

# Days numbered for decaying sculpture in Opechee Park

By RICK GREEN  
THE LACONIA DAILY SUN

LACONIA — Time appears to have run out for a huge wooden sculpture in Opechee Park depicting an American Indian and called Keewakwa Abenaki Keenabeh, or “The Defiant One.”

The 34-year-old statue has been ravaged by rot and insects, has a pole propping it up from the

back and is surrounded by a fence.

City Manager Scott Myers said the safest path is to have it disassembled and removed. No date was immediately set.

“We are at the point right now where we need to take that statue down,” he said at the Monday night City Council meeting. “We will look to dismantle when conditions allow.”

Nobody on the council objected.

The alternative would be to try to remove it in one piece, but that could cost more than \$7,000, and the statue could fall apart in the process, Myers said. Restoration, if it is even possible, could cost a like amount.

The 36-foot, 12-ton red oak piece, created by Peter Wolf Toth, depicts the face and headdress of

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The Laconia Police Department's Bryan Moynihan, shown at the Laconia Middle School, where he recently started as the new school resource officer. (Alan MacRae for The Laconia Daily Sun)

## Middle School gets own police officer

By RICK GREEN  
THE LACONIA DAILY SUN

LACONIA — Sitting in the office of Laconia Middle School Principal Alison Bryant, City Councilor Bruce Cheney glanced out the window overlooking Opechee Bay and remarked on how much things have changed since he was police chief.

“Back in the ‘70s or ‘80s when I was in law enforcement, we were asked not to come into the schools because it had a negative effect on the students,” Cheney said. “We negotiated to the point where we started having officers come here for lunch, to sort of open that up.”

“Look how far we’ve come.”

Last week, the school got its own police officer.

Officer Bryan Moynihan reports to the school every morning, meets with staff and students and provides a first line of defense if a serious problem should arise.

Embedded at the school, he gets to know the young people, serves as a role model and helps defuse problems before they occur.

The City Council agreed to fund the new school resource officer position last year. Moynihan was a natural choice because he already knows many students through coaching youth soccer and teaching

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## Tire-popping potholes get City Council attention



A traffic barrel directs drivers around a freshly-patched pothole on Union Avenue on Tuesday morning. (Adam Drapcho/The Laconia Daily Sun)

By RICK GREEN  
THE LACONIA DAILY SUN

LACONIA — Mayor Ed Engler on Monday made a plea for patience over a plethora of potholes, but Councilor Bruce Cheney called for quick action about a particularly rough section of Union Avenue.

“I’m not questioning the competency or commitment of the Public Works Department,” Cheney said at the council meeting. “I’m questioning, is there some way of dealing with the problem?”

He was concerned with an area near O’Reilly Auto Parts and VIP Tires, 1033 Union Ave., where an orange barrel was in a large pothole for days, diverting northbound traffic into the center turning lane.

Crews were out early Tuesday repairing this and other potholes on Union Avenue, one of the city’s busiest streets.

A pothole story last week in The Laconia Daily Sun drew numerous Facebook comments, including some from people complaining about Union Avenue.

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## QUESTION of the week

see page 2

### Add color for healthy snacking

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TODAY'S NEW HIT COUNTRY

Laconia Police Chief Matt Canfield speaks on the benefits of a school resource officer as newly appointed SRO Bryan Moynihan listens during an interview at Laconia Middle School on Thursday, March 21. (Alan MacRae for The Laconia Daily Sun)



## SROs placed in a position where they can help kids

SRO from page 1

drug education courses.

Another officer, Steve Orton, works at the high school, where he also serves as an assistant football coach.

### Building trust

Chief Matt Canfield said students come to learn an officer is someone they can trust, someone who can help them, even someone in a career they might be interested in pursuing themselves one day.

"Aside from the criminal enforcement, you take kids who are from broken homes or they see some bad stuff at home, and to have that positive influence through a police officer can make a huge difference," Canfield said.

"Having that presence, and that relationship in place, kids feel a lot more free to come up and say, 'Hey, this is what's going on at home. This isn't quite right,' or 'Hey, I know what happened with that case.'"

"It's the same thing with community policing. There's a big difference between sitting in a car versus being out talking to people. You get so much more information."

### School shootings

In the back of the mind for students, teachers and parents is the fear of violence.

Education Week documented 24 school shootings that led to injuries or deaths last year in the United States. A total of 35 people were killed and 79 others were injured.

"The likelihood of that happening in Laconia is very slim, given the percentages, but it is a very real possibility," Canfield said. "We've never had a school shooting, but certainly we have had real threats that have been dealt with."

Local schools have increased security with cameras, secured entry points and other upgrades.

Police train for active shooter situations in scenarios that are made realistic with screaming and fake blood. Bryant, the principal, participated last October, pretending she was a hostage in one drill and that she had been killed in another simulation.

### Internet safety

Police are also concerned about Internet crimes that harm young people.

Bullying that takes place on social media can escalate. Inappropriate pictures may get spread online.

Another role of police is to provide drug education. It begins at the elementary school level and continues at the middle and high schools.

### Police presence

Moynihan, 31, concentrates on getting to know students and relating to them. He may sit with them at lunch or shoot some hoops with them in the afternoon.

"Sometimes there are issues with kids at the school," he said. "I try to de-escalate the situation. A lot of that is getting to know the kids."

Bryant is pleased to have a police officer nearby. "I spoke with the staff and explained to them that, on any given day, we have 450 of the most precious beings in our city right here in our building," she said.

"To have the police department and the City Council to support having an officer here speaks very highly of how we value our kids."

To contact Rick Green, send him an email at [rick@laconiadailysun.com](mailto:rick@laconiadailysun.com).

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