

BARRE GAZETTE

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Voters approve all warrant articles

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OAKHAM – About 110 voters attended the Annual Town Meeting at the Oakham Center School.

They acted on a 17 article warrant on Monday, June 22 in a little over one and a half hours.

The first order of business was to elect Mark Turnbull temporary Moderator by voting to have the Select Board Chairman Michael Brunelle cast one vote.

Voters elected Turnbull as Moderator at the Annual Town Election. Since the Annual Town Election warrant was not posted, the town was still waiting for verification of the election from the state.

Voters unanimously approved articles 3 through 7 with a consent calendar.

Russell Killough-Miller requested article 2 be discussed separately. He wanted to discuss that article as he had a question about Selectmen's total salaries line item increase.

The Moderator said that would be discussed in article 8. Voters unanimously approved article 2 to fix the salaries and compensation of all elected officers.

Finance Committee Member Clare Hendra said the Fiscal Year 2027 was level funded and totaled \$5,162,451. Of the total, \$4,950,422 was by raise and appropriate and \$212,029 was a transfer from free cash.

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Turley Photos by Ryan Drago

To celebrate its 105th anniversary, Barre Players performed William Shakespeare's "A Midsummer Night's Dream" for the month of June. This scene features a fight involving Helena, Demetrius, Hermia and Lysander.

Barre Players perform 'A Midsummer Night's Dream'

By Ryan Drago
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BARRE – As part of celebrating their 105th anniversary, Barre Players put on the classic play, William Shakespeare's "A Midsummer Night's Dream."

Jessie Olson directed the production of this show and enjoyed revisiting "A Midsummer Night's Dream" this year. Olson was involved in this play back in 1996 for Barre Player's 75th anniversary production.

As part of the cast, Olson played Helena, and now she has returned to take on the responsibility of directing the show.

This year, Barre Players performed a total of eight shows of "A Midsummer



Peter Quince, left, played by Larry Johnson is surrounded by his cast for an upcoming play.

Night's Dream" during the month of June. The show was selected as the 105th celebration kickoff for the theater group, because it was first featured at Barre Players in 1921.

At the time, the play was performed outdoors. Olson directed many shows at Barre Players. The graduate from Quabbin High School started directing at the age of 18. She is proud to call Barre Players a home to come back to.

Barre Players can be described as "a learning theater" as Olson explains. The show consisted of Barre Player veterans and newcomers working as one to bring a classic play to life.

"A place to learn and

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SB signs COA agreement

By Zacharias Fragkiadakis
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HARDWICK – The Select Board met last Monday where they signed a three year agreement with the Barre Senior Center, so Hardwick residents can continue to utilize their services.

This comes after the signing was delayed at a May 26 meeting following concerns about the center from residents,

At the June 8 meeting, Select Board Chair Jeff Schaaf said residents came to him and expressed their approval of the senior center, and said they felt included and approved of the operations. Schaaf said the senior center seems to be enjoyed by Hardwick residents.

Barre Senior Center Director Betty-Jo O'Brien was also present, along with members of both the Barre and Hardwick Councils on Aging. O'Brien said she watched the last meeting, and saw the comments made about the senior center.

She said the senior center is seeing a growing number of Hardwick residents, and the center offers transportation, nutrition programs, wellness programs and educational programs. She said in 2024, there were seven new Hardwick residents attending, when she started a "stronger together" initiative, which brought in 34 new residents.

She said as of May 31 of this year, there are 11 new participants.

O'Brien said there are 56

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Special Town Meeting passes reduced school assessment

By Zacharias Fragkiadakis
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RUTLAND – A special town meeting was held last Tuesday, with a three article warrant including a vote on a reduced school assessment from the Wachusett Regional School District, a citizen's petition for an override and an additional alcohol license for the Rutland Marketplace.

Article 1 on the June 16 warrant asked voters to

approve the reduced WRSD assessment of \$524,161 to be raised by taxation.

The Finance Committee did not recommend favorable action on the article.

Finance Committee Chair Darren Ross said the committee could not vote favorably in "good conscience" since the town is set to be losing 19 employees as a result of the failed override.

According to the explanation printed in the warrant, this sum reflects the

difference between what was approved at the May 9 annual town meeting (\$17,723,546), and the final assessment voted on by the WRSD school committee (\$18,247,707).

The explanation states the overall district budget increased by 3.09%, but Rutland's share has increased by 4.3% as a result of student enrollment and the formula assessment. The proposed fiscal year 2027 budget for the district overall is

\$133,070,587, nearly a \$4 million increase from Fiscal Year 26.

According to another handout titled "Wachusett Regional School District FY27 Budget Narrative," the reasons for the assessment increase include state funding calculations "drastically" underestimating the cost of educating students, the district's "hold-harmless" status in chapter 70 and the state's foundation budget shifting greater responsibility to the

member towns of the district.

The narrative states the chapter 70 funding formula is "seriously flawed and disproportionately burdens our towns." It states that the formula is based on a "model school budget from 1992," and works better for urban and vocational districts, but does not reflect the cost of educating students in the WRSD.

The narrative states the FY 27 estimates from the state show they expect a

vocational school to cost 60% more to educate students than Wachusett.

The narrative also states the school is in hold-harmless for a third year in a row due to a 1.84% decline in enrollment in FY 26, and the estimated increase in chapter 70 aid for the district is about \$1.046 million for FY 27, which is about \$1.5 million less than the FY 23 increase,

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Select Board discuss future goals

By Zacharias Fragkiadakis
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RUTLAND – The Select Board met Monday, where they discussed future goals for the board, for town operations and for future projects.

Select Board Chairman Sheila Dibb said there were five over-arching goals including communication, finance, capital projects and debt, local activism and staff support. Members of the board discussed possi-

ble projects, which could fit under those topics.

Select Board member Leah Whiteman said for activism, forming a group of people representing the Wachusett Regional School District could be helpful and there is a committee being put in place regarding the state's school funding formula being put together by Governor Maura Healey.

She said getting someone from the Wachusett Regional School Committee on that board would be important.

Town Administrator Heather Butler said she could take items on the master plan and try to fit them into these over-arching goals as well,

with a focus on "manpower" items rather than items that come with a cost, given the budget situation.

Butler also said there is work that needs to be done at Glenwood Elementary School as a facilities study shows it is one of the worst in the district. She said the Massachusetts Interlocal Insurance Association is cracking down on buildings that have risks, leading to higher insurance costs, so a goal would be to examine where the town is falling behind.

Dibb said there was an ad-hoc building committee at

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First Meetinghouse Preservation Committee votes to pursue grant

By Zacharias Fragkiadakis
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HUBBARDSTON – The First Meetinghouse Preservation Committee voted last Tuesday to pursue a grant through the Mass Historical Commission for repairs to be done at the meetinghouse.

At the June 16 meeting, committee member Susan Worth recommended the committee vote to apply for a \$150,000 matching grant called the Mass Preservation Project Fund, which would use

funds from the town's local Community Preservation Act to meet the matching requirements.

Worth said the grant process consists of five steps, including voting to pursue it as a committee, receiving support from local boards or committees, sending the application to the Community Preservation Committee, voting on the grant at a special town meeting and meeting the MHC deadline in March of 2027.

Worth said the CPA application deadline is July 15.

The committee discussed which items should be part of the scope of the project, with member Betty Ann Sharp suggesting addressing water infiltration as a top priority.

"Water is the enemy of the building," she said. The committee also discussed addressing issues with the foundation, and if there was still money available after those projects, to start addressing above ground items.

Committee member and

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Quabbin EP Wine advances to District 3 title game

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

BARRE – The final baseball game of the season played by the Quabbin EP Wine Little League team at Felton Field in Barre was a very enjoyable experience.

Quabbin EP Wine advanced into the District 3 championship game following a 10-0 shutout victory over Athol/Orange last Tuesday night. The game was halted by the home plate umpire with two outs in the bottom of the fourth inning

due to the ten-run mercy rule. “We played very well defensively, were aggressive on the bases, and we also got the job done at the plate,” said Quabbin EP Wine manager Matt LaPointe, who’s squad posted its first shutout of the season. “It was an awesome performance tonight.”

Quabbin EP Wine (8-5) also defeated Athol/Orange (5-7) three times during the regular season.

Quabbin lefthanders Murphy LaPointe and Deklan Sampson com-

bined to hold Athol/Orange to just five base hits in last Tuesday’s game.

LaPointe, who was the starting pitcher, didn’t allow any baserunners in the first inning before giving up back-to-back singles to begin the second inning. He was relieved by Sampson at that point.

“Murphy could only throw 20 pitches to be eligible to start in tomorrow night’s championship game,” said manager LaPointe. “Deklan came in and pitched very well.”

Sampson, who slings the ball to the plate with his wrist, hadn’t been a pitcher prior to this spring. He allowed three hits, which all came in the fourth inning, along with recording five strikeouts and issuing two walks.

“Deklan has a consistent delivery, which is perfect for little league,” manager LaPointe said. “We also gave him a lead to protect, which was very helpful.”

Sampson managed to get out of the second inning jam with the help of two strike-

outs. The home team took a 2-0 lead in the bottom half of the second inning.

Jake Pimental hit a leadoff double into left field before scoring the game’s first run on a wild pitch.

Two batters later, Jack Bowen swung at a strike three pitch thrown by righthander Max Wilson. Bowen was safe at first base on a passed ball. He would cross the plate on another passed ball.

Pimental and LaPointe had RBI singles in the third

inning, as Quabbin built a 6-0 lead. Lapointe scored following a throwing error by the catcher. Lukas Lance, who hit a flyball single to center, also scored on a wild pitch.

Travis O’Connor began EP Wine’s fourth inning rally with a leadoff walk, and he scored on a wild pitch making the score 7-0. Everett Laviolette knocked home another run with an infield hit. LaPointe contributed

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Post 241 suffers loss to visiting Greenfield

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

PALMER – Entering the second week of the American Legion baseball season, Monson Post 241 had the opportunity to move into a first-place tie with Greenfield Post 81 in the Zone 3A standings.

The Monson supporters didn’t have very much to cheer for in the first meeting between the two teams. Greenfield remained in sole possession of first place and improved to a perfect 3-0 following an 11-0 shutout victory on a gorgeous evening at Legion Field in Palmer, last Monday (June 15). The contest ended after five innings due to the 10-run mercy rule.

“We made more errors than we had base hits in tonight’s game,” said Palmer manager Steve Tripp. “You always have to make the plays to beat a very good hitting team like Greenfield.”

While Greenfield outscored their first three opponents, 39-2, Monson (1-2) only scored seven runs in their first three games,



Turley photos by Gregory A. Scibelli
Kyle Kaczuwka makes a play on a bouncing ball to first base.

which were all played at home. Four of the runs came in, a 4-2 win over Sheffield Post 340 on June 12.

Tripp received some good news about Theo Haley, who suffered an injury at a preseason practice.

Tripp was originally told that it was a season ending

injury, but after seeing a doctor, Haley was cleared to return to action. He’s hoping to play his first game during the next couple of weeks.

This past spring, Haley was one of the leading hitters on the Palmer varsity baseball team.

Making his second

start of the Legion season, Brayden Mega, who graduated from Pathfinder Tech a year ago, set down the first three Greenfield hitters that he faced on a groundball out and two strikeouts. The righthander didn’t receive very much support after that.

The Monson batters had a chance to take the lead against Greenfield righthander Matthew Burke in the bottom half of the opening frame.

Third baseman Sebastian Mayberry beat out a groundball to the shortstop for an infield single leading off the inning. After the next batter struck out, first baseman Kyle Kaczuwka was also safe at first base following another infield hit. The threat ended quickly, as Burke retired the next two batters on a flyball and a strikeout.

“We haven’t scored a first inning run during our first three games of the season,” Tripp said. “We’ve been struggling offensively.”

Monson had at least one base runner during the next four innings, but none of

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Hope Santaniello sends a long kick away.

Mutiny suffers loss to Crusaders

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

LUDLOW – Following three straight 2-1 road losses, the New England Mutiny were looking to celebrate a home victory versus the Hudson Valley Crusaders.

The Mutiny managed to take a 1-0 lead before the Crusaders responded with four unanswered goals leading to a 4-2 victory in a USL W League match held at Lusitano Stadium, last Saturday night.

“This is a very challenging league,” said Avery Klingensmith, who was an outstanding soccer player at Belchertown High School. “We’ve had several games this season where we had taken an early lead and wound up losing, which is a little bit frustrating. Protecting a lead is something that we need to work on. We really wanted to win tonight’s game.”

The Mutiny (1-5-2) are first-year members of the USL W League. Their only victory came at home against

AC Connecticut, 5-0, on May 30. They lost two close road matches against Hudson Valley, 2-0, and 2-1.

The Crusaders (5-2-2), along with Hartford Athletic and Vermont Green FC, are trying to finish the regular season in first place in the Northeast Division. Only the first place team earns a berth in the league playoffs.

Klingensmith, who wrapped up her collegiate soccer career at American University in Washington D.C. last fall, is planning to join a professional soccer team in Greece at the end of the summer.

“I’m really looking forward to starting my professional soccer career in a different country,” Klingensmith said. “Its going to be a different type of experience for me.”

Hope Santiniello, who’s from Agawam, has been a member of the Mutiny since 2019. She played in her first home match of the 2026 season against the Crusaders.

“The atmosphere at this stadium is always amazing,” said Santiniello, who was a starting defender for the first time in last Saturday’s match. “It’s always been a pleasure playing for this team.”

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Santiago Blasco fights to keep the ball.



Thomas Wadas clears the ball away.

Turley photos by David Henry www.sweetdogphotos.com

Pioneers battle to draw with Boston Bolts

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

LUDLOW – After 21 days away from historic Lusitano Stadium, the Western Mass. Pioneers returned home last Friday night for an intra-state showdown with the Boston Bolts.

The Pioneers faithful supporters had plenty to celebrate early in the match, as the home side stormed out to a 2-0 advantage in the 24th minute.

The Bolts responded with a goal late in the first half.

They struck again 15 minutes into the second half and the USL League Two match-up ended in a 2-2 draw in front of a large crowd.

“We held a 2-1 halftime lead,” said Pioneers head coach Federico Molinari. “We didn’t play very well in the second half. This is a very disappointing result for us.”

Both teams entered the match with a total of 14 goals.

The Pioneers (5-1-2), who have allowed 10 goals, are currently sitting in third place in the Northeast

Division table behind NEC and Vermont Green FC.

The top two finishers in the division will automatically qualify for the league playoffs.

The Pioneers, who went 2-0-1 in their previous three matches on the road, have qualified for the league playoffs each year since joining USL League Two in 2019.

The Western Mass. squad will most likely need to win their remaining five regular season matches and get a little bit of help along the way to keep the playoff streak

alive.

“It’s very disappointing letting a two goal lead slip away, especially in front of our fans,” said Felipe De Andrade, who scored the Pioneers second goal. “We’re going to continue to improve and keep fighting the rest of the season.”

De Andrade, who’s from Westborough, played for the Bolts, which only won three matches a year ago.

“Western Mass has always been a very strong team,” he said. “I just want-

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Kayleigh Lukasik heads up the field for the Mutiny.