

Pittsford Police apprehend subject in community threat scare

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PITTSFORD — A shockwave ran through the town of Pittsford on the morning of Thursday, June 9, as news spread of an ongoing community threat and a lockdown at Lothrop Elementary School. By early afternoon that same day, the situation had settled, the lockdown was lifted, and information began to trickle out about the details.

RNESU Superintendent Jeanné Collins sent an email to parents, making them aware of the details, citing an “external community threat” that had triggered safety protocols leading to the lockdown. Local law enforcement did not deem the threat severe enough to trigger a similar lockdown at other area schools.

“While the threat was not directly made against the school,” the letter read, “upon consultation with law enforcement, we made a proactive decision to lock down Lothrop School while the police dealt with the threat.”

Pittsford Chief of Police Mike Warfle said he was able to apprehend the subject himself based on the information given to him by Rutland Town and Rutland City Police, to whom the threat was initially reported.

“The subject entered an Army recruiting office on the afternoon of June 8th talking about Texas and stating that he had thoughts of killing his grandmother and shooting up a school,” said Warfle.

“We only had a first name and a vehicle to go off of,” he said, explaining the delay in time from the initial reports until the decision to lock down the school was made, “and we knew he was from Pittsford.”

Warfle was able to piece together several details from the initial report that gave him an indication of who made the threat.

Upon driving by the subject’s residence, Warfle observed the subject getting into a vehicle that he briefly trailed before making a traffic stop.

“In the end, this was a mental health issue,” he said. “I was able to have a peaceful discussion with the subject, and he confessed to making the threat at the recruiting station.”

Warfle then partnered with the Rutland City Police to obtain a mental health warrant. “The subject was cooperative and voluntarily submitted to a minimum 72-hour mental health evaluation,” he said.

As of June 14, the subject, who was still in the custody of the Regional Medical Center in Rutland, is currently residing with his grandmother in Pittsford after recently being released from the Brattleboro Retreat.

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Superintendent Jeanné Collins

It is unclear what the medical center’s determination may be or what may become of the subject if he is released. “His grandmother stated that she no longer wants him to live with her,” said Warfle. “He told me he was awaiting a package delivery and would be on his way, but I’m not sure what he meant by that.”

“The subject was not found to have any weapons,” he continued. “We know he’s never had anything more than a bb or pellet gun. He has no record, but he has a history of involvement with law enforcement due to mental health issues.”

As for the students at Lothrop School, Superintendent Collins said they were barely disrupted. “We say lockdown,” she said, “but the school was already locked—as it always is. The kids were not aware of any threat as we don’t want to stress them unnecessarily.”

“It was a relatively normal day for them with a couple of exceptions,” she said. “They weren’t allowed to go outside for recess, and normally we’d have to exit the building to get to the cafeteria for lunch. Instead, we brought bag lunches for a picnic with the kids.”