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MONDAY, JULY 14, 2025 | ENTERPRISENEWS.COM

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From left, Brockton Ward 5 City Councilor Jeff Thompson, President and CEO of Boys & Girls Club of Metro South Derek Heim and Brockton School Committee Vice Chair Tony Rodrigues take part in a site visit on July 1 to discuss plans the expansion of the Boys & Girls Club in Brockton. PHOTOS BY MARK JARRET CHAVOUS/THE ENTERPRISE

Eagles statues holding up \$18M Boys & Girls Club project

Jacob Posner
The Enterprise
USA TODAY NETWORK

BROCKTON — A sticking point for the Boys & Girls Club expansion at Keith Field is a proposed entrance that would require altering an existing pedestrian entrance marked by eagle statues — an area that Brockton School Committee members have said has historic value.

On a site visit to Keith Field on Tuesday, July 1, Brockton School Committee members discussed an alternate entrance that would leave the eagle statues untouched.

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Tim Sullivan and Jorge Vega of the Brockton School Committee go over plans for the proposed new Boys & Girls Club building while on a tour of the site on July 1. School Committee member Judy Sullivan is between them.

Fired Brockton cop, VA employee pleads guilty to extorting veterans

Amelia Stern
The Enterprise
USA TODAY NETWORK

A former Brockton cop and employee of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs in Providence, Rhode Island, pleaded guilty Tuesday, July 8, in federal court to accepting nearly \$30,000 in bribes from veterans and their families to approve and expedite benefits claims, according to the U.S. Attorney's Office in Rhode Island.

Michael Darrah, 47, of Taunton, pleaded guilty Tuesday to three counts of brib-

ery and one count each of extortion, gratuity received by a public official and witness tampering, the U.S. Attorney's Office said.

Darrah, a former benefits service representative at the VA, solicited and accepted bribes from veterans and their family members to approve and expedite requested dependent care benefits and disability benefits.

Darrah told his victims he used some of the money they gave him to purchase gift cards for other VA employees he said could or did help him expedite and approve those benefits claims, according to

the U.S. Attorney's Office.

What Taunton man pleaded guilty to, according to indictment

The indictment against Darrah alleges he requested and received approximately \$3,385 and \$16,566, respectively, from two different veterans to expedite and approve claims for disability benefits, the U.S. Attorney's Office said.

Darrah also sought and accepted \$2,700 from a relative of a third veteran to

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Brockton firefighter battling Alaskan wildfires

Amelia Stern
The Enterprise
USA TODAY NETWORK

The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) and the Department of Fish and Game (DFG) deployed 20 state wildland firefighters Wednesday, July 2, to Fairbanks, Alaska, where wildfires were burning across nearly 130,000 acres of land, according to the DCR.

Brian Procida, a DCR firefighter from Brockton, is one of the 20 specially trained crew members who volunteered for the job.

A 2018 graduate of East Bridgewater High School, Procida, who is in his 20s, is no stranger to traveling assignments. In July 2023, he joined another Massachusetts crew to fight wildfires in Quebec, according to the DCR.

"For me, I love to see the fires, I love going into them and putting them out," Procida told an Enterprise reporter in 2023 after he completed his assignment in Canada.

What this Brockton wildland firefighter will face in Alaska

Procida and the Massachusetts crew will spend approximately two weeks in Fairbanks working directly on the front lines building fire breaks, securing fire perimeters, containing fires and protecting structures.

As of Wednesday, July 2, the DCR said there were 67 Alaskan wildfires burning nearly 130,000 acres of land, most of which were either at low or zero percent containment.

The 20-person crew will work alongside 34 other wildfire crews in the state, along with 29 engines, 15 helicopters and a total of nearly 1,500 personnel, according to the DCR.

Officials thank firefighters

According to DCR Chief Fire Warden Dave Celino, the low fire activity in Massachusetts and other northeastern states enabled the organization to lend support to officials in Alaska.

"The firefighters we are sending

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"The firefighters we are sending represent the firm Massachusetts belief that when a neighbor asks for help, you show up. Only by working together can we effectively respond to severe weather events like this."

Lt. Gov. Kim Driscoll

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Volume 145 | No. 140
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