73 ODs treated at LRGH in 6 months

Hospital officials detail strain put on their medical & security resources

By Michael Kitch
The Laconia Daily Sun

LACONIA — Nowhere has abuse of heroin and other opiates been felt more keenly than at the emergency department of Lakes Region General Hospital, where 73 patients were treated for overdoses during the last six months of 2014 and, since the turn of the year, the pace has not slowed.

“These are very resource-intensive patients,” said Kendra Peaslee, director of Emergency Services at LRGH, who stressed that treating those who have overdosed places heavy demands on the medical and security personnel of the hospital, often at the expense of other patients requiring care.

An overdose of an opiate, whether from illicit heroin or prescription medication, attacks the part of the brain that regulates respiration, causing breathing to become slow and shallow. As breathing slows, levels of carbon dioxide in the body are elevated, further slowing and ultimately stopping the breathing and heart rates.

Peaslee said that when patients reach the emergency room the immediate priority is to restore their breathing. Those transported by ambulance have been administered Narcan, or naloxone, a medication that reverses the effects of the opiate, by emergency medical technicians.

Lawmakers complete county budget work at +1.3%

By Roger Ansiden
The Laconia Daily Sun

LACONIA — The Belknap County Convention Monday night approved a $26,828,694 budget, which increases the net amount to be raised by 2015 property taxes by 1.3 percent. The bills will be passed on the 11 municipalities for collection.

The convention made only one change in the working budget it had approved last week, shifting $100,000 from the Finance Department budget to a newly created personnel management reserve budget line which gives the Belknap County Commission authority, with convention Executive Committee approval, to fill the now vacant county finance director position through either hiring a new person or contracting with an outside service provider to perform some of the functions handled by the finance office.

see COUNTY page 31

Frustrated selectman advocates tearing Belmont Mill down

Colleagues convince Cormier to go along with making another attempt to engage residents

By Gary Ober
The Laconia Daily Sun

BELMONT — Selectman Ron Cormier came within a hair’s breadth of making a motion to tear down the historic Belmont Mill last night but was convinced by fellow selectmen to reach out again to the voters.

Cormier, who has been wrestling with the future of the mill for about 11 years, made his threat in the wake of the resounding March 10 defeat of a $3.4 million bond issue to rehabilitate the building and remove it for Town Office purposes.

“Knock the friggin’ thing down,” said Cormier in frustration. “Every time we try to do something, nobody approves.”

Even more frustrating to Cormier was the town voting down putting $125,000 into the capital account for building maintenance. see MILL page 10

Where’s Jonah?
MILL from page one

nance, which affects all town buildings and not just the mill.

Selectman Chair Ruth Mooney and Selectman Jon Pike were both disappointed and disheartened by the number of people who said no to the 467 of the 631 who voted — but told Cornier they weren’t quite ready to give up on it. There are about 4,500 registered voters in Belmont said Town Clerk Cynthia DeRoy.

Pike and Mooney suggested that the selectmen bring the mill issue back to the people and let them decide what to do with it and how to pay for it.

Board members and Town Administrator Jeanne Beaudin suggested inviting all the people who personally wrote letters to the editor to local newspapers — for or against — along with the anyone else in Belmont to come to a facilitated meeting about the future of the mill.

Tentatively scheduled for May 6, the selectmen are searching for a possible venue, hoping the meeting room at the Corner Meeting House is too small.

“Put the (exams) on them,” said Pike, who was ranked by the number of people who accused the Board of Selectmen of putting together a plan “without consulting anyone.”

Selectmen held two separate public hearings, discussed the plans at a number of regular selectmen’s meetings, made use of a SB-2 Deliberative Session, and invited the general public to attend two public presentations given by the engineering company that designed the rehabilitation and plans for town offices. The Budget Committee also held one public hearing and discussed the mill in a different public meeting.

At the most, and with the exception of the SB-2 hearing, about 20 people attended. Local newspapers reported on nearly every meeting held by the board with the exception of the last public hearing because there were few voters in attendance.

With the exception of two newspaper reporters, the Town Clerk and her assistant, no one was at Belmont’s selectman’s meeting last night.

Town Administrator Jeanne Beaudin said the selectmen should support hiring a person for a nominal wage to come in and videotape the selectman’s meeting for rebroadcast on Lakes Region Public Access television. She also suggested, and selectmen agreed, to create a Facebook page for discussion on the mill.

The town has four more years on its agreement with the U.S. Housing and Urban Development, Community Development Block Grant used to rehabilitate the mill in 1992.

Restored in 1995 and 1996 the town relied heavily on the 25-year federal grant awarded in 1994 that came with the stipulation that the mill would be used for middle- to lower-income purposes or the town would have to pay back $50,000 a year to reimburse the federal government.

With the near failure of the fourth floor two years ago, the mill is no longer home to the Lakes Region Community College Culinary Arts program — one of their larger rent payers.

The day care center has out-grown its space there and will be relocating to a nearby business park. Belknap Family Health Care occupies the third floor and the Senior Center and the Parks and Recreation Department have office space there. All of the aforementioned uses are in keeping with the tenants of the loan, however, town offices would not be.

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