

BARRE GAZETTE

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Planning Board continues gas station hearing

By Zacharias Fragkiadakis
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BARRE – The Planning Board continued the public hearing for the proposed gas station, convenience store and car wash submitted by Pine Hill Leasing and Bruce McDonald.

The original proposal was started in early April and the engineering firm reviewing the plan, Graves Engineering, has not begun their review yet.

At the May 5 meeting, the Planning Board signed the contract allowing Graves Engineering to review the site, which will be paid for by the applicant. After the contract was signed, the board opened up the room for public comment.

Richard Power, a resident who lives near-by the proposed site of the gas station, asked if the Planning Board does site reviews in order to get an idea for where proposed projects are placed.

Planning Board Chair Floyd Kelley said site walks are the job of the Conservation Commission. Power said he welcomes the board to his property to see how much light comes through from the Barre Health Center.

“I just want people to understand why we’re actually here,” Power said.

Resident Jessica Power, who lives on the same property, asked why it is necessary for there to be a liquor store, convenience store and drive-thru take-out food windows.

Kelley said it is only the job of the Planning Board to ensure the property meets town bylaws, not decide whether a property is needed. He said the board cannot disenfranchise or endorse a

See BARRE, page 5

Petersham Art Show features two artists



Courtesy photo

Artist Jude Kallock works in her studio. See story and more photos page 2.

Proposition 2.5 fails at polls

By Zacharias Fragkiadakis
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RUTLAND – Following the passing of the proposition 2.5 override at the annual town meeting on May 9, the second step in its passing was for voters to approve it on a ballot question.

There were three questions on the May 11 ballot, 1A approving the \$3 million override for fiscal year 2027, which was approved at town meeting. 1B was to approve an additional \$1.1 million for FY 28. Question 1C was to approve an additional \$1 million in assessments for FY 29.

Unofficial results posted to the town website show that all three questions failed, with question 1A receiving 833 yes votes and 1,040 no votes, question 1B receiving

761 yes votes and 1,095 no votes, and question 1C receiving 731 yes votes and 1,128 no votes.

According to email correspondence from Executive Assistant Tomeca Murphy, the failure on the ballot is a failure of the override altogether, regardless of its passing at town meeting.

Murphy said the Town Administrator Heather Butler, “will work with the Select Board and staff to prepare for the cuts that will be effective on July 1.”

Murphy wrote that some of the effects of this will be reduced town hall hours, to two days a week, reduced Council on Aging hours to three days a week, loss of library hours to 32 hours a week, the loss of five full-

See OVERRIDE, page 7

Pathfinder receives record-breaking grant

By Marcelo Gusmão
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PALMER – Pathfinder Regional School District has been awarded a monumental \$3.5 million grant from the state.

Earlier this month, Superintendent Eric Duda attended the official announcement event and press conference in Marlborough that was hosted by Governor Maura Healey to announce the funds being awarded to Pathfinder. The funding will support the expansion of 150 Career Technical Education seats, and the repurposing of the former Cold Spring School in Belchertown as an expanded campus.

Duda described the award as a transformational moment for the district.

“This \$3.5 million award is truly game changing for Pathfinder Tech,” Duda said. “We are about to embark

on the largest expansion in the history of our school district, and we are honored to receive the largest grant award ever awarded to Pathfinder Tech.”

“You don’t need to try to duplicate with an introductory version of what we offer. Instead, remember that Pathfinder Tech is already the town’s school, and students are now guaranteed to have a seat available for them to attend.”

– Superintendent Eric Duda

The new campus in Belchertown is scheduled to open in September of this year. The school promised additional updates and announcements regarding the project in the coming

months, as the district prepares the campus for students.

“This is a tremendous opportunity not only for Pathfinder Tech but for the entire region,” said Duda. “We are ensuring that a former school building remains an active, thriving educational space while giving more students the chance to pursue rewarding career pathways. This expansion is a milestone for career technical education in Western Massachusetts, building on decades of success at Pathfinder Tech and opening new doors for students.”

To ensure that the new campus preserves its local roots and maintains a strong connection to the community, Pathfinder will invite Belchertown residents to help select a name for the new campus through a community survey.

In addition to creating new educational opportunities, the Cold Spring



Submitted photo

Superintendent Eric Duda (left) met with Governor Maura Healey to accept the grant of \$3.5 million.

location is expected to create new educational opportunities, generate local job growth, and strengthen community partnerships by pre-

serving a valuable community asset and addressing the increased need for skilled

See PATHFINDER, page 8

Board interviews TA candidates

By Zacharias Fragkiadakis
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Alex Magee

HUBBARDSTON – The Select Board interviewed three candidates for the town administrator position at their Monday meeting.

The board is looking to appoint a new administrator, as the interim, Sean Fitzgerald, has a term ending no later than June 30.

The three candidates interviewed were Alex Magee, Allyson Mitchell, and Elizabeth Kazinskas. Each candidate was asked four scripted questions by each member of the Select Board, then each board member had the opportunity for one follow up.

Magee was the first candidate interviewed, and was asked how he would work on the school’s budget increasing at a higher percentage than revenue in Hubbardston.

Magee said many communities face this issue, with schools growing too fast, and the revenue growth of towns are limited by proposition 2.5. He said the budget for Quabbin increased 7.5%, and it can sacrifice the town’s budget, and can be disproportionate.

Magee said he would get on the same page with the superintendent, boards, and committees to gain understanding of the situation. He said the school is the biggest asset, and there should be col-

See HUBBARDSTON, page 7

Override, school budget pass at ATM

By Zacharias Fragkiadakis
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RUTLAND – The annual town meeting was held last Saturday, where voters gathered to decide on the town budget, the school budget and capital purchases, among other articles.

One of the articles at the May 9 meeting had to do with a proposed \$3 million override for fiscal year 2027 to provide level services to the town.

The total budget proposed in article 4 was about \$11.675 million dollars, with the aforementioned \$3 million to be funded by the passage of the proposition 2.5 override at the town meeting and town elections.

According to the explanation in the warrant, if the override passed at both events, the town would have been able to raise taxes above the 2.5% limit, and

if it did not pass, the town would operate on the balanced budget in the warrant.

An alternate motion was made on the town meeting floor by Finance Committee member Darren Ross, which requested the town raise and appropriate \$10.047 million for the upcoming fiscal year, excluding the line items community television and education 300-399. The second part of the motion was to raise and appropriate an additional \$1.778 million to fund the budget, if the override were to pass at the election, also excluding education and community television.

The third part of the motion was to use about \$660,000 in free cash to fund the budget if the override were not to pass, and if it did, the town could not spend it without approval at another town meeting.

After the motion, the floor was open to discus-

sion. One resident said the school takes up 62% of the budget, and the costs stay the same even though the enrollment decreased. The resident also said the town would not be the same if services were lost.

Ruthann Rovezzi, chair of the Library Board of Trustees said without an override, the library will reduce hours of operations and staffing, and they will not meet the state standards for certification of libraries.

One resident said she did not want to see her taxes go up, but said it is possible to give up purchases to pay off the taxes, but she did not want to give up services like police, fire, and EMS. She said home insurances could go up due to risk assessments as a result of limited public safety.

After discussion, voters approved the amended motion made by Ross, passing the override 243-135.

School budget

As printed in the warrant, article 7 looked to raise and appropriate \$18.808 million for the Wachusett Regional School District Assessment, with \$10.102 million being the minimum contribution, about \$140,500 being for debt service, \$1.883 million being for transportation, and \$6.681 million being for the discretionary assessment.

An alternative motion was made by Ross to raise and appropriate \$18.283 million dollars, and to raise an additional \$100,000 for the discretionary assessment if the override passed.

A resident asked why the school could not amend their budget. Superintendent of the WRSD Jim Riley said the school budget is actually below average in many aspects.

Another resident said that if the town chooses not to

See RUTLAND, page 7



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Panthers fall in close matchup with Leicester

BARRE – It was a busy home work for the Quabbin Regional High School baseball team, thought the Panthers did lose one game to a rainout last Wednesday. Last Monday, the Panthers

defeated Narragansett 3-1, but suffered a 10-8 loss to Leicester. With the defeat, Quabbin stands at 5-7.

They have more games on the schedule, but are looking for that .500 record needed

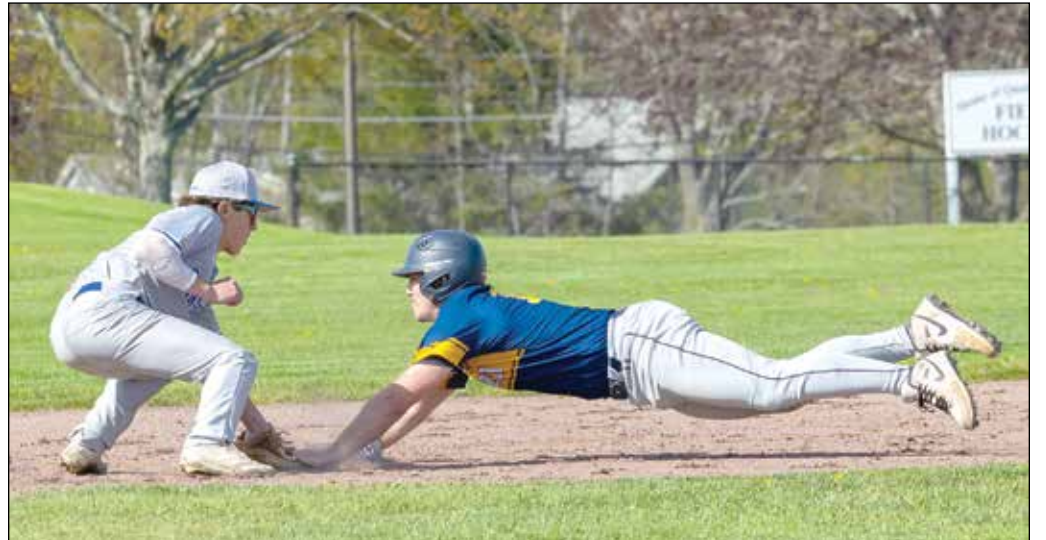
to qualify for the Division 4 state tournament. Coming up, the Panthers will host Murdock High School at 3:30 p.m. on Thursday, May 14. They host Bromfield on Monday, May 18 at 4 p.m.



Andy Warfield winces as he is struck by a pitch.

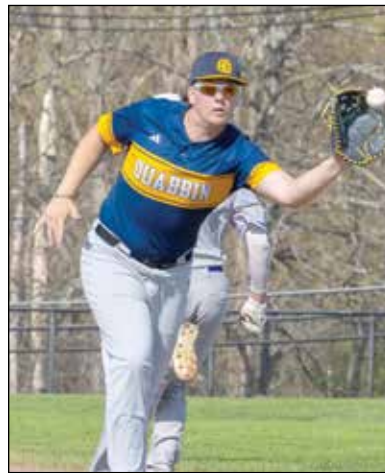


Aiden Lapointe dashes for second base.

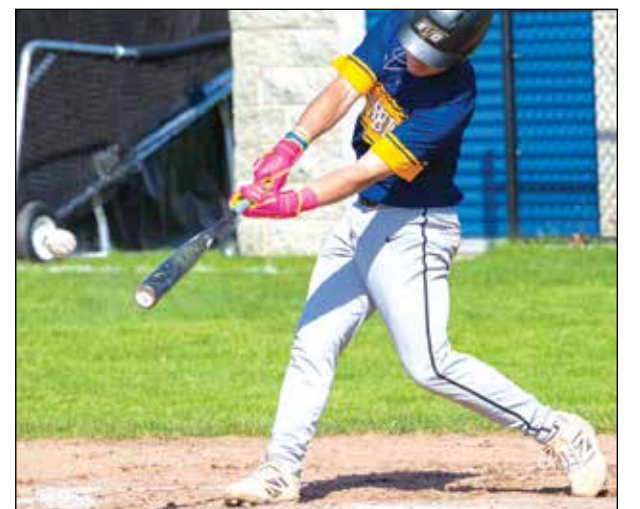


Adam Adams dives safely into second base.

Turley photos by Jeffrey Haynes



Ian Haupt stretches out to make the catch as the runner sprints to first base



J.R. Falconi connects on the pitch for a hit.



Izzy Doty makes the catch on a deep shot to center field.



Raegyn Wnek, right, scrambles to make the catch on a foul ball.

Turley photos by Jeffrey Haynes

Quabbin girls tennis suffers first defeat

BARRE – In its 13th match-up of the regular season, the Quabbin Regional High School girls tennis team took its first loss of the year, falling 3-2 to Groton-Dunstable. It was two of the singles players from Groton-Dunstable that clinched

it for the opposition. Farrah Wojcik had the only singles win for Quabbin, winning in three sets. Wojcik lost the first set, but came back to win the last two to take her match.

The two doubles teams split, with Quabbin's second doubles

team of Addison Suprenant and Maria Hamm scoring Quabbin's other win in the match.

While Quabbin is 12-1 for the season, they are still undefeated in league play as the regular season winds down.

Indians in action

NORTH BROOKFIELD – Last week, North Brookfield softball was in action, the Indians are looking to make the state tournament season and currently sit at 3-5 on the season with games against Parker Charter and North High School coming up in the next couple of days. Both games will be played at home.



Hope McCoy leads off first.



Sophia Dufresne fires a throw.



Whitney Reno fields a ground ball and heads to tag first base.

Quabbin softball rebounds with win over Leicester

BARRE – Until last Thursday, Quabbin Regional High School softball was on a three-game losing skid. The Panthers changed their fortunes with an 8-4 win over Leicester on May 7. The Panthers are now 4-7 on the season, with plenty of time to get back to .500. The Panthers are in action on Thursday, May 14 against Murdock at 3:30 p.m. and then face Bromfield on Monday, May 18 at 3:30 p.m.



Josie Castell fields a ground ball.



Maggie Leander delivers a late-game pitch.



Maci Roseberry watches the play as she runs for third base.



Lindsay Fors reaches for the catch to make the tag at second base.



Olivia Holmes squares up a hit.



Abby Lindberg sends a pitch away.