Volume 1, Issue 3
October 2026

EPSOM TOGETHER

sharing stories • connecting neighbors • building community

Locke Family Fundraiser

On October 15, a devastating fire struck the Locke family's home and business, Chicken Nick's, on Route 4 in Epsom. Thankfully, the family was not home. We extend our heartfelt thanks to the Epsom Fire Department and other emergency personnel and departments that provided mutual aid during the response.

Those wishing to support the Locke family can donate using the QR code and find additional information and donation details on Facebook.

We extend our heartfelt wishes to the Locke family as they navigate the days ahead.

Nicholas Locke
@lockefamdonation26

venmo



Debbie LaPage holds one of the pumpkins decorated during a pumpkin decorating activity she organized for the Epsom Public Library. Photo by Michele Clark.

IN THIS ISSUE:

From the Front Porch

Honoring Epsom's Revolutionary War Patriots

Understanding HB 1300

Welcome To Valley Artisans

How Epsom Builds A Town Budget

Epsom Town Band

And More!

From the Front Porch

On the last Thursday of November, Americans gather in the time-honored tradition of giving thanks. Epsom Together is thankful for the Town's warm reception to our newsletter. We are also grateful to Epsom's heroes in many different forms, from first responders to generous neighbors, municipal staff and snowplow guys, veterans and volunteers who serve and inspire us all. Thank you!

From the Front Porch continued on Page 2...

From the Front Porch continued

Walk into the Epsom Library through the end of October and you can't miss the brightly decorated pumpkins, the results of a contest organized by Debbie LaPage, the new Children's Services Coordinator. Debbie, an Epsom resident for nine years, and a Special Education Teacher at Epsom Central School, looks forward to sharing her love of books with the children and families in our community. In addition to developing crafts and reading programs, she hopes to introduce CPR classes and a course to train Red Cross certified babysitters. Debbie joins Emily Fixler, the Library's Early Childhood Coordinator, in providing a wide variety of thoughtful, fun and inspirational programs for Epsom's young people. Welcome to the Library, Debbie LaPage!

Following the September 21 Town Information Session. Epsom Together recently caught up with the one remaining Water District Commissioner, Donna Dudley, to learn more about the next steps in determining the future of the Epsom Village Water District (EVWD.) On October 8, Dudley met with residents who had volunteered to help fill vacant positions. Since then, Joel Swift has been appointed by the New Hampshire Superior Court as a second commissioner, allowing the district to resume official business. At its October 15 meeting, the district's agenda included appointing additional commissioners and filling the treasurer and clerk positions
Thank you, Volunteers!

Happy Thanksgiving from the Epsom Together family!

Honoring Epsom's Revolutionary War Patriots

By Michele Clark



Center Hill Cemetery, Epsom, NH, also known as McClary Cemetery
Photo credit: Epsom Historical Association

This Veterans Day, November 11th, as the Town of Epsom prepares to celebrate its Three Hundredth Anniversary, it is appropriate that we remember our Town's historic heroes. According to the Epsom Historical Association, Epsom proudly claims more than 90 Revolutionary War veterans. This number includes roughly 68 men who enlisted directly from the town and nearly 25 others who proudly made Epsom their home after the war.

The most famous among these men is Major Andrew McClary, born in Ulster, Ireland, around 1730.

McClary, together with his parents, brother and four sisters sailed for the colonies and settled in Epsom around 1738, where they became one of the town's earliest pioneering families. McClary

was a man of commanding presence and stood well over six feet tall. He was a farmer, Town Clerk, and the popular owner of the Epsom Farm Tavern, which served as the hub for all local town meetings. As a skilled woodsman, he had also served as a frontier scout in Rogers' Rangers during the French and Indian War. He was renowned for his generosity, wit, and unyielding patriotism.

When news of the Battle of Lexington reached Epsom, McClary famously left his spring plow in the field and set out to join the fight. He rallied an 80-man local militia, was elected their captain, and together they marched 70 miles through the night to reach Cambridge. Commissioned as second-in-command under Colonel John Stark, McClary led his men with fierce dedication. After surviving heavy fighting at the Battle of Bunker Hill on June 17, 1775, McClary was killed by a British cannonball while returning to the field to monitor enemy activity. He was the highest-ranking commissioned officer and last American soldier to die at Bunker Hill that day.

McClary was survived by his wife and seven children, who all remained in Epsom and became leading citizens in the new state of New Hampshire.

While Major McClary's final resting place remains in Medford, Massachusetts, many of his brave contemporaries are buried here in Epsom.

The Epsom Together family offers heartfelt gratitude to all Epsom Veterans.

Epsom Voters: What's on the November 3 Ballot?

By Shauna Fisher

On Tuesday, November 3, 2026, voters will return to Epsom Bible Church to cast their ballots in the 2026 Midterm Elections. Whether you're a longtime voter or voting for the first time, reviewing the sample ballot before Election Day can help you get familiar with the offices, candidates, and questions you'll encounter. You can find sample ballots at the Town Office or on the Town website.

What will you encounter on the ballot?

Epsom voters will select candidates for federal, state, and county offices, including U.S. Senate and House, Governor, State Representatives, and several county positions. Voters should read the entire ballot carefully, as some races let them select up to two candidates instead of just one.

Epsom's sample ballot provides a preview of the candidates, offices, and questions voters will see on Election Day. Online resources are available to help voters learn about candidates, review ballot questions, and understand their choices.

In addition to candidate races, Epsom's ballot includes two questions that require a three-fifths majority of Yes votes to pass.

Question 1: Eliminating the Office of Register of Probate

This proposed amendment to the New Hamp-

This proposed amendment to the New Hampshire Constitution concerns Articles 71 and 81 and would remove the constitutional requirement to elect registers of probate. The Register of Probate is a county official whose former court duties were eliminated in 2011. Today, the role primarily involves preserving historical probate records.

Question 2: School-Related Property Tax Growth Limits (HB 1300)

This question asks whether Epsom should adopt limits on certain school district property tax increases under RSA 32:5-i. See our HB 1300 article for more information.

Are you registered? Check your registration at the Town Office or on the Secretary of State's website. If you're an eligible Epsom resident who is not registered to vote, New Hampshire allows voter registration on Election Day. Voters should be prepared to provide the documentation required under current New Hampshire law to prove eligibility.

Visit sos.nh.gov/elections for the latest registration requirements and accepted documents, voter ID laws, accessible access, and absentee voting.

Please go online to read our updated Get to Know the Candidates article that now contains Howard Kozloski's answers.

https://www.epsomtogether.com/post/get-to-know-the-candidates

Get Informed Before You Vote!

Not sure what's on the ballot or where to find reliable information?
These resources can help.

Ballotpedia | ballotpedia.org or
BallotReady | ballotready.org
Nonpartisan information about candidates, elections, and ballot questions.

Town of Epsom | https://www.epsomnh.gov/elections
Local election information and sample ballots

NH Secretary of State | sos.nh.gov/elections
Your official source for voter registration, ID requirements, absentee ballots, and polling information.

Epsom Together | epsomtogether.com
Local, nonpartisan articles explaining ballot questions and issues affecting Epsom residents.

Candidate Websites & Social Media Accounts

Be informed before you vote!

Review the ballot, explore the resources, and make your choices on November 3.

Understanding HB 1300 (The "School Tax Cap" Bill)

By Sini Kerman

A new state law gives New Hampshire voters a chance to have a direct say in how much local property taxes can grow in the near future.

House Bill (HB) 1300, signed into law in July, requires towns to put a proposed tax cap on the November 2026 general election ballot relative to school and school administrative unit (SAU) budgets. If approved by at least three-fifths of voters, the limits would take effect with the 2028 school budget year. The law is currently set to expire on January 1, 2032.

If SAU 53 voters approve the school district tax cap, the amount raised through school property taxes could generally increase each year based on inflation and growth in taxable property from new construction and improvements. Certain costs, including qualifying debt for school construction, would not count toward the limit.

In cases where certain costs, such as healthcare premiums, fuel, and/or energy, outpace inflation, the district would need to decide where to make up those dollars in an already tight budget. The law is written in a way that may allow voters to approve spending above the cap when additional funds are needed. For districts like Epsom with an annual town vote, an override of the cap would require approval by three-fifths of voters. This vote is not a vote on the amount of Epsom's annual school budget. The school budget question voters are accustomed to will remain on this year's ballot. Instead, this is a vote to cap the total amount of local property taxes that can be raised for the school district.

If the school district tax cap is approved, it will also impose an SAU budget tax cap. SAU 53 provides administrative services for Epsom, Allenstown, Chichester, Deerfield, and Pembroke. If Question 2 is passed by three-fifths of the total votes in the towns included in SAU 53, central office spending would be limited to 6% of the combined school districts' appropriations, with certain bonded costs excluded. Over the last five years, the SAU budget has remained fairly consistent at approximately 3-4% of the combined school districts' spending.

The SAU cap would apply to expenses such as the superintendent's office, business administration, human resources, finance, payroll, purchasing, legal services, and district-level technology administration. According to the language of the bill, classroom instruction, special education, transportation, food services, facilities, and school-based administrators would not be included in the SAU budget cap.

For Epsom voters, HB 1300 will bring questions about future school tax growth and SAU 53 spending directly to the ballot.

The November election will provide an opportunity for Epsom residents to review the proposed limits and decide how we want our school finances handled in the years ahead.

Read the full bill text, here: https://gc.nh.gov/bill_Status/billinfo.aspx?id=2080

Welcome to Valley Artisans

By Alison Parodi-Bieling with Epsom Together staff writer

Located at 10 Goboro Road in Epsom, Valley Artisans is a place where local creativity, community spirit, and New Hampshire history come together. Visitors are invited to experience its unique charm at the annual Holiday Open House this November 28th and 29th from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Long before it became Valley Artisans, the building served as the Flour House, a storehouse for the general store across the street, operated by Silver and Young. In the 1950s, the Young sisters transformed the old building into the Pine Shop, offering pine furniture, handmade soaps and candles, braided rugs, and other traditional crafts. The original wood stove that warmed the Pine Shop still heats the front room today.

In 1981, Mabel Bartlett, one of the Young sisters, encouraged Alison Parodi-Bieling and other local artisans to rent the former Pine Shop and continue its tradition of promoting locally made products. “Figure it out!” she told them, and they did. With the support of Charlie Yeaton and his family, who kept the rent affordable, Valley Artisans grew into an outlet for local artists and craftspeople.

Today, ten members run the shop and exhibit their work, joined by consigners who contribute their own handcrafted creations. From pottery, jewelry, and glasswork, to woodworking, fabric arts, candles, and soaps, the shop reflects the skill and talent of local makers.

The members and consigners of Valley Artisans share a deep commitment to the site’s historic significance and see themselves as stewards of the building, working to preserve its authentic character and honor the vision of the sisters who first filled it with local crafts. Their goal is simple: to cover the bills while keeping a welcoming place where New Hampshire artists can share their work and traditions with the community.

Come to the November Open House to enjoy the warmth of the wood stove, the charm of the old building, homemade baked goods, and mulled cider. Discover locally made gifts and help keep this special tradition alive!



Alison Parodi-Bieling with historic stove

Epsom's Select Board Weighs Competing Budget Priorities

By Staff Writers

Epsom Department Heads have presented their budgets to the Select Board, making their case for proposed increases. First responders especially are facing severe challenges.

Police Chief Brian Michael requested across-the-board salary raises to combat a steep wage gap: Epsom ranks 17.3% lower in police pay than neighboring towns and 25% lower statewide.

According to Chief Michael, without competitive pay, the Epsom Police Department risks being unable to fill its current vacancy and losing veteran officers. He explained that failing to address the problem of lower pay for police officers now may cost more later. Onboarding one new officer, including extensive security background checks, 16 weeks at the Police Academy, and 12 weeks of Field Training costs the town upwards of $100,000. Chief Michael explained that when veteran officers leave, tax dollars spent training them leave also, forcing the town to repeat this cycle when a new police officer is hired.

Fire Chief Stewart Yeaton requested an increase in salaries and part-time stipends as well as increases in the building maintenance budget. He pointed to having no control over sharply increasing Insurance rates for volunteer firefighters.

At their October 12th meeting, Select Board members conducted a line-item review of all budget proposals and struggled to limit overall increases while providing appropriate pay raises. The Board must now weigh the long-term impact of underfunding public safety against immediate fiscal constraints, including town concerns over rising taxes, before presenting the final Town budget to the Budget Committee on November 12.

The Budget Committee independently reviews the proposed budget line-by-line. The recommendations of both the Budget Committee and the Select Board are shown on the Warrant (agenda) for the town Deliberative session, where citizens can amend the proposed budget and warrant articles. Voters then vote on the Warrant articles in March. The Town budget is approximately $4 million and the School's Budget is approximately $16 million dollars.

Seven To Save



Pictured are Dick Frambach and Bruce Graham ringing the bell of Epsom's Old Meetinghouse before the start of the 20th anniversary celebration of Seven to Save. The event recognized two decades of historic preservation efforts across New Hampshire.

To learn more about the celebration, visit epsomtogether.com and read the online edition of this month's Epsom Together newsletter.

How Epsom Builds a Town Budget

Part 1 of an Ongoing Series

By Shauna Fisher

Who develops the town budget, how are spending decisions made, and when can residents have a say? Understanding the process helps Epsom voters make informed decisions each March.

Epsom's town budget takes shape throughout the year. Each month, the Board of Selectmen reviews expenditures and budget information. Department heads meet to discuss financial needs, while town boards, committees, and departments regularly review their expenses and priorities. This ongoing work helps shape the budget voters consider each March.

Who Does What?

Epsom operates under New Hampshire's Official Ballot Referendum system, known as SB2, and has an Official Budget Committee.

Budget Committee member Nancy Wheeler explained that the Select Board develops budget recommendations and provides supporting documentation, while the Budget Committee prepares the proposed budget for voters to consider at the ballot.

The Budget Committee reviews spending but does not manage town departments or their day-to-day expenditures. The Select Board also develops other warrant articles, while the Budget Committee makes recommendations on any involving town spending.

Ultimately, the Budget Committee proposes the budget, but voters decide whether to approve it.

How Can Residents Get Involved?

Don't wait until Election Day to participate. Much of the budget process happens at public meetings throughout the year. Residents don't need to understand every budget detail or state law to contribute. Active listening and using public comment time during any town or school board meeting are productive ways for every voter to get involved. Asking why an expense is increasing, whether last year's funds were spent, or how a proposed change will affect taxpayers can spark meaningful discussions.

Town officials and volunteers prepare and review the numbers and consider community needs over a year-long process; residents can ask questions and provide input, and **Epsom voters make the final decision.**

Beyond the Ballot: Ways to Participate

Attend Budget Committee Meetings: Hear from town officials and department heads as they review spending proposals.

Participate in the Public Budget Hearing: Typically held in January, this is an opportunity to ask questions and share feedback before the budget is finalized.

Attend the SB2 Deliberative Session: Discuss proposed warrant articles and vote on possible amendments before they appear on the March ballot.

Vote in March: Residents have the final say on the town budget and warrant articles.

Epsom Town Band Returns to Deerfield Fair 100 Years Later



From its beginnings in the 1890s to a special performance at the Deerfield Fair's 150th anniversary, the Epsom Town Band continues a musical tradition that has brought generations of neighbors together.

The Epsom Town Band's October 1 performance at Deerfield Fair celebrated a century-old connection. Then known as the Epsom Brass Band, performed at the fair's 50th anniversary in 1926. To celebrate the fair's 150th anniversary, organizers invited the band to return.

The band dates back to 1891, when Albert L. Sanders helped organize 23 musicians, many with little prior musical training. Like other community brass bands of the time, they performed at parades, patriotic celebrations, and public gatherings. Historical records document the band's participation in Epsom's 1932 Old Home Day celebration at Webster Park, a tradition that continued for generations.

For some families, the band's history is also their own. Longtime band manager Penny Graham represents four generations of family involvement. Her grandfather, George H. Yeaton, appears in a 1902 band photograph, while her father, John B. Yeaton, managed the band from the 1950s through the 1990s. Her great-grandfather is believed to have helped establish the group. Today, Penny and her husband, Bruce, both play percussion.

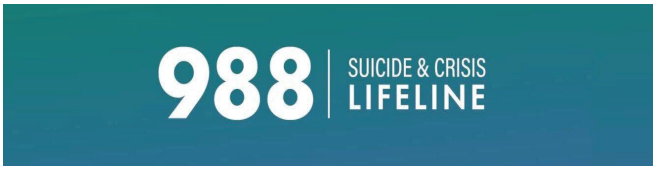
Graham remembers Friday evening summer concerts at Webster Park, where families gathered, local groups sold refreshments, and audiences honked their car horns in appreciation. "The concerts have been social events for the community to gather with neighbors, friends, and family," she recalled. "I hope that our audience grows as more people seek to spend time with others while enjoying a variety of music."

For this year's Deerfield Fair performance, director Don Plummer selected music representing the decades since 1926, taking the fair audience on a musical journey through the past century. According to Plummer…

"I chose an historical approach that I thought would be fun for the audience. Wherever and whenever we play, it gives the band great pleasure and pride when we see the audience enjoying our music."

Today, the Epsom Town Band continues performing at the local Memorial Day event and summer concerts at Webster Park. As Epsom approaches its 300th anniversary in 2027, the band remains a living connection between the town's past and present, bringing neighbors together through music just as it has for more than 130 years.

Did You Know?



The Holidays bring joy and excitement. For many, they can also be a source of stress and anxiety.

DID YOU KNOW...that there is a number you can call when you feel anxious, depressed, or that the world is just too much?

988 is a free, confidential 24/7 phone, text and chat service that will connect callers to trained crisis counselors. If you or someone you love is going through mental health issues, 988 can provide immediate assistance and connect you with resources in your community.

Tricentennial Calendar

It's the Tricentennial Countdown! On January 1st, 2027, Epsom will begin a year-long celebration to honor our rich history and celebrate our vibrant community with family-friendly events scheduled throughout the year.

Don't miss out! Order your 2027 Tricentennial Calendar today to learn what is going on each month. You can also add birthdays and anniversaries of family members for $1.00 per name (first names only. For more information, please go to the Epsom 300 website at https://www.epsom300.com/category/community-calendar.

Upcoming Events

October 2026

Board of Selectmen Meeting
Mon, Oct 26, Nov 6, 23 | 5:30 pm-6:30 pm
Old Meeting House, 1596 Dover Road, Epsom

Epsom Supervisors of the Checklist Session
Wed, Oct 28, 2026 | 3:00 pm-4:00 pm
Epsom Town Hall, 1598 Dover Road, Epsom

Trunk or Treat @ Epsom Bible Church
Sat, Oct 31, 2026 | 5:30 pm-7:00 pm
398 Black Hall Road, Epsom

State and Federal Election Day
Tue, Nov 3, 2026 | 7:30 am-7:00 pm
Epsom Bible Church, 398 Black Hall Road, Epsom

Medicare Basics with Timothy Harrigan
Tue, Nov 4 | 6:00 pm
Epsom Public Library, 1606 Dover Road, Epsom

Hanz Araki Playing @ The Blasty Bough
Saturday, Nov 7th | 7:00 pm
3 Griffin Road, Epsom

Budget Committee Meeting: Selectmen Presentation of Proposed Budget
Nov 12 | 7:00 pm-8:00 pm
Old Meeting House, 1596 Dover Road, Epsom

Hometown Holiday Trail w/Stevens Farmhouse
Saturday, November 21, 2026 | 9:00 am-4:00 pm
Town of Epsom

Open House @ NH Valley Artisans
Saturday & Sunday, November 28th & 29th | 12:00 pm-5:00 pm
10 Goboro Road, Epsom

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