

Littleton residents discuss 2019 budget

BY JUSTIN ROSHAK AND
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LITTLETON—Voters reviewed the next year's

budget and slate of projects at the town's annual deliberative session, last Tuesday, Feb. 5.

The largest project

proposed is the \$6.3 million Sub Area 2 sewer, stormwater, and roadway upgrade, with the full cost to be borrowed,

and the costs of borrowing to be supported by sewer fees. The Select Board would be empowered to negotiate the

loan, and Article 2 stipulates that the project will not begin unless Littleton receives grants totaling at least 45 percent of the appropriated funds.

Sewer Sub Area 2 experiences the second highest level of wastewater infiltration, which increases pressure on the wastewater treatment center. Poor construction and old age allow water to seep in, increasing the volume that must be treated. Many pipes in the area are 40 to 70 years old. The Board expects a \$9 increase in sewer bills as a result of this project.

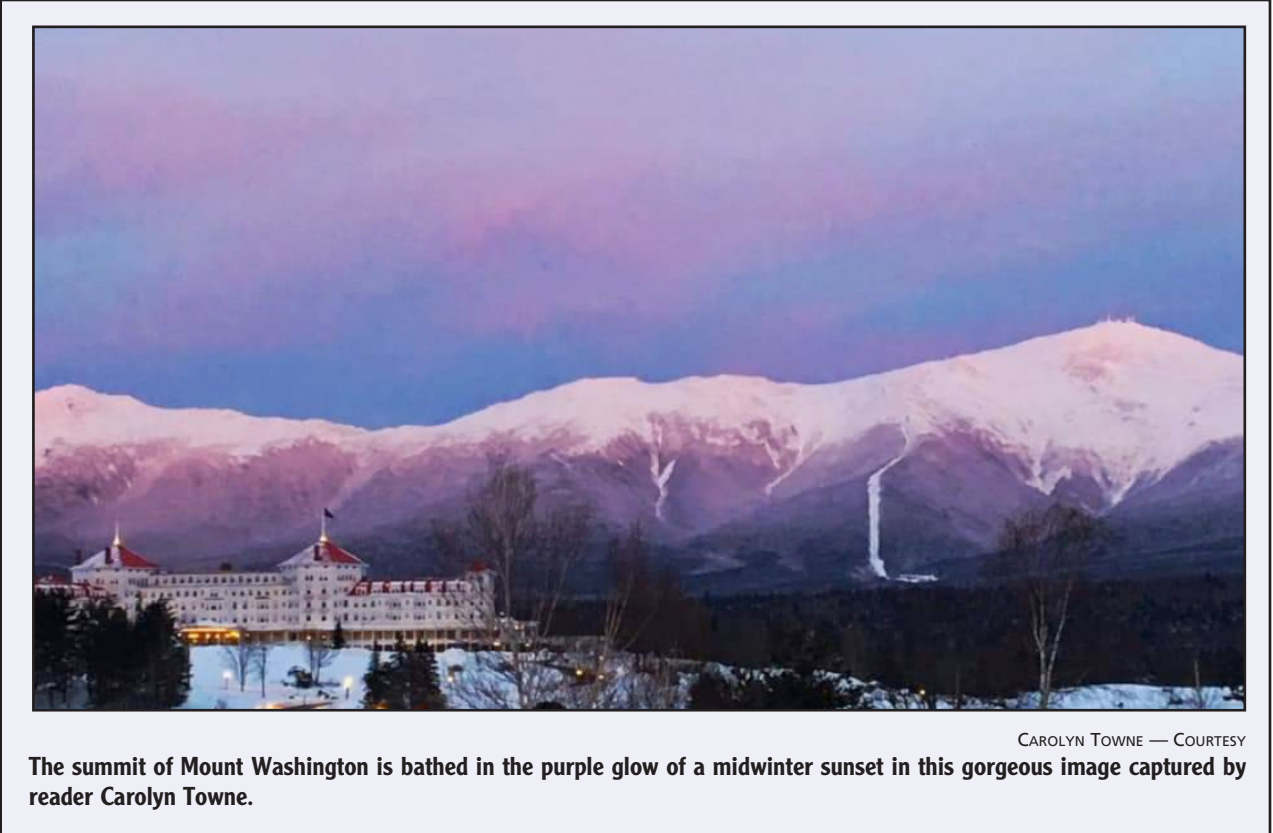
Article 3 would raise \$85,000 to study the issue of phosphate reduction in Partridge Lake, a popular spot for many local residents, but which is heavily overloaded with chemical nutrients, causing algae blooms.

The town expects \$75,000 to be repaid from the Clean Water State Revolving Loan fund, and to receive the remaining \$10,000 as a donation from the Partridge Lake Property Owners Association, dropping the expected tax impact to zero.

Article 4 would raise \$49,000 to study the assets at the Wastewater Treatment Plant. This year, a key centrifuge was damaged and had to be repaired—in the interim, waste management costs were elevated by the need to truck out liquid waste for further treatment.

This year, the expected operating budget is \$8,863,210, with a tax impact of \$7.133 per thousand. Major reductions were made in legal costs, fuel expenditures, and

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CAROLYN TOWNE — COURTESY

The summit of Mount Washington is bathed in the purple glow of a midwinter sunset in this gorgeous image captured by reader Carolyn Towne.

Bethlehem voters debate proposal to ban firearms on public property

BY JUSTIN ROSHAK
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BETHLEHEM—A petitioned warrant article to ban guns on public property was amended to state “for advisory purposes only” at last Monday’s deliberative session.

Petitioner David Woods laid out his case for the article, which collected 26 signatures—qualifying it for automatic inclusion on March’s warrant.

“Over the past year, there have a few occurrences under New

Hampshire’s open carry gun laws, of pistol-packing citizens attending town functions, such as Select Board meetings. In one case, a meeting which I attended, the incident was aggressive and it was intimidating

BETHLEHEM, PAGE A16



COURTESY

The Franconia Notch Guest House, under new management and overlooking the same spectacular views, is this month’s Littleton Area Chamber of Commerce Featured Member.

New owners offer hospitality with a view at Franconia Notch Guest House

BY JUSTIN ROSHAK
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FRANCONIA—The new owners of the Franconia Notch Guest House are this month’s Littleton Area Chamber of Commerce Featured Member—a couple who have moved north and settled down to live the dream of running a North Country bed and breakfast.

Longtime New Hampshire seacoast residents, Beth and her partner, Doug “Doc” Fletcher came from the medical field: her as a Health Care Assistant, him as a US Navy Hospital Corpsman.

Beth recalled, “We always loved taking trips to the White Mountain region and always wanted to one

day call this majestic area our home.”

When the time came to move on, they began a search for bed and breakfasts for sale in the White Mountains. Eventually, they discovered the Guest House on Realtor.com.

The Franconia Notch Guest House, located on the Forest Hill Road in Franconia, is defined by its mountain views, central timber-and-stone main room, and adjoining private rooms.

Beth told the Courier that taking over ownership was “a long process, but definitely worth the wait.”

She added, “The first time we sat out on the covered porch after taking ownership

was pure bliss!”

While coming into ownership of the property, the couple was helped along by their connections to other local businesses and organizations, and they expressed enthusiasm for joining Chamber and Chamber-like groups in their area.

In particular, she praised the Littleton Area Chamber of Commerce for “providing opportunities to meet other local business owners and provide forums for us to meet and share ideas, tips, and experiences.”

In the coming year, the couple looks forward to meeting more guests and neighbors,

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JUSTIN ROSHAK

Left to right: Shawn MacLeod, Event Coordinator for Boston Bruins Alumni Association; Dr. Jessica Harney, Board President at New England Disabled Sports; Heidi MacDonald, Director of Skating Programs at Riverwalk Resort; and Renee Blood, General Manager at Riverwalk Resort.

New England Disabled Sports receives \$27,047 from Bruins fundraiser

BY JUSTIN ROSHAK
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LINCOLN—Last Saturday, Feb. 2, New England Disabled Sports was presented with the fruits of a collaborative fundraiser from last year.

Last December, 2018,

Loon Mountain’s Riverwalk Resort hosted a “Skate with the Boston Bruins Alumni” fundraiser at its skating rink. Among those out on the ice was Rick Middleton, who holds four National Hockey League (NHL) records

for points, assists, and point averages. He also serves as president of the Boston Bruins Alumni association, and headlined the charitable event at the Riverwalk.

The fundraiser fea-

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and to the 2019 wedding season in particular. The Guest House is not the only North Country hospitality business to discover that the region’s pristine views and small-town charms make for ideal matrimonial ter-

ritory.

Leaning into that model, the Fletchers plan to transform the Guest House’s third floor into a fully realized “Bridal Suite” for the not-too-distant 2020 wedding season.

To those with a similar dream—to move

north and run a bed and breakfast—Beth urged “patience and perseverance.”

“It can be a long process, but if it is truly what you want to do, don’t give up,” she added. “The right property will find you!”

FUNDRAISER

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tured VIP skating sessions with the alumni, a silent auction, 50/50 raffle, and cocktail reception. All in all, the event raised \$27,047, which was awarded last week.

New England Disabled Sports is the primary provider of adaptive sport instruction in the Lincoln area, and a colleague organization to the Franconia area’s Adaptive Sports Partners of the North Country. According to industry leaders, each

adaptive organization largely runs its own programming within its own territory, although both organizations collaborate on the largest fundraiser of the year: the August Sunrise Ascent on Mount Washington.

As of September of last year, the Sunrise Ascent raised \$102,174, well above its goal of \$62,880, from the efforts of eleven area teams. The collaborative multi-organization project was made possible by teams of

volunteers serving as both gear luggers and trail angels.

Like Adaptive, NEDS runs all-season programming for individuals with both physical and cognitive disabilities. It leans heavily on its volunteers, many of whom pursue certifications in various kinds and levels of adaptive instruction and equipment proficiency. Both organizations have also begun to scale up efforts for veterans.

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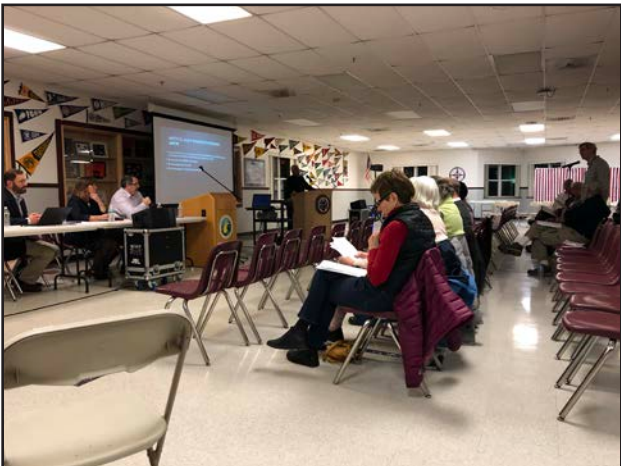
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a drop in expected road improvements from \$500,000 to \$300,000.

Article 9 would raise the dog licensing fee by \$1, with the funds generated to support a planned new dog park. The money will be allocated to a special fund. While some residents expressed disdain for the idea, Dog Park Committee Co-Chair Sue Pillotte argued that it would help Littleton grow. The project stems partly from the closure of athletic fields to dogs, after concerns from Health Officer Bratz about fecal matter. Dog enforcement officers will be deputized.

Also toward the new dog park, Article 16 would raise \$45,000 for engineering, design, the purchase and modification of land, and the purchase of supplies. Only half, \$22,500 will come from taxation, with the rest to come from fundraising. The article would have a tax impact of 2.8 cents per thousand.

Article 17 plans \$150,000 for a replacement for Remich Park,



NICHOLAS MEACHEN
Littleton leaders and residents reviewed the next year’s projects and budget at last week’s deliberative session.

with \$25,000 to be offset by fundraising. If that goal is not reached, the town will only spend \$125,000. The tax impact would be 15 cents per thousand (\$.153). Remich Park has been slated for replacement since an inspection in the summer of 2018 revealed numerous safety and code concerns. While Parks and Rec Director Wilkins considers the site safe, he has said it should be replaced, and began fundraising for the purpose last fall. Parks leadership considered closing Remich Park after the problems became known.

Finally, Article 22 would contribute the \$6,000 Littleton owes in membership dues to the Mount Washington Regional Airport, at a tax impact of \$0.007 per thousand. Unlike every other article mentioned above, the Budget Committee did not vote to recommend this article (6 against, 2 for), with some members expressing doubt in the value of the project, based on the difficulties its new leadership team has faced recruiting new member communities. However, the Select Board voted 3-0 to support it.

BETHLEHEM

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to the other citizens that were there.”

Woods said the goal of his article was to direct the Select Board to seek state guidance on a potential ordinance that would ban guns at, for instance, town hall.

The Select Board has not yet sought the advice of town counsel, but would likely do so if the article is approved, and they begin the process of seeking an ordinance.

At the state level, proposed House Bill HB 101 would clarify local town and school powers to take action on firearms.

According to Town Moderator Mary Lou Krabmeier, the New Hampshire Municipal Association advised her that while the petition as such may or may not be legal, “If passed, it will be up to the Select Board

or the proponents to take it to the next step.”

Assistant Town Moderator Don chimed in with, “This vote would not automatically put an ordinance in place. It would give a mandate to the Select Board to put an ordinance in place: it would be incumbent on the Select Board to craft an ordinance to meet the public will,” including consultation with the state.

Select Board member Martin Glavac disagreed with Woods, saying, “I have not once felt threatened when there was open carry in attendance,” and that he thought the situation last year was “handled well.” He said he would not support the article as written, nor “any other way.”

Resident Chris McGrath argued against the article, saying, “The

only people this is protecting is the criminals.”

Opponents of the measure also raised the issue of lawsuits against its constitutionality, and the potential ambiguity over which public property the ordinance would apply to.

Krambeer also pointed out that Bethlehem has passed advisory articles on other issues, such as climate change.

Voters were not permitted to alter the subject of the article, but could tinker with the language surrounding it.

A motion to add the phrase “for advisory purposes only” to the article was narrowly passed 20 to 19, after four separate rounds of voting failed to conclusively settle the matter. Three of five Select Board members voted for the amendment.

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