset, to mark time not only by calendars but by intention.

In small towns, resolutions tend to be less dramatic and more grounded. They are shaped by weather, work schedules, family obligations, and the realities of living in close-knit communities where people depend on one another more than they may realize. Here, a resolution does not need to be grand to matter. It only needs to be sincere.

Perhaps the most valuable resolutions are not the ones focused on self-improvement alone, but those that consider how we show up for others. Patience is a worthy goal. So is listening. So is the quiet decision to assume good intent, even when opinions differ or tempers flare. These are not resolutions that lend themselves to tracking apps or checklists, but they have a lasting effect on the tone of a community.

The new year also offers an opportunity to resolve to stay engaged. Civic life does not run on autopilot. Town meetings, school discussions, volunteer boards, and local organizations rely on participation. It is easy to feel disconnected or to assume that someone else will take care of things. A resolution to pay closer attention, to ask questions, or simply to show up can strengthen the fabric of local life in ways that are not immediately visible but deeply felt over time.

There is also value in setting realistic expectations for ourselves. The pressure to reinvent everything at once often leads to frustration. Progress, whether personal or communal, tends to happen incrementally. A single habit adjusted, a single conversation handled better than before, a single commitment honored consistently can do more than an ambitious plan that collapses under its own weight.

The turning of the calendar is also a reminder that time is shared. We move through the year together, through snowstorms and spring mud, summer heat and autumn routines. Resolving to notice one another more, to offer grace when possible, and to lend a hand when needed reflects an understanding that no one navigates the year alone, no matter how independent they may seem.

As the year begins, it may help to think of resolutions not as rigid promises but as guideposts. They can be revisited, adjusted, and renewed. They can be quiet. They can even be invisible to anyone else. What matters is that they point us toward the kind of days, and the kind of community, we want to help shape.

The new year does not demand perfection. It asks only for intention. That is a resolution worth keeping, long after January has passed.

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

An almost forgotten creed

To the Editor:

During the past few weeks, we thought of a historic American civics reflection which is pertinent for all of us to ponder, particularly in light of recent domestic and worldwide events — it is titled “The American Creed” by William Tyler Page, written by him in 1917 near the end of World War I and adopted by Congress on April 3, 1918. It reads:

“I believe in the United States of America as a government of the people, by the people, for the people, whose just powers are derived from the consent of the governed; a democracy in a republic, a sovereign nation of many sovereign states; a perfect

union, one and inseparable; established upon those principles of freedom, equality, justice, and humanity for which American patriots sacrificed their lives and fortunes. I therefore believe it is my duty to my country to love it; to support its Constitution; to obey its laws; to respect its flag; and to defend it against all enemies.”

As we prepare to celebrate our 250-year legacy as a democratic republic, may we continue to honor and cherish the freedoms that we have and remember all of those who have served and sacrificed to preserve our democracy!

CHARLIE BRYER
BROOKFIELD

Seeking, finding, enjoying happiness in 2026

To the Editor:

My personal definition of happiness is simple, upbeat, positive, realistic, and achievable for the new year. If we watch and enjoy each sunrise in the east, perhaps evoking feelings of renewal, hope, peace of mind and gratitude; putting each of us in an uplifting mood, ready to tackle new challenges; it gives each of us a fresh start to seize the opportunities of each moment of each day. It generates a feeling of joy when setting and achieving realistic personal and professional goals: Assisting others in need, like running errands for them, volunteering your time, donating money and providing emotional support. A plethora of needs are available for us to assist others daily.

Being very thankful for our families, our health, education, reading inspiring books, listening to uplifting music: These opportunities and events are part of our happiness journey in life.

Focus on purpose, connections with people, perform acts of kindness and realize achievements in the new year. Slow down, connect with others.

Establish and practice a realistic, healthy exercise program that produces positive

results.

Yes, finding and enjoying happiness in 2026 is to have our government, both House and Senate, to work together passing legislation, achieving goals that benefit all of us.

To immediately end the war between Russia and Ukraine with no concessions.

To have Russia return all children they captured, back to their homes in Ukraine, the first month of the new year.

To end all conflicts and wars in our universe.

We have all the tools, knowledge, expertise and ability to produce, achieve whatever we desire in our nation.

At the end of each day in this great nation of ours, the United States of America, as we view each sunset in the West, it is up to each of us to establish, monitor and enjoy the positive results of our individual goal for 2026. Happiness is what we desired and asked for!

Seek, find, hold, embrace, secure, enjoy your goals for happiness in 2026.

DONALD L. GAUDETTE, SR.
SOUTH HADLEY
FORMERLY OF BROOKFIELD

God is giving us space

To the Editor:

The Spencer New Leader prints articles by the same people over and over, but I would like to get two cents in. Here it goes:

Christianity is a reality, a 24 hour, seven days a week lifestyle whose symbols of the cross and fish seem to offend the ungodly. Christians have many enemies, foreign and domestic, whose purpose is to eliminate our way of life and impose their doctrines on the U.S. Christians and Jews are not second class citizens.

Our leaders talk to us with euphemisms, half-truths and double talk, which are tools used to instill in the citizenry deceitful ideas for the future harvest. Compromise is a tool of the ungodly.

Where is the separation of church and

state? Justice for all or for the decadent few who use

compromise to their advantage?

As we witness global society becoming more godless and humanistic, do not be led into thinking that God approves evil or won’t eventually intervene. The delay is simply that God, in his great mercy, love and kindness, is giving both nations and individuals space to repent and seek him before his end time judgement is carried out. The United States of America, in God we trust.

P.S.: please read John 8:31-32.

Sincerely,

DENIS LEO
SPENCER

Is it too late?

To the Editor:

How many of you believed that the purpose of DOGE was to ferret out government waste in order to reduce spending and fund needed programs? How many thought that we no longer needed clean restrooms or trails open in the national parks? Consumers no longer need protection from fraud? What are your thoughts on the wasteful spending for USAID, that will bankrupt 75 percent of the farmers who invested in supplies and equipment to support? How about the over 700,000 the shutdown has already starved, or the donated pharmaceuticals drawing \$10,000. monthly storage fees? Or the cost to incinerate 500 tons of food instead of delivering it? With all these cuts, you would think the deficit might just go away.

literate employees, because we are seeing victim names only any redactions of everything else, and are still not seeing the required files.

Remember all that push for efficiency? The administration has become efficient in doling out you money to contracts with Musk and Don Jr., They have determined that prosecuting their political enemies is good for the economy of the lawyers for the innocent victims they are wasting your money to prosecute. The see logic in deploying a carrier group to blow up little wooden boats full of cocaine piloted by men whose families are held at gun point to get them to convince them to go You did not think any drug lords were in those boats did you? Why is Christy Noem announcing oil tanker ship seizures? Swiping the oil for the homeland?

It is a longstanding tradition, or maybe even a law, that presidents memorialized on ships, currency, stamps and agencies, are deceased. I will accept Trumps name appearing, as soon as he meets the criteria. Trump has defined immunity from prosecution as immunity from following any laws, even those he swore to protect and defend. When his answer to Welker’s questioning if he would follow the constitution, was “I will have to ask my lawyers,” he clearly believes dictatorship to be his right. I hope we can last until his third and final impeachment

KEN KIMBALL
BROOKFIELD

New Year’s financial resolutions: Making them stick



FINANCIAL FOCUS

TREVOR NIELSEN

As the calendar flips to a new year, millions of Americans pledge to improve their financial lives. But without a concrete plan, those well-intentioned resolutions often fade quickly.

Financial goals consistently top the list of New Year’s resolutions. A 2025 CFP Board study shows that financial resolutions are prominent, with saving more money (45 percent) and reducing debt (32 percent) ranking among the top three goals.

Unfortunately, most resolutions don’t last. A 2023 Forbes Health poll found that over half of people give up on resolutions by the four-month mark, and only 1 percent make it the full year.

The challenge isn’t a lack of desire for change. People may set the same resolution year after year, revealing a disconnect between intentions and action. Or it may be that they try to tackle too many goals at once, or aim higher than is realistic, setting themselves up for disappointment.

Set smart financial goals. Before crafting your action plan, consider which financial priorities matter most to you. If you need ideas, here are some areas where you may want focus in 2026:

Regularly review your financial goals and track progress toward meeting them

Increase your 401(k) contributions or max out your IRA and/or HSA contributions

Pay down debt strategically and negotiate lower interest payments

Build an emergency savings fund of six to 12 months

Save more consistently

Be specific. Vague resolutions like “save more money” rarely succeed. Instead, it can help to make goals specific and measurable. For example, rather than making a resolution to “start an emergency fund,” commit to a specific goal, such as, “I will put \$100 a month into an emergency fund.”

This shift from general to specific transforms wishful thinking into actionable steps. When goals are attainable, it’s easier to track progress and stay motivated.

Find an accountability partner. Don’t go it alone. Having someone to check in with can help you stay on track. This could be a spouse, friend or family member who shares similar goals.

Consider working with a financial advisor who can help you create a realistic plan, monitor your progress and adjust strategies as needed. A professional can provide expertise and accountability, making it easier to stay on track throughout the year.

Start small and build momentum. Rather than overhauling your entire financial life all at once, focus on one or two priority areas. Identify where the largest gap exists between your current situation and where you want to be, then concentrate your energy there.

Breaking larger goals into smaller, manageable actions makes them less overwhelming and more achievable. Each small win builds confidence and momentum for tackling the next challenge.

The new year offers a fresh start and renewed motivation to improve your financial health. With specific goals, a solid action plan and the right support system, this could be the year your financial resolutions finally stick.

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.

Closing out 2025

As we enter the new year, let's close out the latest 2025 auction news, beginning with a rare baseball card heading to auction.

T206 cards were produced by tobacco companies from 1909 to 1911 and given away as premiums. Honus Wagner played during that time and was a first ballot Hall of Famer who "hit .300-or-better for 15 straight seasons from 1899-1913," according to the Hall of Fame. In that span, Wagner won eight National League batting titles, led the NL in doubles seven times, stolen bases five times and RBI four times," according to the Hall of Fame's website. His baseball card is the rarest in the set and PSA (a card grading company) has graded only 36 Wagner cards, according to Sports Collectors Daily. Some have speculated that Wagner didn't want his likeness associated with tobacco products and that he wanted production of his card halted. However, Hall of Fame research showed that Wagner actively promoted other tobacco products. The card that was recently found came from a collection that had been handed down through a family after a collector passed away in 1974. The collector would have been 11



ANTIQUES,
COLLECTIBLES
& ESTATES
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**WAYNE
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around the time when the cards were being placed in cigarette packages. Even though the card graded at only a 1 out of 10, it has a \$1,000,000 starting bid. The last PSA Honus Wagner graded 1 card sold for \$3.1 million in 2022 and this most recent card is expected to bring more.

In the rock and roll world, a rare photo went on the auction block recently. David Bowie's "Aladdin Sane" album cover is "one of pop music's most iconic images," according to an Antique Trader article. The photo depicts Bowie with the lightning bolt design on his face that appeared on the album cover. Brian Duffy took the photo. His archive website says his "cutting-edge photography documents the vibrancy of 'the Swinging '60's' London scene when the city was at the height of cool." The photo sold for £381,400 (about \$515,481 USD).

As you are probably aware, the government stopped minting pennies in November. The U.S. Mint partnered with the government to auction some of the last pennies minted. The pennies had an "Ω" (Omega) mark designating them as being some of the last that were made. Benjamin Franklin is credited with designing our country's first penny, the Fugio Cent. Fugio means "I flee" in Latin. The reverse had a 13-link chain that symbolized the 13 original colonies. The front had the words "Mind your business" below a sundial. They were struck in different locations in New Haven, Conn. The U.S. Mint pro-

duced its first penny in 1793. The coin is called the "Flowing Hair Cent" because of the image of the woman on the front. The reverse has a wreath design with the words "One Cent." The most expensive set in the auction contained the last 3 pennies that were struck. Two pennies were made with the typical zinc and copper composition from the Philadelphia and Denver Mints along with a .9999 fine 24-karat gold penny. It brought \$800,000. Along with the other Omega pennies in the auction, the sale brought in \$16.76 million. Meanwhile, a local grocery store recently offered two cents for every penny with pennies getting harder to find. Hopefully no one turned in an Omega penny.

Our single-collector Civil War auction will be starting soon. Our following sale will include fine jewelry, sterling silver, art, and other antiques and collectibles. We'll be running a major sale with sports cards and memorabilia in the summer. We are accepting consignments for our two next sales. Please visit our Web site, [https://centralmass](https://centralmassauctions.com)



tralmassauctions.com, for links to upcoming events.

Contact us to consign items or for auction information at: Wayne Tuiskula Auctioneer/Appraiser Central Mass Auctions for Antique, Collectibles Auctions and Appraisal Services info@centralmassauctions.com or (508-612-6111).

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Operation Undercover a great success

To the Editor:
Spencer's "Operation Undercover" was a great success. Marcus Torti and his brother Frank, Santa's helpers, delivered 1,163 pairs of underwear and socks to Abby's House, Jeremiah's Inn and Mass Veterans Shelter on Dec. 22.

Thank you so much for the generous donations.
We wish you a happy and healthy New Year.

ELIZABETH MCPHERSON
SPENCER

Bizarre math

To the Editor:
The day after President Trump's Dec. 18 televised speech, Fox News asked Secretary of Commerce Howard Lutnick to explain the claim that Trump has made, again and again, about cutting drug prices 400, 500, or even 600 percent. This speech wasn't the first time that Trump claimed multi-hundred percent savings.

As we know, that's nuts. A 100 percent drop would make the drugs free. Anything greater and the drug makers would be paying you to please take their drugs. E.g., a \$10 drug, with a 600 percent price reduction, would pay you \$50. The math is \$10 minus the discount, which is six times \$10. Trump ran the fraudulent Trump real estate organization. Unless he failed elementary school, he should know about percentage discounts. Lutnick is Secretary of Commerce. Does he know anything about "commerce?"

Trump realizes that if he suggests a 10 percent discount, then 20 percent sounds better. Why stop there? That's how he gets to 600 percent! He is playing the role of a carnival barker, trying to get the crowd to buy in.

Secretary Lutnick twisted himself into a

pretzel trying to explain Trump's math. He said, "It's 700 percent higher [than] before, it's down 700 percent now, right? So \$13 would have to go up 700 percent to get back to the old one," Lutnick continued. "So, it all depends on when you look at it." Nope, that's nuts.

If something was \$10 and went down to \$5, it's 50 percent cheaper. If it goes from \$5 to \$10, it's 100 percent more expensive. A percentage is always relative to the previous price. This numbskull Lutnick wants to convince us that percentages don't work the way we learned in school.

Does Trump think that we are just a bunch of uneducated rubes? I bet we will hear the hundreds (thousands?) percentage savings claims again and again. Is anyone buying it?

Oh my god, I knew it! On Dec. 22, Trump announced that drug prices were down "1,000 percent, 1,200 percent, 1,300 percent, and even 1,400 percent (in some cases)!" That didn't take long! Will he reach a million percent before the year is out?

ALLAN JOHANNESEN
LEICESTER

Lanterns Along Main Street

LANTERNS ALONG MAIN STREET By CHIPPY

There was a time when winter felt like something to be endured. You shoveled, you complained, you waited for it to be over. Spring was the reward, and winter was simply the price you paid to get there. Somewhere along the way, that changed for me. I do not know exactly when it happened, but at some point, I stopped wishing the season away. Maybe it came with age, or maybe it came from realizing how many winters I had already watched pass by. Either way, I have learned that winter is not an obstacle. It is a pause. And pauses, I have found, are underrated.

This part of the year does not demand much from us beyond patience.

It asks us to move a little slower, to plan a little better, to pay attention to the small discomforts so they do not become big problems. Put the boots by the door. Keep the flashlight handy. Leave early.

Those habits spill over into other parts of life. Winter teaches you to prepare quietly instead of reacting loudly. You learn to anticipate rather than rush. You notice things you might otherwise miss because you are not charging ahead at full speed.

I see it in how people interact, too. Conversations tend to be shorter, but often more sincere. There is less time for small talk and more appreciation for getting straight to the point. You ask how someone is doing and actually wait for the answer. You hold the door because you know what cold feels like. You nod to a stranger because it feels wrong not to.

These are not dramatic shifts, just subtle ones. But subtle changes shape the tone of a community more than any big announcement ever could.

I have also noticed that winter has a way of leveling things out. It does not care who you are or what you do. Everyone slips a little. Everyone misjudges the ice at least once. Everyone learns humility the hard way, usually in their own driveway.

There is something oddly comforting about that shared experience.

We talk a lot about resilience these days, usually as something to aspire to. Winter reminds us that resilience is mostly practical. It is checking the weather. It is calling to make sure someone got home safely. It is accepting help without making a production out of it.

It is knowing when to stay put. I think that is why small towns handle winter as well as they do. Not perfectly, but together. Plows run. Neighbors check in. Life continues, just at a slightly quieter volume.

And when the snow finally melts, we will pretend we did not appreciate any of it. We will complain about the mud and the potholes and the long wait. But deep down, we will know that winter gave us something we did not realize we needed.

A pause. A reset. A reminder that slowing down is not the same as falling behind. Sometimes, it is exactly how you keep your footing.

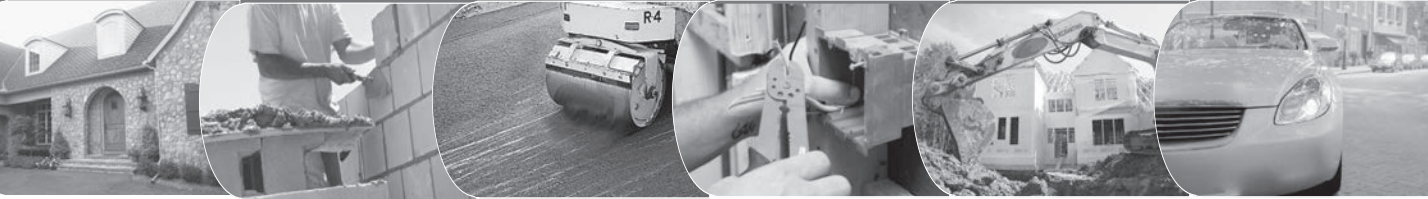
Leicester KOC hosting family dinner

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.

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Cornerstone Bank’s annual Toy Drive spreads holiday cheer across community

WORCESTER — Cornerstone Bank is proud to announce the success of its annual holiday toy drive, which collected new, unwrapped toys for local children and families this season. Thanks to the generosity of customers, employees and community members, the effort once again brought joy to those who need it most.

Since its founding in 2017, Cornerstone has proudly partnered with local charities to brighten the holidays for families throughout its community. This year, all branches except the Southbridge

location donated collected toys to the Planting the Seed Foundation, a Worcester-based nonprofit that supports underprivileged children and families. The Southbridge Branch continued its long-standing tradition of supporting the Cops ‘N’ Kids Toy Drive, a local program that has received donations from Cornerstone Bank for more than five years.

“This year’s toy drive truly shows the power of community,” said Cornerstone Bank CEO Todd Tallman. “Seeing so many people come together to support children and families

in need is inspiring, and it reminds us why giving back is such an important part of what we do.”

Cornerstone Bank extends its sincere gratitude to everyone who participated and helped make this year’s toy drive a success.

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 PeoplesBankCorp, 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 cornerstone-bank.com or call 800-939-9103.



LAKE LASHAWAY
continued from page A1

it enters Lake Lashaway has a significant amount of invasive weeds there, and that continues to flow into the lake,” Rodrigues explained. “The recommendation is for us to treat the north cove of the lake which is where the boat ramp is and the basin that is before the water enters the lake under the bridge.”

While the association’s membership does contribute to covering the cost

of mitigation, along with donations and sponsorships, the cost of the upcoming treatment is much higher than normal. For comparison, over the past few years the association has invested \$92,000 in treatment and water quality management. The latest treatment will cost roughly \$59,000 on its own.

“This time around, it’s a large amount, and we need contributions from both East Brookfield and North Brookfield towns to offset the cost of that,” Rodrigues said.

East Brookfield has already allocated \$10,000 to the cause, and Rodrigues did not specify a specific amount for their request from North Brookfield. The Board of Selectmen argued that the investment would not only help maintain property values around the lake but also invest in the betterment of a popular recreational asset as well. They chose to follow normal protocol by saving the specifics for a future meeting with the intent of adding the item to a town meeting warrant.

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.

Census, dog licensing information being mailed to N. Brookfield residents

NORTH BROOKFIELD — The Board of Health and the Town Clerk’s Offices in North Brookfield are partnering this year to mail the annual census, together with Recycling Center and dog license renewal information in one combined mailing. This collaboration results in

significant cost savings for both departments and, ultimately, for the taxpayers.

These materials will be mailed at the beginning of the year. If applicable, you may return multiple items in the same envelope. Multi-family properties must pay for Recycling Center stick-

Tabitha Myers named to President’s List at Bob Jones University

GREENVILLE, S.C. — Tabitha Myers, a Sophomore Strategic Communication major from E. Brookfield, was among over 620 Bob Jones University students named to the Fall 2025 President’s List.

The President’s List recognizes students who earn a 3.75 or higher grade point

average for the semester.

Founded in 1927, Bob Jones University is a Christian liberal arts university located in Greenville, S.C. BJU offers a well-rounded education that combines strong academics with a biblical worldview, preparing students to succeed in their future careers while deepening

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All Saints Academy’s Living Nativity concert brings the Christmas story to life

WEBSTER — Students, staff, and families gathered for the annual Christmas concert. The concert retold the Christmas story through music, drama and narration. The eighth grade class brought the Nativity to life. The performance followed the story of Mary and Joseph’s journey to Bethlehem, the birth of Jesus, the visit of the shepherds, all presented in a way that was engaging for the audience. Songs formed the heart of the concert, with students in Preschool through Grade 7 and the ASA choir performing a mix of Christmas music. The songs allowed the students of all ages to take part and showcase their talents and class teamwork. Eighth grade narrators helped guide the audience through the story, clearly explaining each scene and its meaning. Mrs. Shanna Keegan, ASA music teacher, worked closely with students in the weeks leading up to the performance, rehearsing songs, preparing costumes,

and encouraging pupils to understand the message behind the Nativity. For many students, it was an opportunity to develop public speaking skills, musical ability, and self-confidence, while also learning about an important part of Catholic tradition. Mrs. Matys, ASA Head of School, praised the effort of everyone involved, saying the concert reflected the school’s strong sense of community and that watching the students work so hard and support one another to share the Nativity story of kindness, hope and togetherness was a wonderful thing to see. Families filled the gym, applauding enthusiastically after each performance. Many commented on the warm and joyful atmosphere, noting how the concert marked the start of the Christmas season. The Nativity Concert proved to be a highlight bringing the ASA community together and reminding everyone of the values at the heart of Christmas.



SAINT JOSEPH SCHOOL ANNOUNCES HONOR ROLL

WEBSTER — Saint Joseph School has released its honor roll for the first quarter of the 2025-2026 school year.

- Grade 4
High Honors: Patryk Deptula, Kenneth Maruer, Keziah Anobah, Callum Bergman, Maria Berry, Maksymilian Bujala, Logan Derry, Olivia Guinto, Maya Jackson, Nella Copeland, Oliver Delgaudio, Addison Goulet, Olivia Perry, Oliver Smith, Joanna Thrun, Reese Shepard, Kelsey Cormier, Paulina Piascik, Jackson Lovett, Tamara Giteru, Avery Benson, Jamarion Pierre
Honors: Amalina Khozami, Quincy Middleton
- Grade 5
High Honors: Stella Andreotta, Julian Gibbons, Rylan Shemansky, Ariel Corbin, Mia Reed, Carson Krajcik, Julia Biela, Cecilia Coan, Christopher Bourgeois, Anna Wozniak, Aaliyah Andersen, Samuel Brunnett, Persefoni Sgouritsas, Michael Kamangu, Sophia Bengston, Charlie Cyr, Cameron Blodgett, Julie-Ann McCracken, Faye Derry, Luke Zegle
- Grade 6
High Honors: Giorgios Sgouritsas, Johnny Marcuccio, Allen Oliver Jean-Paul, Charles Smith, Amadeusz Gacek, Charlotte Dollar, Kirolos Ibrahim, Marina Szydluk, Severyn Kuznecki
Honors: Sylvia Cyr, Cameron Tremblay, Jon Belanger, Mathiew Prunier, Armani Cedeno, Claudia Vezeau, Charlotte Rumsay, Maddox Clair
Credit: Andrew Hachigian, Liam Dvoryaninov, Connor Kippax
- Grade 7
High Honors: Bella Kicilinski, Abigail Rubin, Sophia Surowanic, Lily Martin, Amelia Potem, Lukas Stock, Quinn Meehan, Sydney Caissie-Desautels, Ariana Benson, Evelyn Macko, Jacob Manzi
Honors: Grayson Dollar
Credit: Nico Meijas, Gabriel Ketnouvong-Ung, James Miranda
- Grade 8
High Honors: Axel Kapitulik, Lukas Barbosa, Kalleia Agosto, Neli Kuznecki, Tosin Akindele, Tenleigh Dowd, Mychael Jones, Ivonka Waranajitys, Jacob Marcuccio, Hayley Benes
Honors: Avery Archambault, Alexis Archambault, Jacob Lopez

Rachel Myers named to Dean’s List at Bob Jones University

GREENVILLE, S.C. — Rachel Myers, a Sophomore Music major from E. Brookfield, was among over 700 Bob Jones University students named to the Fall 2025 Dean’s List. The Dean’s List recognizes students who earn a 3.00-3.74 grade point average during the semester. Founded in 1927, Bob Jones University is a Christian liberal arts university located in Greenville, S.C. BJU offers a well-rounded education that combines strong academics with a biblical worldview, preparing students to succeed in their future careers while deepening their faith. With a student body representing 48 states, 40 countries and 5 territories, the University offers a dynamic campus environment where each student is encouraged to pursue a higher calling anchored in truth, mentored in wisdom and strengthened in faith.

North Brookfield sets tax rate

NORTH BROOKFIELD — The Fiscal Year 2026 tax rate for the town of North Brookfield has been set at \$11.96 per \$1,000 of valuations. Any questions can be directed to the Board of Assessors at 508-867-0209.

Information session planned on new water/sewer billing process

NORTH BROOKFIELD — The Water & Sewer Departments, as well as the Collector’s office, will be presenting and discussing the new water/sewer billing process that will begin in February 2026 during an upcoming public informational session. This session will take place on Wednesday, Jan. 7 at 6 p.m. in the Elementary School Auditorium. Water and Sewer Users are encouraged to attend. The bills are going to be combined and sent quarterly. This is an opportunity to find out how this work and how it will affect you.

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COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS ENERGY FACILITIES SITING BOARD

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: dpu.efiling@mass.gov; Daniel.W.Keleher@mass.gov; ckeu-then@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

LEGALS

they would intersect Worcester-Providence Turnpike (State Route 146) before passing through Elmwood Street, Shaw Schools Recreational Fields, and Witter Lane. From there, the Rebuilt Lines would pass Greenwood Street and intersect Dwinell Road before entering Auburn.

Auburn: The Rebuilt Lines would enter Auburn and cross Washington Street to connect with the Pondville Substation before proceeding west, where they would intersect Ramshorn Brook, the Penn Central Railroad/Norwich, and Worcester Railroad. The Rebuilt Lines would continue west, passing through Hillside Cemetery and intersecting Central Street and Saratoga Road before crossing Interstate 90. The Rebuilt Lines would then cross Interstate 290 and pass through Auburn Recreation Complex (also known as Oxford Street Recreation Area), which is adjacent to Bayman Street. From there, the Rebuilt Lines would intersect Oxford Street, continue past Bryn Mawr Avenue, cross Dark Brook and run west, intersecting Leicester Street, Chapin Brook, Rochdale Street, Penn Central Railroad, and Drake Court. The Rebuilt Lines would cross Chapin Brook and Leicester Street before entering Leicester.

Leicester: The Rebuilt Lines would enter Leicester, transect Stafford Street and Henshaw Street, cross Grindstone Brook and Bunker Hill Road, and continue to Peter Salem Road, connecting with the Leicester Substation. The Rebuilt Lines would continue west and then transect Peter Salem Road, Pleasant Street and Memorial Drive. The Rebuilt Lines would continue southwest and cross Town Meadow Brook and Burncoat Brook, continue west, and then cross Pine Street and Charles Street before continuing northwest to pass through Burncoat Brook again as they enter Spencer.

Spencer: The Rebuilt Lines would enter Spencer and continue northwest, crossing Greenville Street, R Jones Road, Spencer State Forest and Midstate Trail (an unpaved road). The Rebuilt Lines would continue northwest and intersect Ash Street, continue to Ashview Drive connecting to Maple Street, cross Charlton Road and continue past Pleasant View Road and Bixby Road Circle and continue northwest towards the intersection of West Main Street and Bixby Road. The Rebuilt Lines would cross the intersection of Olde Main Street and Meadow Road before connecting to the Meadow Street Substation. From there, they would continue west over the Seven Mile River, crossing Smithville Road before they enter East Brookfield.

East Brookfield: The Rebuilt Lines would enter East Brookfield, continue northwest to connect to the Harrington Switchyard, and then cross over Lake Lashway before entering North Brookfield.

North Brookfield: Crossing over Lake Lashway, the Rebuilt Lines would enter North Brookfield, cross Shore Road and the Five Mile River. From there, they would transect Old East Brookfield Road, continue through a wooded area and cross over the Penn Central Railroad before crossing Dunn Brook. The Rebuilt Lines would pass through the intersection of East Brookfield Road and Donovan Road, then over the Forget-Me-Not-Brook before connecting with the Lashaway Substation. From the substation, the Rebuilt Lines would continue northwest through the Donovan Road Conservation Area where they transect Fullman Road near Fullam Hill Road Conservation Area, Brookfield Road, and West Brookfield Road. The Rebuilt Lines would enter the North Brookfield Town Forest, intersecting McCarthy Road before crossing Coys Brook and continue northwest, crossing Old West Brookfield Road, Coys Brook, and Tucker Cross Road. The Rebuilt Lines then would cross Smith and Hanson Road before entering West Brookfield.

West Brookfield: The Rebuilt Lines would enter West Brookfield, cross Wigwam Road, New Braintree Road, and Birch Hill Road, enter the West Brookfield State Forest, cross Sucker Brook and Shea Road. The Rebuilt Lines would continue west and cross Madden Road, Mill Brook, Wickaboag Valley Road, Ragged Hill Road, John Gilbert Road, Lamberton Brook, Cedar Drive, and Peirce Road before passing through Rock House Reservation and Corydon W Kibbe Agricultural Preservation Restriction Area as they enter Ware.

Ware: The Rebuilt Lines would enter Ware and cross Gilbertville Road (Route 32) before connecting to the Ware Substation. From there, they would continue past the CSX Transportation Railroad, cross the Ware River, Church Street, Old Gilbertville Road, Sheehy Road, the Muddy Brook, Greenwich Road, Sorel Road, Osborne Road, and finally the Flat Brook. The Rebuilt Lines then would cross Old Poor Farm Road, King George Drive, Greenwich Plains Road, and Fisherdict Road, the Quabbin Reservoir Watershed, Beaver Brook, Peppers Mill Pond, Old-

Ware Enfield Road, Belchertown Road, Webster Road, and Belchertown Road again. The Rebuilt Lines would continue through the Quabbin Reservoir Watershed and cross the Swift River into Belchertown.

Belchertown: The Rebuilt Lines would enter Belchertown and continue through the Quabbin Watershed Reservoir, cross Winsor Dam Road, and then run between Blue Meadow Road and the Quabbin Reservoir, where they would connect to the Quabbin Switch Substation. The Rebuilt Lines would continue northwest, transect Cold Spring Road, then continue through the Quabbin Reservoir Watershed, crossing Warner Street, Earley Street, and Old Enfield Road before continuing north along the Quabbin Reservoir to enter Pelham.

Pelham: The Rebuilt Lines would enter Pelham and continue northwest into the Quabbin Reservoir Watershed to cross Packardville Road, Cadwell Creek, and the Daniel Shays Highway. The Rebuilt Lines would continue into the Cadwell Memorial Forest and cross Dunlop Brook and Amherst Road. They would continue northwest and cross over the Amethyst Brook and North Valley Road before continuing through the Buffam Brook Road Conservation Area and then crossing Buffam Road to enter Shutesbury.

Shutesbury: The Rebuilt Lines would enter Shutesbury, pass through the Amherst Watershed, and then cross Dean Brook, Sand Hill Road, Nurse Brook, and Pratt Corner Road before connecting to the Shutesbury Substation. The Rebuilt Lines are then proposed to cross over Nurse Brook again before entering Leverett.

Leverett: The Rebuilt Lines would enter Leverett and continue northwest, crossing Roaring Brook and Cushman Road. They would then cross Doolittle Brook in the Beaver Pond Conservation Area, Depot Road, Amherst Road, Long Plain Road, and the New England Central Railroad before entering Sunderland.

Sunderland: The Rebuilt Lines would enter Sunderland through the Mount Toby State Forest and Mount Toby Wildlife Management Area before crossing Montague Road, Chard Pond, and Falls Road. The Rebuilt Lines would then run along Gunn Brook and cross over the Connecticut River into Deerfield.

Deerfield: The Rebuilt Lines would enter Deerfield, cross River Road, and then continue to the west, crossing Clapp Brook, Steam Mill Road, the Boston and Maine Railroad, and Massachusetts Route 10. The Rebuilt Lines would then cross the Fuller Swamp Brook and Mill Village Road adjacent to farmland to continue through woods and farmland and ultimately cross Interstate 91. The Rebuilt Lines would then run parallel to Sand Gully Road, cross Stillwater Road, Hoosac Road, and the Deerfield River to enter Conway.

Conway: The Rebuilt Lines would enter Conway adjacent to the Deerfield River and Mohawk Trail, cross over the South River, Bardwells Ferry Road, and the Boston and Maine Railroad before entering Shelburne.

Shelburne: The Rebuilt Lines would enter Shelburne and cross the Deerfield River near Dragon Brook and Orchard Road. They would continue northwest before crossing Barnard Road. The Rebuilt Lines would then run parallel to the Deerfield River before connecting to the Deerfield #2 Substation. They would then run parallel to the Boston and Maine Railroad, cross over the Deerfield River again and then the Mohawk Trail. From there, the Rebuilt Lines would proceed north where a tap line connects to the Deerfield #3 Substation across the Deerfield River. The remainder of the Rebuilt Lines would continue northwest before terminating at Deerfield #4 Station near Main Street.

Descriptions of Tap Line Replacements

Quabbin Switching Tap: The Project includes replacing the two tap lines in Belchertown that would connect with the Rebuilt Lines at the Quabbin Switching Tap and Tower near Blue Meadow Road. Quabbin Switching Tap extends approximately 0.1 miles to Quabbin Switching Tower in Belchertown.

Deerfield #3 Taps: The Company also proposes replacing the two tap lines that would connect to the Rebuilt Lines at the Deerfield Generating Station north of the Deerfield River in Shelburne. The Deerfield #3 Taps extend approximately 0.5 miles to the Deerfield #3 Generating Station in Buckland.

Shutesbury #704 Tap: The Company proposes replacing the two tap lines that would connect to the Rebuilt Lines at the Shutesbury #704 Substation near the Pratt Corner Road. The Shutesbury #704 Taps extend approximately 0.02 miles to the Shutesbury #704 Substation in Shutesbury.

January 2, 2026
January 9, 2026

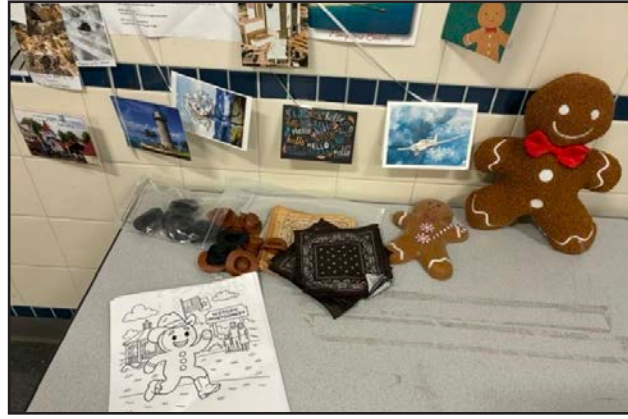
<p>Commonwealth of Massachusetts The Trial Court Probate and Family Court Worcester Probate and Family Court 225 Main Street Worcester, MA 01608 (508) 831-2200 Docket No. WO25P4269EA CITATION ON PETITION FOR FORMAL ADJUDICATION Estate Of: Andre J Roy Also known as: Andy Roy Date of Death:09/12/2025</p> <p>To all interested persons: A Petition for Formal Probate of Will with Appointment of Personal Representative has been filed by Nicole D Allen of East Brookfield MA requesting that the Court enter a formal Decree and Order and for such other relief as requested in the Petition. The Petitioner requests that: Nicole D Allen of East Brookfield MA be appointed as Personal Representative(s) of said estate to serve Without Surety on the bond in unsupervised administration</p> <p>IMPORTANT NOTICE You have the right to obtain a copy of the Petition from the Petitioner or at the Court. You have a right to object to this proceeding. To do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance and objection at this Court before: 10:00 a.m. on the return day of 01/06/2025. This is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline by which you must file a written appearance and objection if you object to this proceeding. If you fail to file a timely written appearance and objection followed by an affidavit of objections within thirty (30) days of the return day, action may be taken without further notice to you. UNSUPERVISED ADMINISTRATION UNDER THE MASSACHUSETTS UNIFORM PROBATE CODE (MUPC) A Personal Representative appointed under the MUPC in an unsupervised administration is not required to file an inventory or annual accounts with the Court. Persons interested in the estate are entitled to notice regarding the administration directly from the Personal Representative and may petition the Court in any matter relating to the estate, including the distribution of assets and expenses of administration. WITNESS, Hon. Leilah A. Keamy, First Justice of this Court.</p>	<p>Date: December 11, 2025 Stephanie Fattman, Register of Probate December 26, 2025 January 2, 2026</p> <p>Notice of Special Public Hearing East Brookfield Zoning Board of Appeals This Zoning Board hearing will take place at the East Brookfield Memorial Town Complex, 122 Connie Mack Drive, East Brookfield, MA on Thursday, January 8th, 2026. Hearing will commence at 6:00PM or soon thereafter as can be heard. Interested parties can attend in person. Applicant: Reece Ornell, owner of the property at 206 East Main Street, East Brookfield, MA. The applicant is requesting a “Special Permit” for a side setback of 1.5 feet. The required side setback for the residential zone is 20 feet. Additionally, a “Finding” to determine if the proposed deck replacement is not more detrimental to the neighborhood then the existing non-conforming use. December 12, 2025 December 26, 2025 January 2, 2026</p> <p>Zoning Board of Appeals Town of North Brookfield 215 North Main St., North Brookfield, MA 01535 The Town of North Brookfield Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) will hold a public hearing on January 26, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. at the Senior Center. The application is for a Special Permit to convert and renovate the existing building at 75 School Street into a four-unit multifamily residential building by AUM Blackrock Investments LLC. The request is being made under the North Brookfield Zoning Bylaws, Section IV(A)(2)(1), which allows an existing dwelling to be converted to multifamily use if the ZBA grants a Special Permit. December 26, 2025 January 2, 2026</p> <p>THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION – HIGHWAY DIVISION NOTICE OF A DESIGN PUBLIC HEARING Spencer - East Brookfield - Intersection Improvements at Route 9 and Route 49</p>	<p>Project File No. 613097 A Design Public Hearing will be hosted on the MassDOT website below to present the design for the proposed project in Spencer - East Brookfield, MA. WHERE: Town of Spencer, Town Hall, Great Room 157 Main Street Spencer MA, 01852 Thursday, January 8, 2026 at 6:30PM WHEN: PURPOSE: The purpose of this hearing is to provide the public with the opportunity to become fully acquainted with the proposed project. All views and comments submitted in response to the hearing will be reviewed and considered to the maximum extent possible. PROPOSAL: The proposed project consists of improvements along Route 9 and at the intersection of Route 9 and Route 49 in the Towns of East Brookfield and Spencer. The work involves construction of a cement concrete roundabout, improved bike and pedestrian accommodations, lighting, and upgrades to pavement, drainage, pavement markings, and signage. The proposed pedestrian accommodations consist of 5-foot wide sidewalks along Route 9 and a shared use path at the roundabout. The proposed bicycle accommodations consist of 5-foot buffered bicycle lanes along Route 9 and a shared use path at the roundabout. Pedestrian and bicycle accommodations have been provided in accordance with applicable design guides. A secure right-of-way is necessary for this project. Acquisitions in fee and permanent or temporary easements may be required. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts is responsible for acquiring all needed rights in private or public lands. MassDOT’s policy concerning land acquisitions will be presented in the hearing. Project inquiries, written statements and other exhibits regarding the proposed undertaking may be submitted to Carrie E. Lavallee, P.E., Chief Engineer, via e-mail to MassDOTProjectManagement@dot.state.ma.us or via US Mail to Suite 7550,10 Park Plaza, Boston, MA 02116, Attention: Project Management, Project File No. 613097. Statements and exhibits intended for inclusion in the public hearing transcript must be emailed or postmarked no later than ten (10) business days (14 calendar</p>	<p>days) after the hearing is hosted on the MassDOT website listed below. This hearing is accessible to people with disabilities. MassDOT provides reasonable accommodations and/or language assistance free of charge upon request (e.g interpreters in American Sign Language and languages other than English, live captioning, videos, assistive listening devices and alternate material formats), as available. For accommodation or language assistance, please contact MassDOT’s Chief Diversity and Civil Rights Officer by phone (857-368-8580), TTD/TTY at (857) 266-0603, fax (857) 368-0602 or by email (MassDOT.CivilRights@dot.state.ma.us). Requests should be made as soon as possible and prior to the hearing, and for more difficult to arrange services including sign-language, CART or language translation or interpretation, requests should be made at least ten business days before the hearing. In case of inclement weather, a cancellation announcement will be posted on the internet at https://www.mass.gov/orgs/highway-division/events. JONATHAN GULLIVER HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATOR CARRIE E. LAVALLEE, P.E. CHIEF ENGINEER December 26, 2025 January 2, 2026</p> <p>Town of Spencer Conservation Commission PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE In accordance with the requirements of the Massachusetts Wetland Protection Act, MGL c. 131, s. 40 and the Spencer Wetlands By-Law: GoVenture Capital Group has filed an Amended Order of Conditions with the Spencer Conservation Commission for a septic system located at East Main Street (R35- 1-3), Spencer, MA. Applications can be reviewed at the Office of Development and Inspectional Services, Town Hall. A public hearing regarding these filings will be held by the Spencer Conservation Commission in McCourt Social Hall at Town Hall, 157 Main Street, on Wednesday, January 14, 2026 at which time all persons having an interest may be present or call in remotely to participate. Conservation Commission meetings open at 6:15 p.m. Mary McLaughlin Mary McLaughlin, Chairwoman January 2, 2026</p>
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Gingerbread fun at the Wire Village School



SPENCER — Prior to the 2025 Winter Recess, students in Mrs. Durant's kindergarten class at the Wire Village School in Spencer took part in a learning activity about "The Gingerbread Man" and read different versions of the story. Kindergarteners then made Gingerbread people out of Play Dough and left them at our tables... When they returned from recess and lunch, Mrs. Durant's students found that they "ran away!"

"I reached out to the local communities to ask for letters and postcards to be sent from all over to help play along," said Durant.



"The response was absolutely amazing! The kids absolutely loved getting mail from all over the country and even a few international ones too! Some went above and beyond with creating stories, sending in coloring pages with little cowboy hats and bandanas, key lime cookies from Key Largo, stickers, confetti and more!" Durant added. "I carried it on to having the Gingerbread visiting different countries to learn about holidays around the world."

At left are some pictures of what they received.



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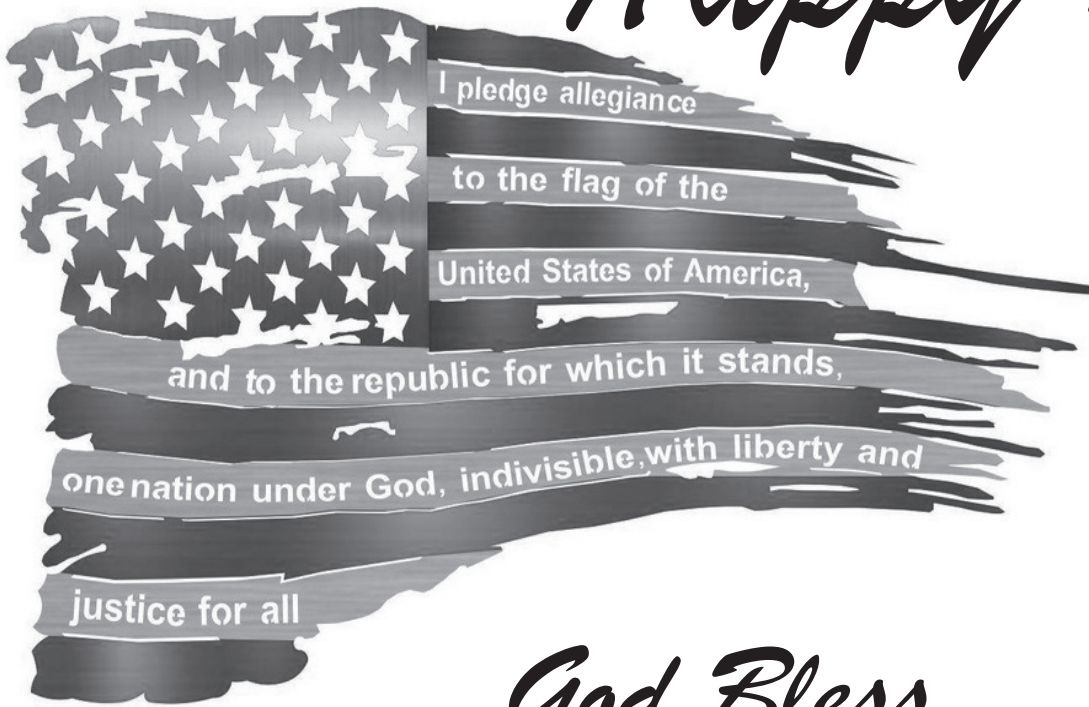
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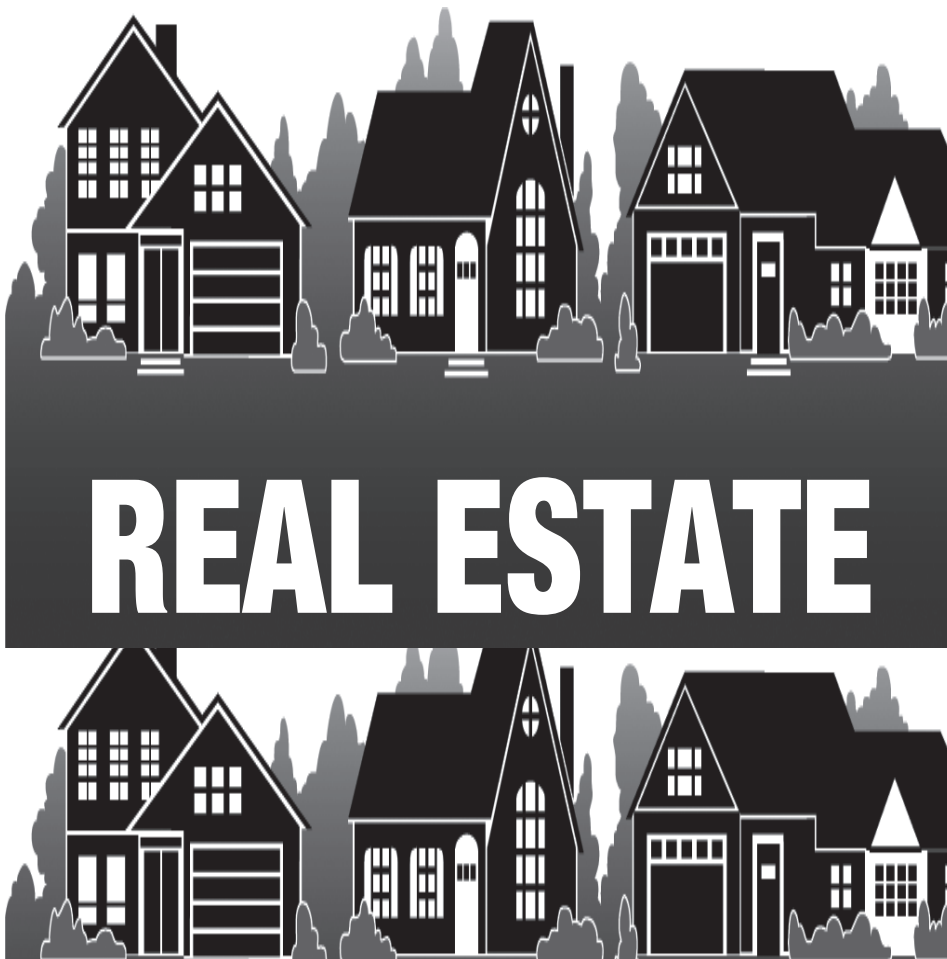
* June Cazeault * Laurie Sullivan * Lori Johnson-Chausse * William Gilmore II * Maureen Cimoch * Bryan Pelletier

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*God Bless
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Music, drama, and faith highlight Saint Joseph School Christmas Pageant

WEBSTER — Saint Joseph School celebrated its annual Christmas Pageant on Sunday, Dec. 14, with more than 550 parents, grandparents, and guests filling the Daniel & Catherine Ivascyn Performing Arts Center. The program opened with a Tree Lighting Ceremony featuring Student Council President Mychael Jones, who recited Sue Pagnanella's poem "Christmas," followed by the Blessing of the Trees by Rev. Richard Polek, Pastor and Headmaster. This reflective opening set the tone for an afternoon filled with music, drama, and community spirit.

The school's Drama Club brought the stage to life with a vibrant production of "In A Galilee Far, Far Away," directed by Brigid Campbell with assistance from Susan Gallivan. This interstellar Christmas musical from Little Big Stuff Music took the audience on an imaginative journey across the universe to witness the glory of God, ultimately

guiding them back to Bethlehem and the Savior's birth. Leading the cast were Kalleia Agosto as Captain Magellan, Amadeusz Gacek as Polo, Alexis Archambault as Otto, Amelia Potem as the Robot, Evelyn Macko as Info, Mia Reed as Sparky, and Bella Kicilinski as Zip. They were joined by Samuel Brunnert as Kenny, Sophia Bengtson as Betty, Julia Biela as Sandy, and Mathieu Prunier, who portrayed Abraham Lincoln. The roles of Shepherds were performed by Johnny Marcuccio, Stella Andreotta, and James Miranda, while Michael Kamangu handled the character of Damage Control.

The production was further elevated by an ensemble featuring all students in Grades 5 through 8, whose participation added vocal strength and dynamic stage presence to several musical numbers. Their work, combined with energetic choreography and memorable songs—including



The nativity comes to life as Saint Joseph School eighth graders Lukas Barbosa and Tenleigh Dowd portray Joseph and Mary in one of the closing scenes of the Christmas Pageant.

"Away We Go," "Home for Christmas," "In a Galilee Far, Far Away," "All in The Book," "Our Savior Is Born Tonight," "The Star Will Shine," and "Seek Him"—brought the story's cosmic theme to life. The visual impact of the musical was made possible thanks to parent volunteer Antonio Marcuccio and a dedicated team of student set and prop designers.

Following intermission, the pageant transitioned into a showcase of musical performances by students in Pre-K through Grade 8. The second act opened with the middle school's "A Merry Christmas Dribble – 2025," a basketball skills exhibition uniquely choreographed to selections from "The Nutcracker Suite." This creative fusion of athletics and classical music delighted the audience and demonstrated exceptional coordination and teamwork.

A series of musical selections followed, with each grade presenting a traditional or contemporary Christmas piece. Grade 8 performed "The Christmas Song," followed by: Grade 7's rendition of "It Came Upon a Midnight Clear," Grade 6's "O Little Town of Bethlehem," and Grade 5's "It's Beginning to Look a Lot Like Christmas." These selections were followed by: Grade 4 singing "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas," Grade 3 performing "Jingle Bells" on recorders, Grade 2's joyful "Children Run Joyfully," Grade 1's lively "I'm the Happiest Christmas Tree," Kindergarten's spirited "Santa Claus Is Coming to Town," Pre-K 4's "Oh, What a Wonderful Day," and Pre-K 3's sweet performance of "Baby Jesus (Are You Sleeping, Brother John)." Students

in Grades 5 through 8 also added a multicultural element through their performance of "Campana Sobre Campana" as part of the school's Spanish program.

A particularly notable moment of the afternoon was the debut of the new Saint Joseph School Show Choir under the direction of Ms. Connie Galli. She was joined by Shepherd Hill Regional High School students Tommy Dolan and Zoraiya Burgos, whose mentorship and musical support helped guide the ensemble in a stunning first performance of "O Come All Ye Faithful." Following this debut, the Saint Joseph Church Choir delivered powerful, profoundly moving performances of "What Child Is This" and "Child of the Poor," harmonizing the refrains and bringing the audience into a reverent, reflective close to the pageant.

Behind the scenes, the production was supported by the musical direction of Mrs. Brenda Lau Anderson and accompaniment by Maria Helena Czarnecka-Cieslak. Physical Education instructor Ms. Lisa Szpila coordinated the basketball exhibition, while Mr. Joey Boudreau and Mr. Mariusz Macko expertly managed sound and lighting.

The annual Christmas Pageant remains one of Saint Joseph School's most cherished traditions, uniting families, students, and parishioners in a joyful celebration of faith and community. Through drama, music, and prayer, the event reflected the school's mission of "Religion, Respect, and Responsibility" and invited all present to share in the joyful anticipation of Christmas.

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