

HARTFORD

Finalists vie for top school job

Public meet-and-greets set for next week

By **CHRISTINA DOLAN**
Valley News Staff Writer

HARTFORD — With the search for a new school superintendent narrowed to two finalists, the public will have a chance to meet the candidates at meetings next week.

Caty Sutton, Hartford's current interim superintendent, and Jodie Stewart-Ruck, who is Mill River Unified School District's assistant superintendent, were recommended by a 13-member ad hoc search committee including district staff, administrators, community members, students and parents that interviewed five candidates.

Stewart-Ruck will meet with the public on Monday, and Sutton on Tuesday. Each session will start at 6:30 p.m. in the Best room at the Hartford Area Career and Technical Center.

Each candidate will participate in daylong interviews early next week that will include tours of the district campuses and the town, interviews with teachers and school staff, and an evening public forum.

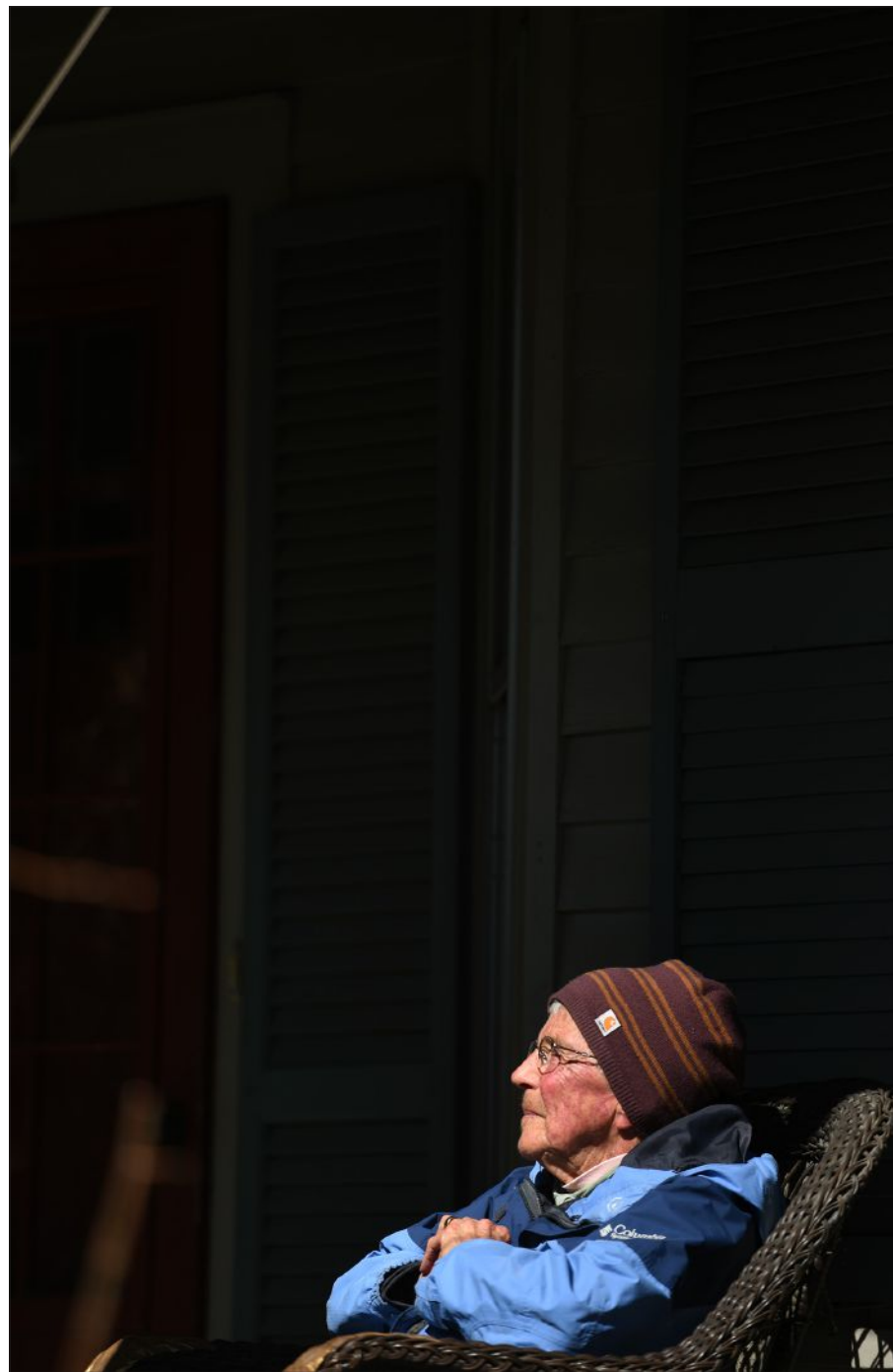
The five-member school board will make the final decision, with the goal of making a hire by the end of the month.

"We are confident that we have represented the interests of all stakeholders, and that the candidates we are forwarding to the board best meet the criteria for this position and possess the leadership qualities necessary to guide our district through the challenges and opportunities ahead," search committee member Jason Hill, a White River Junction resident, told the board at a special meeting on March 7.

Along with the appropriate administrative

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SUN SPOT



VALLEY NEWS — JENNIFER HAUCK
Barbara Rhoad, of Windsor, sits on her porch soaking in the sun after a 90-minute walk near her home on Monday. Rhoad, 85, has lived in the home since she was seven years old. Rhoad and her husband later raised their six children in the house. "It's a great place," she said of the neighborhood.

NORWICH

Police to buy spike strips

Chief points to cases of wrong-way drivers

By **EMMA ROTH-WELLS**
Valley News Staff Writer

NORWICH — The Selectboard approved an expenditure request from the Police Department for spike strips during Wednesday's meeting, in spite of outcry from residents on the town's Listserv.

The Selectboard voted 4-1 in favor of using up to \$10,000 of the Police Specialty Equipment reserve fund to purchase the spike strips, a device that can be laid on a roadway to deflate a vehicle's tires, as well as forcible entry tools such as sledgehammers.

Leading up to the meeting, residents expressed concern both over what they described as frivolous spending and the perceived danger of the spike strips.

"Are these SPIKE STRIPS necessary for the NPD to provide safety in the town? Or, are they a 'want' NOT a 'need'? Eliminating every little bit of unnecessary spending is helpful to reducing the budget," wrote John Farrell.

Resident Charlotte Metcalf wrote in the Listserv about the death of state trooper Mike Johnson in 2003 who was struck by a vehicle in Thetford when the driver swerved to avoid the spike strips Johnson had laid out.

"How and under what circumstances does our police department plan to deploy such a device?? Will it be used to trap vehicles coming from outside town, on our town roads, where there may be innocents on foot or in other vehicles???" wrote Metcalf, who asked the same question via Zoom during the meeting.

Norwich Police Chief Matthew Romei, who had submitted the request for the spike strips, took some time to justify the department's need for the equipment during Wednesday's meeting.

He highlighted the frequency of drivers going the wrong-way on the interstate in Vermont.

"We run about double what would be the

The police chief said he could envision the spike strips being deployed on Route 5 or on the town's more than six miles of interstate.

NEW HAMPSHIRE STATEHOUSE

Families brace for changes to Medicaid

By **PAUL CUNO-BOOTH**
New Hampshire Public Radio

Independence is everything to Justin Bonny. The 21-year-old lives at home with his family in Barrington and works at the Dover Housing Authority, helping out with after-school programs. He's a drummer, and his passion is making music. What makes that possible is the in-home nursing and personal care he qualifies for through New Hampshire's Medicaid program. Bonny has a genetic condition, an RYR1-related myopathy, that weakens every muscle in his body and can pose serious risks to his breathing.

"I refuse to, you know, be in some institution," he said. "I need to be able to be in my own home or be in an apartment or wherever I end up living. And it's very important to me to have

that freedom and independence."

But he's worried that freedom and independence could be at risk.

Last month, Republicans in the U.S. House passed a budget plan that would likely require large cuts to Medicaid, the safety net health care program funded jointly by states and the federal government. That could force New Hampshire to roll back key parts of its Medicaid program, which covers more than 180,000 children, seniors, people with disabilities and low-income adults.

This comes as Republicans in Concord are also weighing changes to New Hampshire's Medicaid program, including work requirements and new monthly premiums for some patients.

Bonny and others who rely on that health coverage Medicaid in New Hampshire say they're following the news anxiously — and

bracing for potentially life-altering changes.

The nurse he hired through Medicaid has been a lifeline. Before that, his mother had to spend nights in his room, in case he needed to turn over or had an issue with his BiPAP machine, which helps him breathe.

Once, he had to call his grandparents in the middle of the night because he couldn't wake her up. But he's even more worried for friends who have disabilities and live alone, without the same family support.

"This program, Medicaid, is vital to — just for basic survival," he said.

Cuts worry patients who rely on Medicaid support for disabilities, mental health

If Congress moves forward with Medicaid cuts, the state could lose potentially hundreds

SEE MEDICAID A5

INSIDE

A bill in NH would remove circumcision from Medicaid coverage.

Story, A5

SPORTS, B1

BEARS GO DOWN IN SEMIFINAL

Ronan Przydzielski, of Hanover, middle, tries to keep control of the puck under pressure from Trevor Craigue, left, and Brayden Beaugard, right, of Concord during their game at JFK Memorial Coliseum in Manchester Wednesday. Concord won 3-1.

VALLEY NEWS — JAMES M. PATTERSON



Vt. college faces antisemitism probe

By **GRETA SOLSAA**
VTDigger

Middlebury College is among 60 higher education institutions that received a letter from the U.S. Department of Education on Monday, warning of "potential enforcement actions" if the schools do not take sufficient action to protect Jewish students on their cam-

puses. "The Department is deeply disappointed that Jewish students studying on elite U.S. campuses continue to fear for their safety amid the relentless antisemitic eruptions that have severely disrupted campus life for more than a year. University leaders must do

SEE ANTISEMITISM A6

INSIDE



NEWS

COMMITTEE BACKS SCOTT APPOINTEE

Senators had clashed with Gov. Phil Scott over his appointment of Zoie Saunders to be Vermont's secretary of education.

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WORLD & NATION

CEASEFIRE TALKS

Russian President Vladimir Putin said he agrees in principle with a U.S. proposal for a 30-day ceasefire in Ukraine, but he emphasized that the terms are yet to be worked out. Page B3



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