

# BARRE GAZETTE

USPS 044560

A TURLEY PUBLICATION | www.turley.com

May 7, 2026 | Vol. 191, No. 5 | \$1.00

www.barregazette.turley.com

## Listening sessions highlight areas of growth

By Paula Ouimette  
pouimette@turley.com

NORTH BROOKFIELD – Superintendent Timothy McCormick said he held six listening sessions with staff to find ways to improve the school district.

He said during the listening sessions, staff could talk freely, or write down their ideas.

At the April 27 School Committee meeting, McCormick said the suggestions compiled from the staff feedback fell into several categories including programmatic opportunities, student experience and culture, opportunities and partnerships and structures and systems.

"I had more than 75 different post-it notes...and we identified themes based on those thoughts," he said. "This is the starting point for this next part of the process."

He said staff frequently brought up the need for "more diverse and engaging learning opportunities," such as personal finance, psychology, as well as more art and Advanced Placement classes.

McCormick said a student survey will be sent out to determine interest in launching one or two new electives at the high school for the next school year, based on enrollment and interest.

He said they currently have an internship program

See N BROOKFIELD page 6

## Two candidates vie for Select Board seat

Town election takes place May 18

By Ellenor Downer  
Editor  
edowner@turley.com

OAKHAM – This year two candidates vie for one three-year term to the Select Board.

Donald A. Haapakoski seeks a third term to the Select Board. Frederick J. Gehring, Jr. is the challenger for the position in the Annual Town Election on Monday, May 18 from 10 a.m.-8 p.m.

Although there are no other contested races on the ballot, Lucille DiLeo is a write in candidate for a two year term to the Board of Health. Susan Collette, who took out nomination papers,



Donald A. Haapakoski



Frederick J. Gehring, Jr.

is on the ballot for the two year Board of Health position.

Barbara A. Piucci is a candidate on the ballot for a three year term to the Board of Health. Mark M. Turnbull is on the ballot for a three year term as Moderator.

Other candidates running unopposed are Dawn R. Thistle, three year term Library Trustee; Matthew A. Broderick, five year Planning

Board; Matthew Zebadiah Brunelle, three year term Cemetery Commission and Walter H. Nutter, three year term Quabbin Regional School Committee.

A two year term of Constable has no one running for that position. The Oakham

Historical Association sponsors a candidates night on Tuesday, May 12 at 7 p.m. in the Oakham Center School, Deacon Allen Drive.

The two candidates for the contested position on the Select Board provided statements for print in this edition of the paper.

Frederick J. Gehring Jr.  
Candidate for Select Board  
I am running for the

Board of Selectmen to continue serving Oakham and supporting its future.

As a longtime resident, I have dedicated my career to public service, including 34 years with the Oakham Police Department, rising to Chief, and 30 years with the Clark University Police Department as second in command.

I also studied command and business administration at Roger Williams University and completed extensive leadership and budget training, preparing me to manage people, resources and complex challenges.

Through this experience, I understand how local government decisions affect residents, staff, and essential services. I value Oakham's rural character and believe we must balance fiscal responsibility with maintaining the

services that keep our community strong.

Oakham faces financial pressures and increasing service demands that require steady, thoughtful leadership. I am committed to clear communication, careful listening and making informed decisions based on fairness and long-term impact.

Transparency and accountability are essential, along with greater public access to information and participation, while respecting the Select Board's role in setting policy and providing oversight.

Addressing financial challenges will require a balanced approach—evaluating spending, improving efficiency, and pursuing new revenue without overburden-

See CANDIDATES page 7

## Historical Commission presents counterproposal to DCR

By Zacharias Fragkiadakis  
Staff Writer  
zachf@turley.com

RUTLAND – The Historical Commission presented a counterproposal to the Department of Conservation and Recreation regarding the DCR's proposal to demolish the cell blocks at the Rutland Prison Camps, and fill in the root cellar.

The DCR has cited safety concerns and graffiti as reasons for demolition. The counterproposal follows months of meetings with residents and town officials to gather ideas for the preservation of the structures.

At the April 28 meeting, Historical Commission member Lindsay Maus read through the counterproposal, and the ideas they have come up with to address the DCR's concerns. She said that placing signs that say "do not climb" would remove liability from the DCR should someone get injured from a fall.

For the concerns about hateful graffiti, Maus said the commission is proposing community paint days, or volunteers to paint a mural on the site.

Until then, Maus said, the commission can paint over the graffiti and cover the building in anti-graffiti

coatings. She said the commission has the supplies, and are willing to provide them to reduce costs to the DCR.

Maus said there are studies that say art made by a muralist, or by community members is more likely to be respected by other graffiti artists, limiting the chances of hateful or inappropriate vandalism.

She said the commission also supports installing additional cameras, as well as "dummy cameras" to provide additional deterrence from committing any crime on the site. She said dem-

See RUTLAND page 6

## Select Board, FinCom discuss ATM, budget

By Zacharias Fragkiadakis  
Staff Writer  
zachf@turley.com

HARDWICK – The Select Board held another joint meeting with the Finance Committee to discuss warrant articles, the fiscal 2027 budget and to weigh options on potential cuts for next fiscal year.

At the April 30 meeting, the boards discussed that there are a couple one time revenues built into the FY 27 budget, including \$100,000 from Kearsarge Solar, and at least \$100,000 from the selling of gravel.

Town Administrator Justine Caggiano said she

is projecting the gravel to generate up to \$300,000, but conservatively budgeted the revenue at \$100,000 for the budget.

There were concerns among the board about using at least \$200,000 to fund the budget, as Finance Committee Chair Christopher Culross explained that will lead to a \$200,000 deficit in FY 28. Culross said one-time revenues should be used for things like funding articles, capital projects and snow and ice.

He said they should not

See HARDWICK BUDGET page 12

## Select Board heard presentations for zoning bylaws, capital planning

By Ryan Drago  
Staff Writer  
rdrago@turley.com

HARDWICK – The Select Board had a couple of guest presentations to hear during the April 13 open session meeting.

The first guest presenter was Mark Korzec regarding updates from the Capital Planning Committee.

Korzec had a report to share with the Select Board involving a vote taking during the Capital Planning Committee's meeting on March 30. A vote was taken and unanimously passed by the Capital Planning Committee to recommend a purchase of a boiler to replace a boiler at the elementary school that is no longer in service.

This matter would be discussed at the Annual Town Meeting where the voters will discuss and vote on a decision.

Korzec listed several needs the school has in his report. The school is in need of completing various projects including ones for the roof, windows, and heating

of the building.

There is more to discuss on this matter that was brought up later in the Select Board meeting.

"We're going to talk about this later in this meeting," said Select Board Vice-Chair William Tinker.

The next guest presenter was William Cole of the Planning Board to present updates to the zoning bylaw. Cole provided sheets for the board and the Town Administrator which include summaries of a process that has been ongoing in the town for years.

This process would lead the town to vote on the proposed bylaw amendments that were in last year's town meeting in the spring of 2025. These were later approved by the town and by the Attorney General.

Cole said, "there are others to get to this year."

Cole wanted to address a step in the process where the Planning Board is one of multiple groups that can present to the Select Board a request for a warrant at a special or annual town meeting.

This summary provided by Cole was only an outline and nothing had been finalized yet. Cole said there is language in these bylaw updates that need to be edited

for the articles, which would also have to go back to the Planning Board.

Cole wants to have this process in place because any zoning bylaw has to go through a process in order to be amended. One of the bylaws in the summary is for accessory dwelling units. Language is being worked on for a phased residential development with an ADU.

For example, a small house that can stand on its own in either a garage or barn. This bylaw should be revised and protect the uses of ADUs.

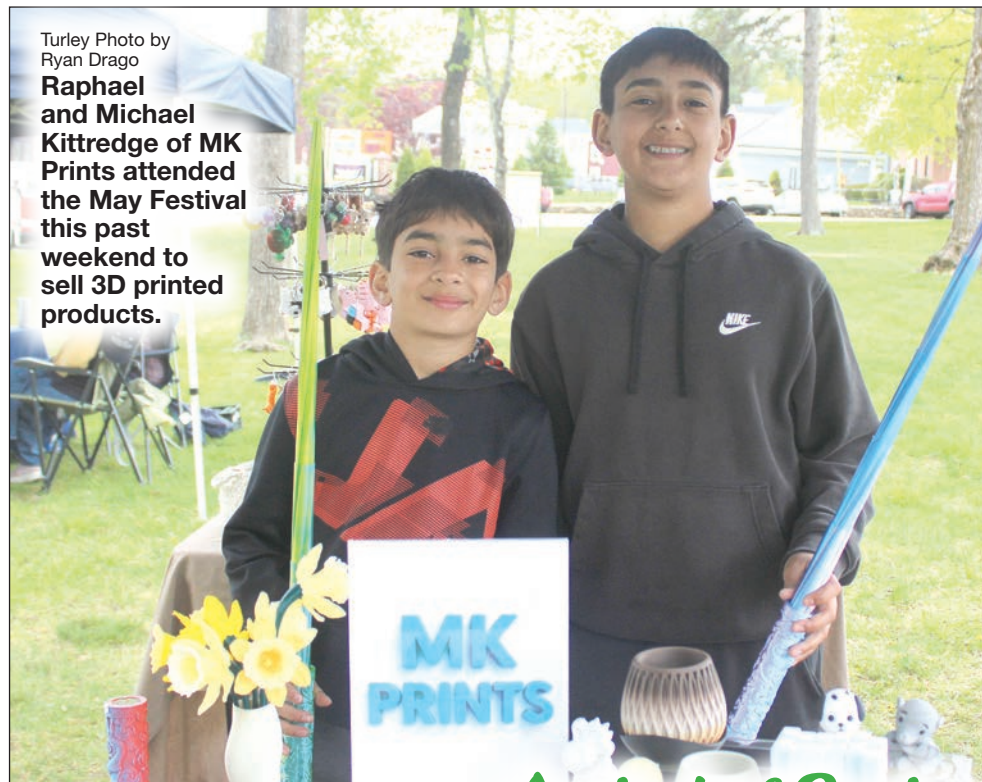
There is also an earth removal bylaw and a bylaw for farm animals. What Cole is seeking is an approval vote from the Select Board so the Planning Board can have a public hearing to allow public input discussing these bylaw updates.

The Select Board voted unanimously to approve this process.

### Increasing building fees

The Select Board had a discussion with Building Inspector Paul Stringham to discuss an increase in building fees. Stringham presented the Select Board with a

See HARDWICK SB page 10 and 15



Turley Photo by Ryan Drago  
Raphael and Michael Kittredge of MK Prints attended the May Festival this past weekend to sell 3D printed products.

## May Festival celebrates Arrival of Spring

By Ryan Drago  
Staff Writer  
rdrago@turley.com

NORTH BROOKFIELD – Spring has arrived as the annual May Festival took place this past weekend.

This annual event was made possible by the Friends of the Haston Free Public Library. Members of the Friends of the Haston Free Public Library were present during this year's May Festival and were excited to have it back after

last year's festival was cancelled by weather.

Ann Kidd and Ellen Smith of the Friends of the Haston Free Public Library describe the May Festival as a community event used to celebrate spring. The May Festival started around 2010 after a town-wide reading program was put together by the library.

With workshops being held, the Friends came to a decision that they "needed to have some sort of culminating activity." Therefore,

the May Festival was born into an exciting event to celebrate spring.

Despite the unfortunate cancellation of the May Festival last year, Kidd and Smith shared they got more sign-ups this year for the festival.

"This is a community event," Smith said. "A celebration of spring."

The theme for the May Festival was around reading,

See MAY FESTIVAL page 5



# SPORTS

A TURLEY PUBLICATION | www.turley.com

SEND US YOUR SPORTS SUBMISSIONS

www.sports.turley.com

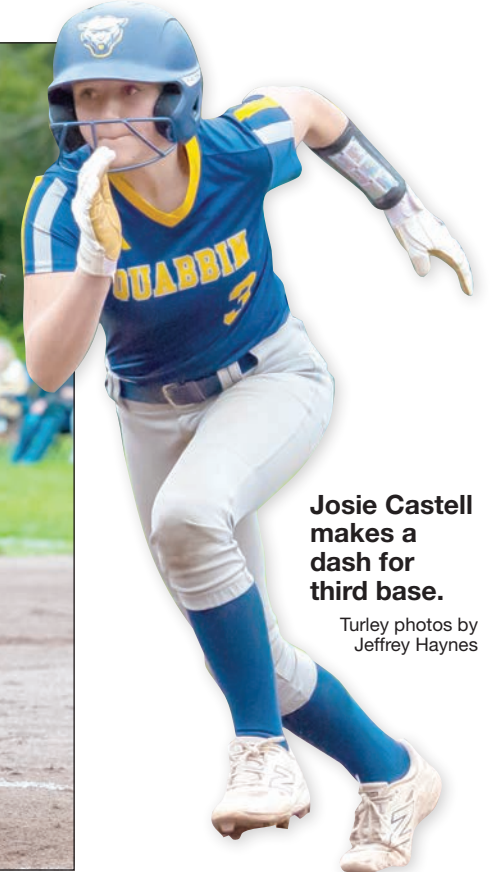


Raegyn Wnek connects for a hit.

## Quabbin softball falls to Oakmont



Aubrey Pope launches herself forward to deliver a pitch.

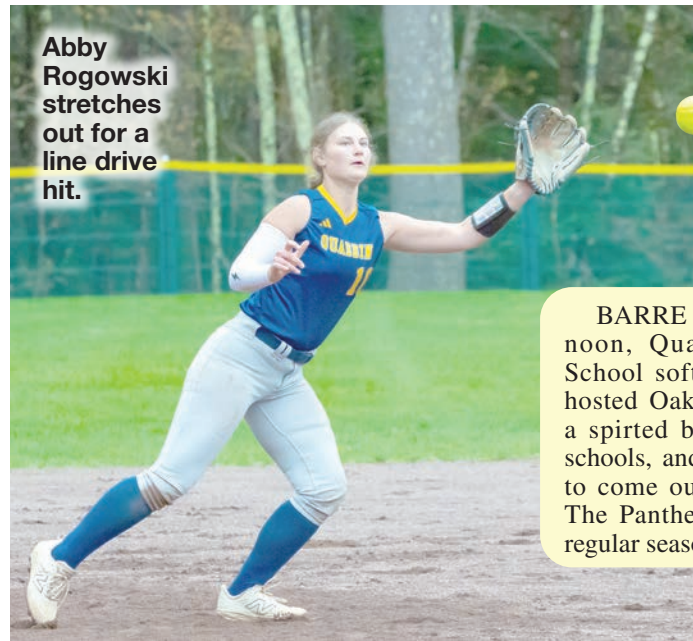


Josie Castell makes a dash for third base.

Turley photos by Jeffrey Haynes



Jenna Roseberry slides safely into home plate.

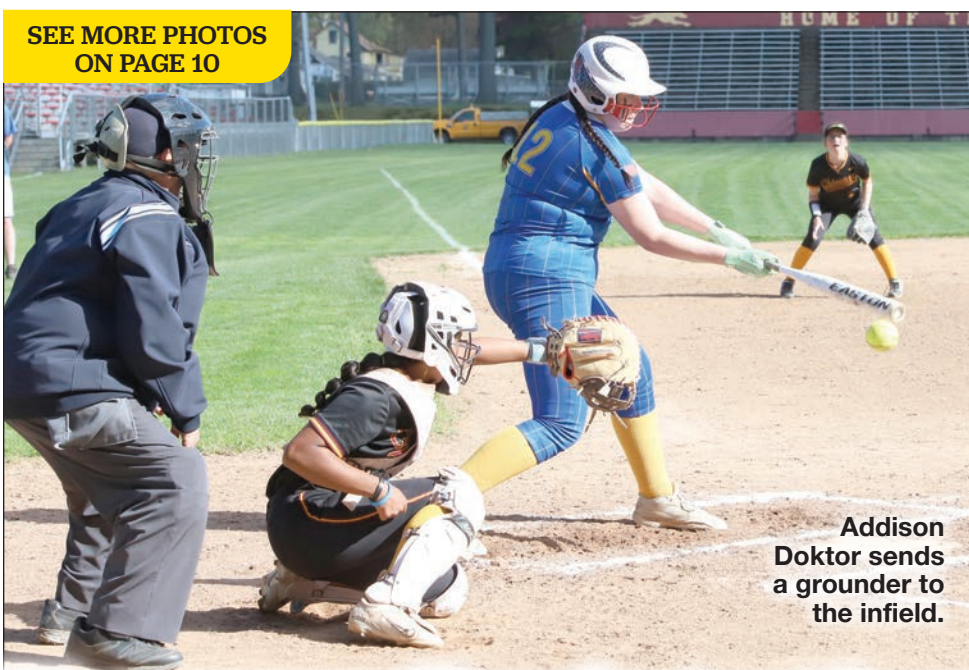


Abby Rogowski stretches out for a line drive hit.



Kelsey Allen makes the catch on a pop fly to center field.

BARRE – Last Thursday afternoon, Quabbin Regional High School softball beat the rain and hosted Oakmont Regional. It was a spirited battle between the two schools, and Quabbin was not able to come out on top, falling 12-7. The Panthers are now 3-5 on the regular season.



Addison Doktor sends a grounder to the infield.

## Pioneers suffer shutout loss

CHICOPEE – Last Friday afternoon, Pathfinder softball was shut out on the road by host Chicopee High School at Szot Park 12-0.

The game ended in

the fifth inning due to the mercy rule. Sam Prouty and Addison Doktor had hits for the Pioneers while Adeline Olbrych had three hits for the Pacers. Raelyn Loud

pitched a five-inning shutout for the Pacers.

Pathfinder fell to 1-10 for the season while Chicopee High is a perfect 13-0 on the season.



Emily Forcier takes a swing.

Turley photos by Gregory A. Scibelli



Addy Harmon tracks the ball as she readies her backhand in doubles.



Madelyn Stauder fires a backhand return from the baseline in doubles.



Turley photos by Jeffrey Haynes  
Elizabeth Matheson leans into her serve.



Farrah Wojcik rushes forward for a forehand return in singles.



Addison Surprenant scrambles to hit the return in doubles.

## Clean sweep for Panthers girls tennis

Kalina Dyer leaves her feet to return a shot in singles.

BARRE – Last Friday afternoon, it was a perfect match for the Quabbin Regional High School girls tennis team, who swept Tyngsborough 5-0 and improved to a perfect 10-0 on the regular season. Farrah

Wojcik, Kalina Dyer, and Elizabeth Matheson all had sweeps of their matches. Dyer and Matheson both won straight sets of 6-0, 6-0. Both doubles teams were also successful, sweeping their matches.

SEE MORE PHOTOS ON PAGE 10