



2026/2027 Proposed School Budget Fran Heap

Two Richmond sisters, Antoinette Cincotta, and Kim DeMasco, tried to persuade attendees at the Monadnock Regional School District (“MRSD”) Annual Meeting on February 7, 2026 to vote down the MRSD warrant articles. Both sisters opined MRSD was costing too much money while yielding poor academic results. Many members of the public lost patience after Antoinette Cincotta told parents their children would end up in “prison” or “poverty” if they attended MRSD schools. When asked by an audience member to prove her claims, she could not. By her third time at the microphone, some attendees even began to yell out “Time”, rather than allow the appointed timekeeper to do his job. Eventually, unlike last year, all of the articles were accepted for the school ballot as written. Below is a brief idea of what the articles might mean to voters on March 10th:

MRSD Article One (Operating Budget)

The good news is that the Proposed Budget of **\$40,874,456** came in at \$232,056 lower than the Default Budget of \$41,106,512.

MRSD Article Two (MESSA Contract)

The bad news is that the 3-year contract for support staff eats up the Operating Budget reduction from MRSD Article One and then some. The results of the MESSA collective bargaining agreement would lead to increases of **\$301,287** (2026/2027), **\$243,703** (2027/2028), and **\$192,752** (2028/2029). The reason for the increases? MRSD has fallen so far behind other nearby districts, it can no longer attract and retain its support staff, with one official pointing out that job candidates were turning down jobs at MRSD because Dunkin Donuts paid better. Here is that pay comparison:

Article 2 - MESSA Paraprofessional Pay Comparison (2025/26)

	LOWEST 8th	7th	6th	← RANK →		3rd	2nd	HIGHEST 1st
	MRSD	Masencic	Hinsdale	Winchester	Jaff-Rodg	Keene	ConVal	Fall Mtn
1st Year Paraprofessionals	\$ 35.50	\$ 36.15	\$ 36.20	\$ 36.25	\$ 37.00	\$ 37.00	\$ 37.50	\$ 37.84
				\$ 18.39 Proposed				
5 Years Experience	\$ 36.30	\$ 36.90	\$ 37.20	\$ 37.25	\$ 38.15	\$ 38.50	\$ 39.50	\$ 40.00
				\$ 17.44 Proposed				
Top of Scale, 9-25 Years	\$ 38.75	\$ 38.90	\$ 39.45	\$ 40.02	\$ 40.50	\$ 40.75	\$ 41.50	\$ 42.88
				\$ 19.79 Proposed				

MRSD Article Three (Roof Replacement)

Proposed cost of partial roof replacement over the 800s wing of MRMHS is **\$100,000**, which cannot be exceeded if voted in.

MRSD Article Four (Upper Parking Lot Repair)

Proposed cost of parking lot repair outside the gymnasium of MRMHS is **\$85,000**, which cannot be exceeded if voted in.

MRSD Articles Five through Eight (Transfers to Trusts)

If there is money left over (unallocated funds) by June 30, 2026, MRSD may move funds to appropriate trusts. These transfers do not involve new taxation:

- Article Five (Special Education Expendable Trust) – Up to \$1;
- Article Six (District Vehicle Expendable Trust) – Up to \$25,000;
- Article Seven (School Grounds Expendable Trust) – Up to \$1;
- Article Eight (School Building Maintenance Expendable Trust) – Up to \$50,000.

Proposed Changes to Our Zoning Ordinance Fran Heap

At the time of this printing, three warrant articles from the Planning Board are expected to follow the warrant article for Elected Officials, and therefore, should appear as Warrant Articles 2, 3, and 4 on the Town Ballot:

- Warrant Article 2 – new Section 404.4
404 Permitted Accessory Uses “404.4 Family and Group Family Child Care: All types of home-based care (family care and group family care) as long as all requirements for such programs adopted in rules of the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services (He-C 4002) are met.”
- Warrant Article 3 – replace of “Building Permit”
Replace word “Building Permit” within Richmond Zoning Ordinances with the words “Zoning Compliance Certificate” to match Board of Selectman’s updated permit language and per State RSA Correction.

- Warrant Article 4 – add Normal Landscaping Definition

Add Definition to Article 17: NORMAL LANDSCAPING means the on-site alteration and contouring of the land exclusively devoted to improving the functional utility and planting of the grounds.

Doug Smith, Chairperson of the Planning Board, has said on multiple occasions that, because the Town does not enforce wetlands protection, we should not bother to include protective language in our Zoning Ordinance. (*Please see Dick Drew's article concerning the "Normal Landscaping" definition later in this issue.*) The same argument about lack of enforcement could be made for the Child Care and Building Permit warrant articles. We currently have no Health Inspector, so it is questionable that home-based child care centers could be inspected to prove they meet the He-C 4002 rule. The Select Board is pushing for residents to accept "Zoning Compliance Certificates" because we have no Building Inspector, leaving new homeowners with no town protection from bad or illegal construction. So, do we weaken or stop amending our Zoning Ordinance because Richmond does not enforce its provisions? Who decides what is enforced and what is not? Something to think about when you vote on March 10th...

Open Letter: Endorses Pam Bielunis for Supervisor of the Checklist

Pam Bielunis is running for another six-year term as Supervisor of the Checklist, a position she has held for the past twelve years. The Supervisor helps ensure that everyone who votes in Richmond is entitled to vote here. This is an important position that demands a person with the highest integrity. That describes Pam Bielunis.

Pam has devoted her life to the service of others. Although she is running unopposed, considering all she has done for Richmond, I urge you to take the time to vote for her on Election Day and help give her the highest vote total of anyone who has ever run for a Richmond office. I can't think of a more appropriate tribute to a person who has done so much.

Certifications: Construction Supervisor CS056788
Radon Mitigator 103048RMT
Radon Measurement 4SS0018RMS



EAGLE ENVIRONMENTAL INC

RADON MITIGATION AND TESTING SPECIALISTS

Kevin M. Murphy
kevin@radonremover.com

60 Whipple Hill
Richmond NH, 03470

508.868.2974

www.radonremover.com


This space donated on behalf of:

House of Hope NH

A 6 to 8-month faith-based residential program providing hope for women overcoming addiction.

PO Box 10371
Swansey, NH 03446-0371
www.houseofhopenh.org

(603) 499-8068
houseofhopenh@gmail.org



Saving Lives. Impacting Generations.

For new people who have not met Pam, she and her husband Al have lived in Richmond since 1979. She earned a Bachelor's of Science from the University of Vermont in Physical Therapy and a Master's degree in Human Services from Keene State College. After moving to Richmond, she worked at Cheshire Medical Center and at Monadnock Sports Medicine for 40 years. She also worked on per diem basis at the Applewood Rehabilitation Center for 30 years.

During her tenure in Richmond, her town work included Secretary to the Selectmen, Assistant Tax Collector, and was elected as a Cemetery and Library Trustee. She still serves as the town's Welfare Administrator and coordinates our Meals on Wheels and Mobile Food Pantry programs.



The Bielunis Family from left to right: Al, Pam, Dave, and Amy.

She and Al raised their two children in our town. Pam was a Brownie and Girl Scout Troop Leader. She also served as an advisor to the Monadnock Regional HS Baton Twirlers.

Cushing & Sons

Water Wells and Pumps

Out of water? Call us FIRST

603-352-8866

Pam believes town officers should function as public servants representing all residents of Richmond. She feels it is important to be honest, straightforward, and fair with no personal agendas.

Please show how much you appreciate Pam by voting for her on Election Day.
Lenny Solomon

Open Letter:

Eroding the Wetland Conservation District

On January 27, 2026, the Richmond Planning Board held the final public hearing on proposed Zoning Ordinance amendments for the Warrant Articles of 2026. This hearing dealt with the definition of Normal Landscaping. Normal Landscaping was inserted into our Zoning Ordinance's Article 603: Uses Permitted in the Wetland Protection District. The article was approved by town vote in 2024 without a definition. The Planning Board has now proposed that "NORMAL LANDSCAPING means the on-site alteration and contouring of the land exclusively devoted to improving the functional utility and planting of the grounds."

Please read this definition carefully. Do you see any limitation on "alteration or contouring" that would protect the wetlands or preserve the functionality of the Wetland Protection District? There is none. It further erodes the protection that our Wetland Conservation District was created for which is to provide a buffer between construction, excavation, and hazardous waste spills affecting our wetlands. The new definition was taken directly from our Excavation Regulations which deal with large scale permitted uses. No permit is required for a fabric shelter or above ground pool built directly adjacent to the wetlands.



Frozen Organic Maine Wild Blueberries
Delivered to YOUR Community

<https://www.burkehillfarm.com>

520 Blackwoods Rd., Cherryfield, ME 04622
207-460-6215
Owner: Ben Perrin



Uses permitted by right in our Wetland Conservation District as outlined in Article 603 include: forestry and tree farming, agriculture, water impoundment and well supplies, drainage ways, streams, creeks, or other normal run-off water, wildlife refuge, parks and such recreation use as are consistent with the purpose and intention of Article 602, conservation areas and nature trails, and open space. Also, because the new definition of structures versus buildings (adopted in 2024), fabric shelters, driveways, above ground pools, and solar panel arrays are allowed in the Wetland Conservation District.

The Planning Board was asked at the hearing on January 27th to delay putting this amendment on the Warrant in March. A delay would allow time to add a phrase to our Wetland Conservation District Ordinance saying that normal landscaping could not affect wetlands. They declined.

WRITE IN


Theresa Morin School Budget Committee

Theresa is a long-time Richmond resident who has served our town in many capacities throughout the years. She and her husband attended schools in the MRSD district, as have her children, grandchildren, and her great-grandchildren. She will represent Richmond fairly and responsibly.

Please write in Theresa Morin on the School Ballot for membership on the Budget Committee.
Thank you.

Please write in Theresa Morin

Political Advertisement: Paid for by Bonnie McCarthy,
100 Granite Hill Rd, Richmond, NH 03470



If you are a registered voter and qualify to vote by absentee, you will need to do ONE of the following to receive a ballot:

- Mail to your town clerk:
1. a photocopy of your ID
2. your absentee ballot application;



or

- Show the clerk your ID to receive your ballot in person;



or

- Mail/show the clerk your notarized absentee ballot application.



TO TRACK THE STATUS OF YOUR ABSENTEE BALLOT OR REQUEST, VISIT [APP.SOS.NH.GOV](https://app.sos.nh.gov)

Frazier & Son

FURNITURE



233 Old Homestead Highway
 (Route 32, south of the airport)
 Swanzey, New Hampshire
 Monday - Friday 10 to 6
 Saturday 10 to 5 • Sunday Closed

• FAMILY OWNED AND OPERATED FOR MORE THAN 60 YEARS •

(800) 494-3876 • (603) 352-0337

www.frazierandsonfurniture.com

LABOY
 Flexsteel England



At the February 5, 2026 meeting of The Richmond Conservation Commission, the “Normal Landscaping” article was discussed. The Commission determined that the definition was confusing. Does it mean that it should improve the functionality of a driveway to a fabric shelter or does it mean to improve the functionality of the land protecting wetlands with planting of the grounds? Because of the lack of clarity of the definition, the Commission voted unanimously to not support this article.

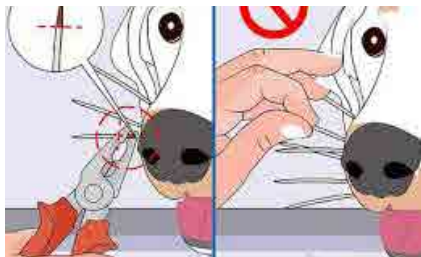
As I have often said: Protecting wetlands starts not in the wetlands, but in the areas that are next to them. We need a buffer between construction and excavation activities to prevent erosion and the potential release of hazardous substances which could negatively affect the function and sustainability of our wetlands. This new definition actually allows the opposite of protection.

In the past, the townspeople have been asked what the most important part of living in Richmond is to them. The overwhelming answer has always been rural character. That rural character in large part consists of our wetlands and the surrounding landscape that support everything from large animals to insects and those beautiful maples which blaze with color in the fall.

Please vote No on Amendment #3 in March and stop the erosion of Richmond’s protection of wetlands.

Richard P. Drew

Open Letter: Reader Shares Porky Tips



Renee Murphy’s excellent article about dogs and porcupines brings to mind a couple of instructive experiences with Bernie “the Froghound” who lived with us in the 1970s. After an expensive trip to the vet for quill removal under anesthesia, we were more careful when

walking her in the evening, always on a leash. One evening, we encountered a porcupine five feet above the ground on a tree adjacent to the road. Feeling safe thanks to Bernie’s leash and the porky’s altitude, we stopped to watch it. Disaster struck when, for reasons still unknown, my wife fell down, letting go of the leash while the porcupine simultaneously lost its grip and fell out of the tree! Bernie, who, unlike Renee’s dogs, was a poor learner, got another snoot full of quills.

With the bank account being rather anemic, I did the work myself this time, wrapping Bernie in a rug to restrain her struggles and using needle-nose pliers to extract a dozen or so quills. I learned a few things that you should know if you attempt quill extraction:

1. Quills are hollow. It is better to leave them whole, maximizing the part to be gripped for removal. Do not cut them;
2. The extremely sharp quills seem smooth, but the business end actually has tiny scales that act as barbs when they swell in moist tissue. Get the quills out before they swell and understand that missed quills can move in only one direction: inward. Over time they can penetrate a considerable distance, even piercing organs;
3. Quills come in a great variety of sizes. Look carefully for the very small ones. Examine the nose and inside of the mouth. When you think the extraction is done, feel for any missed quills by running your hand over all the places that might have been quilled including the feet and legs
4. Consider letting an experienced vet do the job.

Shaun Bennett

LAND FOR SALE

Family Owned
 Serving the Monadnock Region For 53 Years

BLAIS & ASSOCIATES
 REALTORS®

603-352-1972

32 Monadnock Hwy. Keene, NH
 www.blaisrealestate.com

Reader Grateful for Help with Snow

I would like to thank the Richmond Road Agent for keeping Lang Road and adjoining roads in great shape. They have been plowed and well-sanded after every storm, and I feel safe driving on them.

I'd also like to thank some thoughtful neighbors for snow blowing my driveway and for plowing the snow left by the town plow at the end of my driveway. I call both of these neighbors my "earth angels." I (and my back) appreciate it more than I can say.

With much gratitude,

Pam Goodell



Snowfall of January 25th. Photo by Alan Conklin.

Out and About in the Area: The Bridge of Flowers Karen O'Brien



It's almost the end of winter, isn't it? So, in preparation for some well-deserved outings, I thought I'd share some interesting places not far away you might want to explore. Last year, I traveled with a friend to see the Bridge of Flowers in Shelburne Falls, MA. We both had been before: me back in 2015 or so, and my friend had been there even longer ago. I had read it had undergone a reconstruction. I had actually gone back there with a friend a couple of years ago, and it was closed to the public until 2025, so I was eager to see what it looked like now.

The Bridge of Flowers is a unique partnering of volunteers, local government, and businesses. It is free, although donations are accepted. It is "staffed"



**HERBS AND NATIVE
PLANTS FOR SALE**
Call or email for list of plants
Herbs, veggies, flowers

WORKSHOPS & DEMONSTRATIONS

THE GREEN WOMAN'S GARDEN
Karen O'Brien 603-239-6733
www.greenwomansgarden.com

on weekends during the summer, by docents who are actively involved in planting, maintaining, and overseeing the Bridge. The volunteer committee most involved is the Shelburne Falls Area Womens' Club ("SFAWC"), which also holds an annual plant sale to support the garden. My friend and I were lucky enough to encounter a volunteer, even though it was not the weekend. She shared some information about the reconstruction project that boggled my mind. The entire 15' base of soil was removed after all the plants were dug up and saved in various gardens, and parts of the bridge were repaired. The plan was to reduce the amount of soil, which meant that many of the larger trees/shrubs/vines, etc. would not be able to be replanted. They planted more annuals than usual, set in some perennials and shrubs, added much more fencing, etc. and opened officially August 18, 2025 at a cost of 3 million dollars. To see pictures of the reconstruction project, go to their website www.bridgeofflowersmass.org. Right now, the Bridge is a garden in progress, as the plants slowly adapt to their new environment and mature.

The Bridge was first constructed in 1908 for a trolley company to convey raw materials from the railroad yard in Buckland (across the river from Shelburne Falls) to factories nearby. By 1927, the trolley bridge was obsolete, and the company defunct. The concrete structure (which replaced an earlier iron bridge) was too expensive to tear down, and a water line which carried water to Buckland over the Bridge had to be considered. What to do?



HOLMAN CONTRACTING
& LANDSCAPE MATERIALS, INC.

603-242-3660

JOHN HOLMAN

50+ Years Experience
 Roads, Driveways, Site Prep, Septic
 Installation, Site Excavations,
 Trucking, Material Processing & Sales

Three New Services


- Tree Trimming
- Wood Chipping
- Stump Grinding



Enter Antoinette and Walter Burnham, who owned a home which overlooked the Bridge. While out walking, Antoinette noticed that weeds were growing up through the Bridge. She speculated that if weeds could grow, so could flowers. Through Yankee ingenuity and thrift, the SFAWC took on the challenge, providing a \$1,000 grant to start the reconstruction. In April of 1929, 80 loads of loam and fertilizer were placed on the existing Bridge, and the Bridge of Flowers was born.

In the 1980's, Hampshire college students noted the deterioration of the Bridge. In December of 1982, a new plan to reconstruct the Bridge was formed, and all the plants were removed. So, the recent reconstruction is nothing new to the towns of Shelburne Falls and Buckland.

If you'd like to visit, I recommend checking out the website. I saw a couple of different times of operation: one saying it is open 24/7 all year, and the other suggesting specific hours from April through October. You can certainly go whenever, but if you'd like to perambulate among the plants, the gate must be open to enjoy the colors and fragrances of this very special garden.



Richmond
Needs You!

Citizen volunteers needed to help with
 various simple (and important) tasks
 during our next election on

March 10th, 2026

Please call or text Mark Lanen
(603) 338-7665

to get details. Thank you.



Aqua-Aid Systems
 WATER CONDITIONING & FILTRATION

800-252-8484

There are a number of wonderful shops and restaurants on both sides of the Bridge. And if you'd like to make a day of it, there's another interesting garden/sanctuary just a little bit away in Goshen. Stay tuned, and I'll share my experience next month about a funky, though solemn and peaceful, garden vision.

Green Chile Mac and Cheese with Chicken
 Terri O'Rorke

- Ingredients
- 4 Tbsp. unsalted butter
 - 1 large poblano chile, chopped (about 1 cup)
 - 3 Tbsp. all-purpose flour
 - 3 cups whole milk
 - 1/2 tsp. kosher salt
 - 1/4 tsp. ground cumin
 - 8 oz. white processed cheese, cubed (about 1 1/4 cups)
 - 8 oz. sharp Cheddar cheese, shredded (about 2 cups), divided
 - 3 cups shredded rotisserie chicken
 - 12 oz. medium-size shell pasta (about 3 cups), cooked and drained
 - Fresh cilantro, for garnish



Directions

Preheat oven to broil with rack about 10 inches from heat source. Melt butter in a large broiler-safe skillet over medium-high. Add poblano, and cook, stirring often, until tender, about 3 minutes. Add flour, and cook, stirring constantly, until bubbly, about 1 minute. Whisk in milk; cook, whisking often, until mixture thickens, about 5 minutes. Stir in salt and cumin. Add processed cheese and 1 1/2 cups of the Cheddar, stirring until melted, 1 minute. Stir in chicken and cooked pasta; remove from heat. Sprinkle with remaining 1/2 cup Cheddar. Broil in preheated oven until cheese is lightly browned, about 4 minutes. Garnish with cilantro.

**Financial strategies.
One-on-one advice.**
Let's talk about your options.



Annie J Colombie, CFP[®], CRPC[™]
Financial Advisor
650 Park Ave
Keene, NH 03431
603-283-6602

Books by Barbara and Tim Rogers

IT HAPPENED IN NEW HAMPSHIRE: New edition, autographed. Events that shaped NH (and world) history, pub at \$16.95, *Rooster* special: \$12.00

NATURAL WONDERS OF VERMONT: Waterfalls, gorges, a fossilized coral reef, and migrating Snow Geese, pub at \$12.95, *Rooster* special \$3.00

Orders: rogerswrite@gmail.com or 239-6231

Sudoku Puzzle #13

Written and Submitted by Sr. Mary Joseph

	2						7	
9	7	5		6		2	8	4
		4				1		
2			8		4			7
	5		2	7	3		4	
		8	1		6	3		
		2				8		
4	1	3		8		7	5	6
	9						2	

This space donated on behalf of:



Compassionate - Confidential - Free

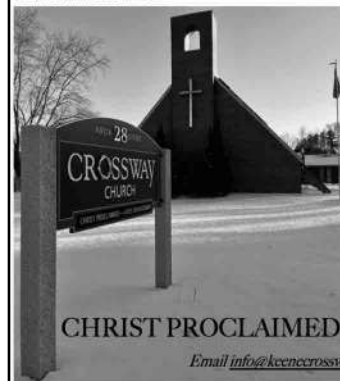
- Pregnancy Testing
- Limited Obstetrical Ultrasound for Pregnancy Confirmation
- Pregnancy Options Counseling
- Training in Parenting Series (T.I.P.S)
- Abortion Recovery Assistance (A.R.A)
- Baby Boutique with supplies for mom and baby

603-358-6460
www.pregnancyresourcekeene.org
nurse@pregnancyresourcekeene.org
100 Washington Street, Keene, NH 03431



Pregnancy Resource Center
of the Monadnock Region

This space donated on behalf of:



Worship and Fellowship Times

Sundays
Pre-K through Grade 6 Sunday School 8:45am
Equipping Class (Teens and Adults) 8:45am
Worship Service 10:00am
Youth Group (Grades 7-12) 2nd & 4th Sundays 12:45-2:45pm
Fellowship Meal follows Worship 1st Sunday of the month

Weekly
Home Fellowships, Men's and Women's Small Groups

28 Arch Street, Keene, NH 03431
(603) 283-0041
keenecrossway.org

CHRIST PROCLAIMED - LIVES TRANSFORMED

Email info@keenecrossway.org for more information

Richmond Historical Society

Richmond, NH The Town and The Forest,
250+ years of living and growing together

<https://www.richmondnhhistoricalsociety.org/>

March Events at the Vets' Hall

Pam Bielunis

Tuesday, March 10th, 11 AM – 7 PM: Town/School Election

Saturday, March 14th, 9 AM: Town Meeting

Thursday, March 19th, 6:30 PM: Open Mic

Saturday, March 21st, 2 PM: Camp Takodah Talk

Graeme Noseworthy's Talk Rescheduled

Lenny Solomon, President
Richmond Historical Society



The Richmond Historical Society (“RHS”) has rescheduled Graeme Noseworthy’s talk that had to be canceled in January due to bad weather. His talk will now occur on **Saturday, March 21st at 2 PM** in the Vets’ Hall. Graeme is the President of the Camp Takodah summer camp on Cass Pond.

Mr. Noseworthy has been affiliated with the camp for decades and oversaw the programs and growth of this Richmond institution throughout his tenure. His talk will feature the history and relationship of Camp Takodah and the town through these many years. Many Richmond residents attended at the camp in their youth so maybe we can encourage some to share some of their stories.

The talk is jointly sponsored by the Richmond Historical Society and the Richmond Library. Light refreshments will be offered, and all are invited. In any event we hope to see you.



(603) 239-6164
library@richmondnh.us
19 Winchester Road
Richmond, NH 03470

www.richmondnh.us

Tuesday 3-7
Wednesday 9-12
Thursday 3-7
Saturday 10-2

Thank you to everyone who has supported The Richmond Historical Society! Your support enables us to provide programs free to our community. If you have not donated and would like to, please send your tax-deductible contribution to RHS, c/o Lenny Solomon, 34 Quaker Lane, Richmond NH 03470.

Library News

Wendy O’Brien

Library Calendar for March

Wednesdays, 10 AM: Storytime

Saturdays, 10 AM – Noon: Drop-in Knitting Circle

Wed., March 4th, 11 AM: Richmond Reminisces

Tues., March 17th, 6 PM: Tuesday Book Club,

Trespasses, Louise Kennedy

Richmond Reminisces is Back!

After a brief holiday hiatus, Richmond Reminisces has returned! Meeting on the first Wednesday of the month at 11 AM, this trip down Memory Lane is a great chance to meet your neighbors and talk about all things Richmond. John A. Lewis anchors each meeting by reviewing a year in the life of Harold J. Dickinson, who kept meticulous daily diaries. Please join us!



The Book Shed

For those of you interested in the Civil War, we are pleased to announce that a lovely collection of Civil War books has been donated for sale in our Book Shed. Come by and peruse anytime when the Library is open! We appreciate monetary donations, but even more appreciate the books finding a good new home.



**Toys, Pottery
Tools, Old Radios
Old Cars or Car Parts
Old Fans or Machines**

**Danny Wahl
Pickin67@gmail.com**

Want to Buy!

We are currently looking to purchase many different items, including but not limited to these.

Call before you throw anything out!



**Musical Instruments
Stoneware, Dishes
Vintage Clothing, Frames
Photography, Pictures**

603-381-7444 Call or Text

New Titles

This is Not About Us, Allegra Goodman
The Hadacol Boogie, James Lee Burke
Wolf Hour, Jo Nesbo
Jigsaw, Jonathan Kellerman
It's Not Her, Mary Kubica

Town Clerk Tidbits

Karen O'Brien

I have been patiently waiting (as I assume you all have been, too!) to find out more about the debacle surrounding **state vehicle inspections**. I finally received a communication from the state and I'd like to share it with you.

According to the January/February issue of *The Examiner*, a publication put out by the NH Department of Motor Vehicles, here is the following update from the DMV:

New Hampshire had planned to eliminate mandatory annual vehicle inspections for passenger cars starting January 31, 2026. However, a federal judge issued a preliminary injunction blocking that change, ruling the state must continue the inspection and emission program until federal requirements (Clean Air Act/EPA approval) are met. As a result, vehicle inspections are still required. However, due to the public's reasonable expectations that the program was ending on January 31, 2026, the Department of Safety is extending the deadline to obtain a state inspection to April 10, 2026, for any vehicle with an inspection that expires prior to March 2026.

It's **time for elections!** Mark your calendars since voting will be happening on March 10th, both town and school elections, with the Town Meeting to follow on March 14th. There are no contests, but there is the possibility of a write-in vote campaign for the unfilled Planning Board seat. Here are the candidates:

- Selectman – William Daniels
- Moderator – Mark Lanen
- Supervisor of the Checklist – Pamela Bielunis
- Library Trustee – Rebecca Haskins
- Trustee of Trust Funds – Susan Perry
- Cemetery Trustee – Gerald Merrifield
- Planning Board – Lisa Traeger

Time again to license your dogs! We have already been busy accepting payment for dog licenses for 2026. We do plan to hold a Top Dog contest again, so get some really adorable pictures of your favorite mutt and send them our way. Entries will be accepted until the end of April, and winners will receive the honor of being "TOP DOG" in Richmond for the year.

Services Planned for Melinda Mae Hildreth Honkala (July 21, 1949 – January 31, 2026)



We are sorry to report that Melinda Honkala lost her battle with Alzheimer's on January 31st. A Celebration of Life Service will be held in memory of Melinda Honkala at 11 AM on April 25, 2026 at the Keene Unitarian Church at 69 Washington St. To read more about the full life of this remarkable Richmond woman, please visit: [Melinda Honkala Obituary January 31, 2026 - Cheshire Family Funeral Homes and Crematories](#)



Thirty-Two Degrees and Perfect Renee Murphy

Last year, around this time, I could not wait for the snow to go away.

I was done with it. Done with boots. Done with shoveling. Done with stepping carefully. I just wanted to feel the ground again. Dry ground. Solid ground. I wanted flowers and longer days and sun that actually warmed your face instead of just lighting up the snow. This year was different. When the snow came and kept coming, I pulled out the snowshoes.

At first, I packed down a short path into the woods with the dogs. Then, the next day, a little farther. And the next, a little farther still. Each time I went out, I cut a bit more trail through the two and a half feet of snow. It was hard work. Slow going. Just steady steps forward. I am hoping to carve it all the way to the little pond we used to walk to before the snow came.

Little by little, what felt like a wall became something we could move through.

Now, when the sky is bright, and it is thirty-two degrees and perfect, I step onto that packed trail instead of staring at the drifts. The dogs know the route. I can walk without sinking. The woods are quiet. The cold feels clean instead of endless.

I still love spring. I love the first crocus pushing through. I love the peepers starting up one night out of nowhere. I love the warmer sun and the longer light at the end of the day.

But I also know what comes with it. The driveway turns soft. The trail gets muddy. Towels end up by the door for wet dogs. And just when you think you will sit outside for a minute, the bugs show up. Not full blackfly season. That comes later. Just the early ones. Enough to make you start running and swatting and wondering how it can already be that time.

Then the flowers come for real. The air turns warm. We roll the windows down and say, "Now, this is what I have been waiting for".

And before long we are sweating through the humidity, chasing shade, counting down to a break in the heat.

Then fall arrives. Cooler mornings. That first crisp day where you need a sweatshirt again. The leaves turning. The light getting softer. Even the rain feels different. The evenings darker a little earlier each week. And we say, "This is my favorite season." Until winter comes back and means winter again.

For a long time, I think I was always waiting for the next season. Waiting for it to get easier. Warmer. Brighter. Less muddy. Less buggy. Less dark. But this year, cutting that trail through the snow, I realized something. The seasons do not change for me. I have to change with them.

Thirty-two degrees feels different when you have made a path. Humidity feels different when you know October will come. Dark evenings feel different when you have walked through a real winter.

Maybe living here is not about preferring one season over another. Maybe it is about learning to make yourself at home in each of them. Spring will come. The mud will dry. The peepers will start. The bugs will get bold. But for now, on these bright, solid days, I am not in such a hurry.

Thirty-two degrees and perfect is enough.

If you are already looking ahead, I would love to hear what you are waiting for. The first peepers. The first crocus. The first dry stretch of driveway. Or maybe you are one of the few who secretly loves a bright winter day.

Send your first signs of spring or what you are most looking forward to, and we will share them in next month's *Rooster*. However, the season decides to show up.

"...the Founding Fathers gave the free press the protection it must have to fulfill its essential role in our democracy. The press was to serve the governed, not the governors."

U.S. Supreme Court Justice Hugo Black

Support your Richmond Rooster

From a friend on Old Homestead Hwy.





NORTON, ABERT & JORDAN, P.C.

Wills ♦ Trusts ♦ Estate Planning
Elder Law ♦ Estate & Trust Administration



KEENE, NEW HAMPSHIRE
www.nortonabertlaw.com
603-355-8858

Record-breaking Year for Savings Bank of Walpole, Douglas Cuddle Toys, KNE-FM Good Friends Campaign

Keene, NH – Douglas Cuddle Toys and Monadnock Media Group/KNE-FM, along with Savings Bank of Walpole (SBW), helped raise over \$45,000 during the 2025 Good Friends campaign which benefited Feeding Tiny Tummies, The Community Kitchen, and Keene Housing Kids Collaborative. The Good Friends campaign is an annual tradition that takes place during the holiday season. Pictured below from left to right are Teri Pearsall, Mark Bodin, Scott Clarke, Joanna Zambella, Sally Mallay, Christine Clarke, Barb Weismann, Danielle Ruffo, Carrie Sevene, Kristen Noonan, Shelby Arlen, and Steve Hame.



Appeal from Magzalea Farm and Sanctuary

Thanks to those who donate throughout the year, donate monthly and sent year end donations to the sanctuary; we were able to recover from the debt of 2025. In 2025, we had to dip into our emergency funds more than any other year. We had an above average number of medical bills and needs. Hay costs increased. Some grain, supplements and meds also increased as well as little things here and there that still add up. So, thanks to you, those funds were replenished, and we hope to not have to touch them. However, having those funds available immediately during an emergency is critical and really, just the responsible thing to have when caring for so many that rely on us.

Donations may be mailed to:
Magzalea Farm and Sanctuary
218 West Lake Road
Fitzwilliam, NH 03447

Staying warm!



Standby Generators • Energy Storage
Sales, Install & Service

Residential • Commercial • Municipal

powersguaranteed.com | 800-853-7202

*Richmond Community
United Methodist Church*

PASTOR STACEY HARTFORD

Worship Services
Sundays 9am



All are welcome to join our church family!

Whipple Hill Temporary Bridge

(photos by Renée Murphy)



Select Board Warrant Articles 5 through 18 as Presented at the PreWarrant Hearing of Wednesday, February 11, 2026, at 7 PM

Article 05 – To see if the Town will vote to change the appointment of a Supervisor of the Checklist from a **6-year term** to a **3-year term**. Recommended by the Selectmen. (Majority vote required)

Article 06 – To see if the Town will increase the Total Disabled Veteran’s Tax Credit from **\$1,500** to **\$2,250**. Recommended by the Selectmen. (Majority vote required)

Article 07 – To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$359,833** for Town Administration. Recommended by the Selectmen.

Operating Budget	Department/Office	Approved 2025	Requested 2026	
Executive (4130-4139)	Selectmen's Office	\$81,731	\$77,700	
Election, Registration, and Vital Statistics (4140-4149)	1. Moderator	\$1,599	\$1,169	
	2. Supervisors of the Checklist	\$2,390	\$3,164	
	3. Town Clerk	\$57,313	\$58,743	
	TOTAL	\$61,302	\$63,076	
Financial Administration (4150-4151)	1. Tax Collector	\$20,822	\$20,845	
	2. Treasurer	\$6,552	\$6,671	
	TOTAL	\$27,374	\$27,516	
Assessors (4152)	Selectmen's Office	\$12,000	\$12,000	
Legal Expense (4153)	Selectmen's Office	\$30,000	\$25,000	
Planning and Zoning (4191-4193)	Land Use	\$16,597	\$16,357	
General Government / General Buildings (4194)	Selectmen's Office	Budget	\$39,774	\$38,303
	Selectmen's Office	Loan Interest	\$0	\$42,000
	TOTAL	\$39,774	\$80,303	
Cemeteries (4195)	Cemetery Trustees	\$21,500	\$20,418	
Insurance (4196)	Selectmen's Office	\$22,500	\$24,463	
Audit (4199)	Selectmen's Office	\$13,600	\$13,000	
TOTAL		\$326,378	\$359,833	

Article 08 – Public Safety To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$230,659** for Public Safety. Recommended by the Selectmen.

Operating Budget	Department/Office	Approved 2025	Requested 2026
POLICE (4210)	Selectman	\$99,000	\$92,000
AMBULANCE (4215)	Fire and Rescue	\$18,746	\$40,303
FIRE AND RESCUE (4220-4229)	Fire and Rescue	\$79,835	\$89,256
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT (4290-4298)	Emergency Management	\$9,210	\$9,100
	TOTAL	\$206,791	\$230,659

Article 09 – Highway, Streets & Sanitation To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$454,021** for Highway, Streets and Sanitation.

Operating Budget	Department/Office	Approved 2025	Requested 2026
Highways & Streets (4312)	Highway Road Agent	\$349,755	\$357,521
Street Lighting (4316)	Selectmen	\$1,000	\$1,500
Sanitation / Solid Waste (4324)	Selectment	\$91,638	\$95,000
TOTAL		\$442,393	\$454,021

32 Monadnock Hwy, Rt. 12S
 Keene, New Hampshire 03431
 OFFICE: (603) 352-1972 x204
 CELL: (603) 355-0720
 FAX: (603) 352-0545
 EMAIL: ral4754@gmail.com



BLAIS
 & ASSOCIATES
 REALTORS®
 www.blaisrealestate.com

Rick Lewis
 Associate Broker




Rick Lewis
 DRONE PHOTOGRAPHY SERVICES
 LICENSED • FAA CERTIFIED • INSURED

RAL
 Aerial

COMMERCIAL • RESIDENTIAL • RETAIL
 CONSTRUCTION • MARKETING & MEDIA • LEGAL

P.O. BOX 10065 • SWANZEY, NH 03446
 (603) 355-0720 • RAL4754@GMAIL.COM

Article 10 – Health & Welfare To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$19,186** for Health and Welfare.

Operating Budget	Department/Office	Approved 2025	Requested 2026
Health Administration (4411)	Selectmen	\$500	\$500
Health Agencies & Other (4415-4419)	Welfare	\$7,501	\$9,700
Welfare Direct Assistance (4441-4442)	Welfare	\$9,186	\$8,986
	TOTAL	\$17,187	\$19,186

Health Agencies & Others

Organization	Approved 2025	Requested 2026
Community Volunteer Transportation Company	\$250	\$0
Home Healthcare, Hospice & Community Services	\$1,000	\$2,500
Hundred Nights Inc.	\$500	\$500
Monadnock Family Services	\$1,496	\$1,000
Southwestern Community Services	\$2,000	\$2,700
The Community Kitchen	\$2,255	\$3,000
TOTAL	\$7,501	\$9,700

Article 11 – Culture & Recreation To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$52,560** for Culture and Recreation.

Operating Budget	Department/Office	Approved 2025	Requested 2026
Parks & Recreation (4520-4529)	Parks & Recreation	\$7,700	\$6,800
Library (4550-4559)	Library	\$45,196	\$45,760
Agricultural Commission (4589)	Agricultural Commission	\$500	\$0
	TOTAL	\$53,396	\$52,560

Article 12 – To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$10,000** to be added to the Highway Vehicle and Equipment Capital Reserve Fund. Recommended by the Selectmen. (Majority vote required)

Article 13 – To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$20,000** to be added to the Municipal Buildings Capital Reserve Fund. Recommended by the Selectmen. (Majority vote required)

Article 14 – To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$10,000** to be added to the Public Safety Radio & Communication Equipment Expendable Trust Fund. Recommended by the Selectmen. (Majority vote required)

Article 15 – To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$25,000** to be added to the Fire Department Equipment Expendable Trust Fund. Recommended by the Selectmen. (Majority vote required)

Article 16 – To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$50,000** to be added to the Fire Truck Capital Reserve Fund. Recommended by the Selectmen. (Majority vote required)

Fund	Approved 2025	Requested 2026
Highway Vehicle & Equipment Capital Reserve	\$15,000	\$10,000
Municipal Buildings Capital Reserve	\$25,000	\$20,000
Public Safety Radio & Communication	\$5,000	\$10,000
Fire Department Equipment	\$25,000	\$25,000
Fire Truck Capital Reserve	\$50,000	\$50,000
Property Revaluation Trust	\$10,000	\$0
TOTAL	\$130,000	\$115,000

Article 17 – To hear any reports of Agents, Committees, etc. heretofore chosen and to take any action thereon.

Article 18 – To take any action that may legally come before the meeting.

SUMMARY OF APPROPRIATIONS

	Approved 2025	Requested 2026
Capital Reserve & Special Articles	\$225,000	\$117,250
Operating Budget	\$1,046,145	\$1,116,259
TOTAL	\$1,271,145	\$1,233,509



Solution to Puzzle #13 from Page 7

6	2	1	5	4	8	9	7	3
9	7	5	3	6	1	2	8	4
3	8	4	7	2	9	1	6	5
2	3	6	8	9	4	5	1	7
1	5	9	2	7	3	6	4	8
7	4	8	1	5	6	3	9	2
5	6	2	4	1	7	8	3	9
4	1	3	9	8	2	7	5	6
8	9	7	6	3	5	4	2	1



Keep your money local.

We're proud to be the Monadnock Region's truly local bank, committed to giving back to our community and providing customers with the best products and services in town.



EMERGENCY: POLICE/FIRE/RESCUE 9-1-1

The Richmond Rooster
an Independent Domestic Non-Profit Corporation



Richmond Rooster Staff

Editor/Co-Publisher: Fran Heap
Design/Production/Co-Publisher: Renée Murphy
Consultant: John Boccalini
Proofreader: Lew Whittum
Treasurer: Renée Murphy
Distribution: Wendy O'Brien
Social Media/Staff Photographer: Debra Carroll

Advertising Rates
Effective as of 2023

Yearly Rates

Business card size.....\$165
Double size.....\$330
1/4 page.....\$380
1/2 page.....\$630
Full page..... \$1250

Monthly Rates

Business card size.....\$15
Double size.....\$30
1/4 page.....\$38
1/2 page.....\$63
Full page.....\$125

Ad Dimensions:

Business Card.....2" h x 3 5/8" w
Double Vertical.....4 1/8" h x 3 5/8" w
Double Horizontal.....2" h x 7 1/2" w
1/4 page.....4.9" h x 3 5/8" w
1/2 page.....4.9" h x 7 1/2" w

Online Subscriptions Free

Snail Mail Subscription (1 year) \$30

Email: therichmondrooster@gmail.com

Stories are presented as fiction and are not intended to be historically accurate in content. Public notices, committee reports, articles, press releases, and letters to the editor are printed as received with minor changes according to space. *The Richmond Rooster* welcomes comments and article contributions. **Deadline is the 10th of each month.**

Email – therichmondrooster@gmail.com

Rooster Online: <http://therichmondrooster.net>

Lost or Found Pet?

Visit tenthousandeyes.org

or call MHS at (603) 352-9011, Ext. 101

Town Administration

Selectmen: William Daniels, Doug Bersaw,
Andrew Wallace

Selectmen Meeting at Town Hall – Mon. 5:30 P.M.
Public is welcome to attend. Please call 239-4232 for an appointment if you have an item for the agenda.

Town Administrator: Susan Harrington
Administrative Assistant: Jennifer Thompson

Mon. 9 AM – Noon, 3 PM – 5:30 PM
Wed. 9 AM – 1 PM
Thurs. 9 AM – Noon

For town business outside of the above hours, please call 239-4232 for a Monday evening appointment.

Town Clerk: Karen O'Brien

Deputy Town Clerk: Cheryl Brake

Tues. 12:30 PM - 4:30 PM
Wed. 9 AM - Noon & 1 PM - 4 PM
Thur. 8 AM - Noon

For Tues. appointments (5 PM, 5:30 PM, 6 PM), call 239-6202 or email the clerk the week prior.

Tax Collector: Steve Boscarino

Deputy Tax Collector: Mary Rogers

Mon. 4 PM – 6 PM, Wed. 9 AM – Noon

Planning Board: Held at Taylor/VanBrocklin Bldg.
1st & 3rd Tuesdays of the month - 7:00 PM

Transfer Station and Recycling Facility: 239-8136

Tues. 8 AM – 4 PM, Thurs. 8 AM – 7 PM
Sat. 8 AM – 5 PM

Library: Wendy O'Brien, Library Director, 239-6164

Tues. 3 PM – 7 PM, Wed. 9 AM – Noon
Thurs. 3 PM – 7 PM, Sat. 10 AM – 2 PM

Police (Non Emergency): 355-2000

Fire/Rescue (Non Emergency): 239-4466

Fire Warden:

Fire Permit: Buzz Shaw, 239-4238

Selectmen – 239-4232

Town Clerk – 239-6202

Tax Collector – 239-6106

Highway Department – 283-6619

Taylor/VanBrocklin Building – 283-6649

Building Maint.: Pam Bielunis

[Phone number area codes are 603, unless otherwise noted.]

Visit town online: <http://richmond.nh.gov> or in person at
Town Hall at 105 Old Homestead Highway.



Tri-State Restoration, LLC

**Need help?
Call TSR!**

603-352-6802



WATER DAMAGE



FIRE DAMAGE



SMOKE DAMAGE



MOLD REMEDIATION

*Proudly serving New Hampshire,
Vermont & Massachusetts*

tristaterestoration.info



*The Richmond Rooster
60 Whipple Hill Richmond, NH 03470*

BULK RATE
US POSTAGE PAID
PERMIT NO. 4
WINCHESTER, NH
03470

**CURRENT RESIDENT
RICHMOND, NH 03470**