

# BARRE GAZETTE

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## Select Board begin budget process

By Ellenor Downer  
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OAKHAM – The Select Board met with the highway superintendent, fire chief and police chief to discuss their budgets for the next Fiscal Year.

Highway Superintendent Patrick Mardirosian said generator maintenance went up by 2%. He said the generator radiator had a leak and he got a quote of around \$9,000 to fix it, which he said was excessive. He said the other two highway employees were handy and they would fix it when the weather warmed up. He said in the meantime they were monitoring the situation.

He also discussed the problem concerning new state legislation regarding the use of sand and salt, which deemed the sand on the side of the road after winter and material in catch basins hazardous. The state required those materials to be tested for hazardous materials. If found hazardous, they would have to be hauled away to a location, which handles such materials, at the town's expense. The nearest handler was in Nashua, New Hampshire. He said the legislation was not in place yet, but it was coming.

This legislation aimed at protecting the water supply would cause a significant budget increase. Select Board Vice Chair Donald Haapakoski called this legislation "another unfunded mandate by the state."

Highway Superintendent Mardirosian said building maintenance was another potential cost. The building built in 1999 was beginning to show its age. He said the lighting was a problem as the holders were obsolete and not all working. He said each light fixture cost between \$250 to \$300. He planned on replacing two per year from his maintenance budget until they were all replaced.

He level funded most of his budget. Recently, he replaced all four tires, the originals, on the oldest vehicle in the fleet, an International. He said tires for the trucks were expensive, but he did have an inventory of tires on hand.

He reduced his hired equipment budget by \$196. He said if he needed to he would rent equipment rather than hire an equipment operator. This reduced cost by about half. He said Massachusetts Department of Transportation now required a double center line instead of a single center line and two side lines. It was another unfunded state mandate, which increased cost to the town.

Highway Superintendent Mardirosian also discussed the need at some point to hire a third full-time worker. When one of the two current workers was out sick or on vacation, the workload was a burden. He said he hired five part-time workers for snow removal, but since they all have other jobs and families, they were not always available. He said other town's paid more than Oakham making it harder to find

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## St. Francis of Assisi Parish hosts

# Magic Show

BARRE – The large sign in front of St. Joseph's Chapel on South Street advertised Matt Robert's magic show.

The parish of St. Francis of Assisi is hosting this fun afternoon for the whole family on Sunday, March 2 at 2 p.m. in the auditorium of Quabbin Regional High School. Doors open at 1:30 p.m. The parish wanted to provide a fun activity before the start of Lent to bring families together.

Roberts brings his unique brand of astonishing magic and clean comedy to his events. His shows are performances for all ages. Attendees will see incredible magic, tons of fun audience interaction, skillful sleight-of-hand, smart clean comedy, predicting future events, a jaw dropping demonstration of time travel and more.

Roberts has presented "Music & Magic" performances annually at Boston Symphony Hall since 2010. His clients include Google, GE, Pepperidge Farms and a performance for Seth Myers. Appearing in over 30 TV commercials and several series, he has earned two Emmy-nominations and two national magic awards from his peers. He has appeared alongside "Slimer" from Ghostbusters in a global TV campaign and on stage alongside "The Muppets" in Manhattan where The New York Times called his work, "enchanting."

The parish of St. Francis of Assisi hosted Matt Roberts a number of years ago to raise funds for a family in need. This time the parish is in need itself. Proceeds from this event will go towards the repaving of the church parking lot on Vernon Avenue in South Barre.

People of all ages do not want to miss this engaging and differ-



Submitted photos

Magician Matt Roberts shows one of his card tricks.

ent show full of laughs and illusions. Tickets are just \$10 for adults, \$4 for students in grades 9-12 and free for all children under grade 9. Children under grade 9 must be accompanied by an adult. Refreshments will be sold and gift baskets will be raffled.

Tickets will be sold at the door, but they can be purchased ahead of time from parishioners of St. Francis of Assisi or by calling or texting Judy at 508-320-5049.

This sign in front of St. Joseph's Church advertises the upcoming Magic Show on Sunday, March 2 at 2 p.m. to benefit St. Francis Assisi Parish. Fidelity Bank sponsors the show.



## Board accepts resignations from TA and selectman

By Paula Ouimette  
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NORTH BROOKFIELD – The Board of Selectmen accepted the resignation of Town Administrator Michael Szlosek, effective April 5 and the resignation of Selectmen Vaughn Schlegel, effective immediately.

At the Feb. 11 meeting, Vice-Chair Elizabeth "Brooke" Canada said she appreciated working with Schlegel on the board.

"He did work really hard for this town," she said.

### Vote by mail

Canada read a statement

from the Town Clerk Tara Hayes requesting that the board vote to opt out of vote by mail for municipal voting this year. Absentee voting and absentee over-the-counter voting will still be available through the Town Clerk's office.

"Absentee is for specific criteria: out of town on election day, physically unable to come to the polls on election day, or religious exemption. Complete the application and return to the Town Clerk's office by the deadline. Absentee over-the-counter is essentially early voting," Hayes said in her statement.

Canada said she believes that

vote by mail should be allowed, to ensure accessibility for all residents.

"I think we should allow mail-in voting like the rest of the state does, for all elections," she said.

Chair Jason Petraitis said his issue with vote by mail is the cost to the town, but he understand the need for it.

A motion to approve the Town Clerk's request failed to pass.

Nomination papers for the annual town election are available at the Town Clerk's office. Seats up for election are as follows: Board of Selectmen, one seat for three-year term; Board of

Selectmen, one seat for two-year term (unexpired term to fill vacancy); Town Moderator, one seat for three-year term; Town Clerk, one seat for three-year term; School Committee, one seat for three-year term; School Committee, one seat for two-year term (unexpired term to fill vacancy); Board of Assessors, one seat for three-year term; Board of Assessors, one seat for two-year (unexpired term to fill vacancy); Board of Health, one seat for three-year term; Cemetery Commissioner, one seat for three-

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## Turkeys flock to Oakham feeder



A flock of wild turkeys gather under a bird feeder in Oakham in search of food.



These wild turkeys peck through the snow in search of bird seed covered by this weekend storm.

Courtesy photos by Tom Rawinski

BARRE GAZETTE

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## Panthers fall in Class B tournament

By Tim Peterson  
Sports Correspondent

AUBURN— The Quabbin girls' basketball team captured the Central Mass. Class B championship title last February with a 12-point victory over Notre Dame Academy at Worcester State University.

The members of this year's Lady Panthers squad were hoping to make another visit to the WSU gymnasium.

Third-seeded Quabbin, who graduated four starters, was trailing second-seeded Auburn, 36-33, entering the final eight minutes of this year's Central Mass. Class B semifinal game.

It didn't remain a close game for very long, as the Rockets built a 15-point lead three minutes into the fourth quarter leading to 52-38 home victory, last Friday night.

"We really wanted to get back to the championship game again and I'm very proud of these kids," said Quabbin head coach Evan Barringer. "Give Auburn a lot of credit because they shot the ball very well during the second half. It's very hard to win a playoff game on the road."

The Lady Panthers (5-14) were

scheduled to wrap up the 2024-25 campaign with a non-playoff home game against the loser of the other Class B semifinal game on Tuesday night.

"We're hoping to end our season with a victory at home on Tuesday night," Barringer said. "It's going to be a fun night of basketball because the boys' basketball team will be playing in the second game of the doubleheader."

The seniors listed on the Quabbin girls' basketball roster are Bella Smith (3 points), Brooke Austin (8 points), Christiana Dunn (6 points), Lianna Leger, and Makaylah Kingsbury.

"The five seniors are very special," Barringer said. "They were a part of a championship team last year and they've faced a lot of adversity this season."

Leading the way offensively for the Lady Panthers was sophomore Abby Rogowski, who scored eight of her 14 points during the first half. Junior Mia Ducos, who was the Lady Panthers only returning starter this winter, added seven points.

"Mia is one of the best girls' basketball players in the history of the school," Barringer said. "Abby

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Lianna Leger fires a pass up the court.



Christiana Dunn makes an inbound pass.



Brooke Austin reaches out for a loose ball.



Mia Ducos looks to drive around an opponent.

Turley photos by Gregory A. Scibelli



Abby Rogowski goes after a rebound.



Bella Smith crosses midcourt.

## Panthers enter final game needing win for tourney berth

BARRE – After losing on Monday night to Nashoba, Quabbin boys basketball needs to defeat Groton-Dunstable in a nonplayoff game Tuesday night if the Panthers wish to go to the state tournament.

Quabbin did not make the Central Mass. Tournament, and at 9-9, were assigned nonplayoff games early this week, facing Nashoba and losing 86-60.

The Panthers had control of their fate last week, but failed to

win either of their games, losing to Hudson and Littleton. Quabbin has lost six of their last seven games after starting the season 8-3.

Quabbin cannot reach the Division 3 state tournament through the power rankings. The Panthers are ranked No. 50 and must get a .500 record in order to reach the tournament. If Quabbin beats Groton-Dunstable, the Panthers would await the state tournament seeding later this week.

## Pioneers finish with one of best records in team history

PALMER – Last week, despite a setback against Sci-Tech, the Pathfinder girls basketball team rebounded to defeat Hampden Charter 52-36 and finish with an overall record of 15-3.

Its one of the best marks the girls basketball team has ever had. Earlier this week, the Pioneers were set to participate in the Western Mass. Class C Tournament, taking on Lee High School on the road in the quarterfinals.

The Pioneers will also get to take part in the state tournament, which begins next week.



Greenly Lagimoniere passes as she clears midcourt.



Desiree Croteau eyes the hoop with a low dribble.



Addison Doktor passes out of the paint. Turley photos by Gregory A. Scibelli



Taylor Allen fights to keep the ball.



Megan Clark looks to shoot.