

EXPANDED E-EDITION

The Eagle Tribune

Two-time winner of the Pulitzer Prize

Subscribers get free access to eagletribune.com

To subscribe, call 978-946-2200

EAGLETRIBUNE.COM

TUESDAY, MARCH 10, 2026



Lawrence City Council President Jeovanny Rodriguez reads to kindergartners during Read Across America Week at the Lawrence Family Development Charter School Friday morning.

TIM JEAN/Staff photos

METHUEN

Hearing set for hotel plans

By Teddy Tauscher
 » ttauscher@eagletribune.com

METHUEN — A proposed 122-room inn on Pleasant Valley Street would address the needs of longterm travelers and bring in much needed revenue for the city, according to developers.

City officials are reviewing the project at 143 Pleasant Valley St., which will require a special permit since the lot is situated in an industrial zone. The Community Development Board will hold a public hearing on the project, located near the Loop, and likely further discuss the design at 6:30 p.m. Wednesday via Zoom.

“This proposed hotel is designed to serve both traditional short term travelers and also longterm guests,” Methuen based attorney Anthony Copani, said during a Jan. 11 meeting of the board.

Alongside a significant increase in property tax revenue, since the lot is currently vacant, the city would also receive an estimated \$219,000 a year from local taxes on hotel rooms, he said. Additionally, the project would have little fiscal impact on first responder services and not add to any costs at the school district, he said.

Copani is representing the project’s proponent, Park Silver Development LLC, which has developed a series of extended-stay hotels. He said the Methuen location would include 71 queen suites, 40 double queen suites and 11 deluxe queen suites. Seven of the 122 rooms will be handicapped accessible.

The hotel would also be near The Loop, a shopping center in the city.

SEE HOTEL, PAGE 3

Read Across America

Joyful, shared experience for students, leaders

LAWRENCE — City Council President Jeovanny Rodriguez seemed right at home Friday, reading to kindergartners during Read Across America Week at the Lawrence Family Development Charter School.

The school welcomed local elected officials and community leaders to read to students in celebration of Read Across America Week, which is promoted nationwide by the National Education Association.

This year’s theme, “Championing Kindness” focused on promoting empathy, inclusion and respect through diverse and representative books.

Read Across America events become joyful, inclusive ways to celebrate stories as shared experiences that build connection and community, according to the NEA. The events create the kind of reading moments that students remember, bringing students, educators, families, and community members together around stories that spark laughter, wonder, curiosity, and conversation.

When students see peers, teachers, family members and community leaders choosing to read, it reinforces the idea that reading matters — and that it’s something people enjoy and value. The events help build positive associations with books, foster a sense of belonging, and strengthen motivation by making reading a joyful, shared experience. They also create opportunities to explore diverse stories, launch meaningful conversations and support the development of lifelong reading habits.



Teacher Katheryn Bernatchez reads to kindergartners during Read Across America Week at the Lawrence Family Development Charter School Friday morning.



Jeovanny Rodriguez, Lawrence City Council president, celebrates reading with a group photo after reading to kindergartners at the Lawrence Family Development Charter School Friday morning.

FEMA ordered to release frozen grant money

By Christian M. Wade
 » Statehouse Reporter

BOSTON — Millions of dollars in FEMA grants will begin flowing to Massachusetts cities and towns after a federal court ordered the release of money after long delayed by a legal fight over clean energy policies.

A ruling issued Friday by U.S. District Court Judge Richard G. Stearns orders the Federal Emergency Management Agency to provide states and local governments with details of grant allocations from the federal Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities program, after a move to end it was deemed “illegal” by a previous court ruling.

In his ruling, Stearns acknowledged “tangible steps” by FEMA to release the money and said the delays can, in part, “be attributed to staffing shortages resulting from layoffs and the current budgetary freeze” with the Department of Homeland Security partially shutdown amid a lapse in funding.

He also noted the departure of Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem, who was fired last week. She was replaced by Sen. Markwayne Mullin, who hasn’t yet been confirmed as the new secretary.

“The court also understands that a new Secretary will soon be appointed and that the transition process will necessarily require

some time and adjustment,” Stearns wrote.

Campbell said the ruling “will allow critical mitigation projects that protect us against floods, wildfires, power outages, and other disasters to proceed and bring urgently needed relief to communities across the country.”

“But let’s be clear: the Trump administration should have complied with the original court order in December instead of ignoring the law and leaving communities vulnerable to these disasters in the meantime,” she said in a prepared statement.

Last April, the Trump administration announced it was cancelling the BRIC program, which has been used by states and local

governments to fund projects designed to prepare for disasters like flooding, tornadoes and fires that are prompted by climate change.

The move was part of broader efforts to eliminate “waste, fraud and abuse” in federal funding, FEMA Administrator Cameron Hamilton said.

Officials said the move to eliminate the program, which was created during the first Trump administration, will save taxpayers’ money while improving how the agency delivers aid during emergencies.

“The BRIC program was yet another example of a wasteful

Ex-IRS worker from Lawrence sentenced to prison for fraud

By Jill Harmacinski
 » jharmacinski@eagletribune.com

BOSTON — A former Internal Revenue Service employee from Lawrence was sentenced to federal prison for filing false tax returns to fraudulently obtain tax refunds and steal Social Security benefits.

Kathleen Mannion, 59, was sentenced to 18 months in prison, to be followed by three years of supervised release, U.S. Attorney Leah Foley announced on March 6.

In May 2025, Mannion pleaded guilty to four counts of aiding and assisting in the preparation and filing of a false tax return and one count of theft of government money. She was charged in March 2025.

From 1998 to 2009, Mannion worked as an IRS contact representative in Andover.

From July 2020 to April 2023 Mannion prepared and filed income tax returns for other individuals with the IRS.

Although she prepared the returns on behalf of other individuals, she did not list herself as the tax return preparer. Instead, Mannion prepared the returns to appear as if the taxpayers prepared the returns on their own, authorities said.

Mannion listed ineligible dependents on the tax returns, resulting in higher refund amounts for which the taxpayers did not qualify without the knowledge of the taxpayers. She also filed forms with the IRS directing that a portion of the fraudulently obtained tax refunds be deposited in her personal bank accounts, which she then used for herself, investigators said.

Separately, from April 2020 to October 2020, Mannion applied for Social Security retirement, spouse and widow benefits with the Social Security Administration (SSA) via telephone for other individuals. Unbeknownst to the beneficiaries, Mannion directed SSA to deposit the Social Security benefits in her personal bank accounts, which she also used for herself, authorities said.

Follow staff reporter Jill Harmacinski on Twitter/X @EagleTribJill and Tthreads at jillyharma.

SEE GRANT, PAGE 3