

## Conversion of Barton Motel to condos clears first hurdle

BY RICK GREEN  
THE LACONIA DAILY SUN

LACONIA — Backers of a conceptual plan to tear down Barton's Motel told the Laconia Planning Board that they want to build high-end condominiums of 2,000 square feet or more, each with

a panoramic view of Paugus Bay, and day docks for residents' boats.

The Planning Board on Tuesday approved the concept, meaning the developer will now draw up a specific site plan for approval after a public hearing. Such conceptual reviews are part of a new performance zoning system under which projects that meet certain city goals can be more easily approved.

In this case, the 32 units planned for the 4.25-acre site at 1330 Union Ave., would exceed the approximate 25 units that would be allowed for the property. Under performance zoning, however, the board can waive that density restriction for a project that would boost the tax base and the local economy.

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# The Laconia Daily Sun

FRIDAY

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 4, 2019

VOL. 20 NO. 84

LACONIA, N.H.

527-9299

FREE

## School district turns up the brightness

BY RICK GREEN  
THE LACONIA DAILY SUN

LACONIA — It is simply brighter this year in the Laconia School District.

Nearly every bulb in every classroom, hallway, gymnasium and office has been replaced with LEDs that are casting a whole new light on things.

They are more energy-efficient and come with dimmers and sensors that turn them on when someone enters a room and off when no one is around.

District Facilities Director Bill Caruso showed off the new equipment in a tour of Laconia Middle School on Tuesday.

"They are quite amazing," he said. "Each light fixture has its own sensor. They did a one-for-one replacement. They would take out one fixture and put in one fixture.

"The amount of light we have is amazing compared to what it looked like before. You just wouldn't think of that until after the fact."

A contractor did the \$4.8 million project. A total of 6,100 light fixtures — about three for each of the district's roughly 2,000 students — were upgraded in work that is to eventually pay for itself in energy savings. Other work and equip-

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Laconia School District Facilities Director Bill Caruso snaps a fixture in place on the retrofit LED 2x4 light panels at Laconia Middle School on Tuesday morning. The district this year replaced 6,100 light fixtures, the energy savings from which district officials say will pay for themselves over the long term. (Karen Bobotas photo/for The Laconia Daily Sun)

**Another bomb found in city**

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**Belknap County indictments**

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# State budget has additional money for municipalities, schools

By RICK GREEN  
THE LACONIA DAILY SUN

LACONIA — The city will receive an additional \$828,087 in state aid in the two-year state budget signed by Gov. Chris Sununu last week.

City Manager Scott Myers said the city will receive half that amount this year, about \$414,000, and the remainder next year.

In anticipation of this money, the City Council amended the municipal budget before adoption in July, increasing revenue by \$414,000 and adding an additional appropriation of \$414,000 to a contingency account, Myers said.

It's not clear yet if or what they will be spent on.

"The funds, when available, are subject to further action by the City Council," Myers said. "Staff will have recommendations at the appropriate time but it will ultimately be a City Council decision."

Meanwhile, the Laconia School District will get a \$1.46 million stabilization grant from the state in the 2020 fiscal year under the new state budget, according to a list compiled by

the New Hampshire Municipal Association.

Superintendent Steve Tucker said Wednesday the district was still awaiting the official notification about the size of its stabilization grant.

"It will be helpful," he said. "We've faced some challenges in the past and significant cuts had to be made, even two years ago.

"We need to sit down at the table and see what we need to do to support education in Laconia. This just gives us another opportunity to evaluate what we are doing. Hopefully, we can come up with ideas to support schools and kids."

Belmont will receive an additional \$319,069 over two years, and its school district will get a \$1.2 million stabilization grant for the 2020 fiscal year. Gilford will receive \$172,961 and its school district, \$363,818. Franklin will receive \$458,621, and its school district, \$4 million.

Tilton will receive \$151,073, and its district, \$566,664. Plymouth will receive \$170,430, and its district, \$1.7 million.

Not every local town and school district will come out ahead, however. While Meredith will receive \$176,373, no stabilization grant is included for its school district.

## Laconia gets \$2.3 million federal grant to bolster student services

By RICK GREEN  
THE LACONIA DAILY SUN

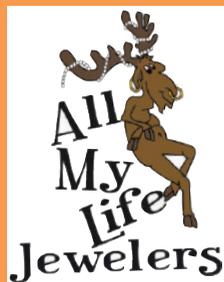
LACONIA — The school district will expand after-school programs, increase mental health services and boost social work programs under \$3.2 million in grant money it will receive from the U.S. Education and Justice Departments.

"The Laconia School District is so excited to be the recipient of these federal grants, which will help us to improve student wellness by continuing to expand our supports and services for all of our students within our Multi-Tiered System of Support for Behavioral Health and Wellness," said Harrington-Bacote, Laconia School District's Office of School Wellness Program Administrator.

The money is intended to support efforts to prevent youth violence in the school system, bolster student and family engagement and better support school and community-based mental health services.

The grant was announced Wednesday by Sens. Jeanne Shaheen

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ment upgrades will reduce heating costs and save water.

Maintenance will be easier.

"The great thing is that the difference in maintenance in replacing ballasts and things like that," Caruso said. "Most of these fixtures have a 15- to 20-year lifespan.

"You might get one or two of these that go out, but we were replacing a lot of ballasts. That was just an old technology type of thing and a lot of maintenance went into keeping those up."

As part of the project, new switches were installed that dim the lights.

Also, the new lights are bright as soon as they are turned on. Gone are the days when gymnasium lights had to warm up before they were bright.

"It almost felt like 10 minutes," Caruso said. "It might have been five. But everybody was like, 'What's taking so long?'"

"So now it's like instant on, instant off. People are happy with that."

There's also a safety advantage. If a ball hits a light, no glass rains down.

Caruso removed the lens of a hallway fixture. A single strand of LED lights replace and are much brighter than the four fluorescent bulbs that were in use before the fixture was converted.

There are retrofit kits that allow workers to use the shell of the old fixtures and replace the inner workings.

Superintendent Steve Tucker said the work was done under a "performance contract" where an audit is done to determine costs and a solution is conceived to reduce that expense enough to ultimately pay for the upgrade.

"It makes sense to try to conserve energy and save costs down the road," Tucker said.

"I like how the lights work. They can dim. They shut off automatically. And I like that they are saving taxpayers' money."

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