



Three area players have played in the NFL

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‘90%’ of MA fire engines short-staffed

Dan Medeiros
The Herald News
USA TODAY NETWORK

The ashes were barely cool at the Gabriel House assisted living facility in Fall River — the day after a horrific late-night fire led to 10 deaths of elderly and physically infirm people — when members of the firefighters’ union stood before the building to talk about the price of safety.

Edward Kelly, general president of the International Association of Fire Fighters, lambasted the City of Fall River for not staffing all its fire companies to national standards of four firefighters per piece of apparatus.

By National Fire Protection Agency standards, Fall River was eight firefighters short.

According to the union, the shorthanded fire companies were quickly overwhelmed having to rescue 70 elderly, often nonambulatory residents from the smoke-filled building. When rescue came for residents, it was sometimes in the form of off-duty firefighters who’d rushed to the scene without equipment — and even police officers who couldn’t stand by while trapped people shouted for help.

“Lives would’ve been saved if the Fall River Fire Department was adequately staffed,” Kelly said. “I don’t think I’m overstating that probably five more people could have lived had those eight firefighters been on the scene, able to effect rescue.”

But if Fall River is running shorthanded, so are almost all other Massachusetts communities.

According to a list of 150 fire departments statewide

provided by the Professional Fire Fighters of Massachusetts, only three staff each engine and ladder truck to national recommended standards: Boston, Brookline and New Bedford.

PFFM President Rich MacKinnon said communities are putting themselves at risk.

“Every decision-maker in these communities have to question, Are we adequately staffing and funding public safety?” he said.

What is the national standard for staffing a firefighting company?

Ken Holland, senior specialist with the NFPA, said it

See STAFFING, Page 2A

Prehistoric pal



A little girl named Addison tentatively approaches a dinosaur during “Dinosaur Days” at the Fall River Public Library on July 23. COLIN FURZE/HERALD NEWS

Ballot takes shape for the 2025 Fall River election

Emily Scherny
The Herald News
USA TODAY NETWORK

FALL RIVER — Candidates submitted their nomination papers and certified signatures to qualify for the 2025 municipal election this past week on July 19. The upcoming mayoral, City Council, and School Committee races have no shortage of newcomers and returning challengers — many who have dabbled in politics or boast a notable presence online.

Incumbent Mayor Paul Coogan is seeking his fourth term as the city’s top executive. He has been mayor since being first elected in 2019. Previously, he served on the School Committee.

Running against Coogan are Gabriel “Boomer” Amaral, Carlos Cesar, Christopher Silvia and Michael J. Vandal.

Who is running for Fall River mayor?

In January, Cesar, the former president of the Flint Neighborhood Association, announced on Facebook that his campaign will revolve around securing funding for city schools, making Fall River an affordable place to live, and supporting public safety.

Amaral took to Facebook as well to announce a run for mayor, where his budding campaign insists that he is the only candidate in the mayoral race pledging to decrease the budget “without putting the taxpayers and the first responders at risk.” Amaral previous ran unsuccessfully for City Council in 2019 and 2023 and mounted a campaign for state representative in 2024 to replace Paul Schmid.

This month, Silvia, the owner of Christopher’s cafe on South Main Street, pursued a campaign and joined the race with weeks to spare, stating in a July 21 Facebook post that he would be embarking on a “yet another journey ... to do the right thing for our city and its people.”

City Council race sees all incumbents in the running, plus five new challengers

All incumbent City Councilors are running for re-election: Shawn Cadime, Joseph Camara, Michelle Dionne, Paul Hart, Bradford Kilby, Linda Pereira, Cliff Ponte, Andrew Raposo and Ricky Tith.

Silvia’s spouse, Nathan Silvia, has entered the running for a seat on the City Council.

In addition to Nathan Silvia, Michael G. Canuel, Jonathan D. Lima, Louis Alves Melim and Christopher Michael Peckham are running to score a seat on the council.

Peckham will renew his bid for a seat on the City Council since he last ran in 2021. On several social media platforms, he promised action on rising taxes and fees, and to be “the unwavering voice for change.”

See BALLOT, Page 2A

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