

TOWN Reminder

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Override fails

Voters turn away both options

By Gregory A. Scibelli
gscibelli@turley.com

SOUTH HADLEY – On Tuesday, despite the endorsement of representative town meeting, the voters of South Hadley rejected override ballot questions, one for \$9 million and one for \$11 million.

If either had passed, the town would have been able to tax property additionally to raise the amount needed to balance a current budget deficit the town is facing heading for FY2027.

Reaction has already started pouring in, and even resulted in a walkout among the overwhelming majority of the population at South Hadley High School walked out of the building on Wednesday morning and staged a protest in response to the vote.

Warnings from town officials during the budget and time leading up to the election centered around losses in programming through cuts that would be made to the budget if the overrides were not approve.

High school students could see drastic changes, including the loss of all extracurricular activities, all high school varsity and sub-var-

sity sports teams, and advanced placement classes for students.

According to a report from the school district, students walked out of class and marched to the football field located behind the school building. Staff reminded students this was not a school-sanctioned event, according to an email sent by Principal Elizabeth Wood to parents. She stated the police were notified and while some students returned to class, others marched to Scala School and then on to Town Hall to continue their protest of the vote.

While the school district expressed a desire to not have students miss instructional time and be in compliance with safety protocols, they also support students expressing themselves in a safe, respectful matter.

The South Hadley Police Department was called and helped monitor students who had left the building and school grounds.

The election Tuesday saw voters vote down the \$9 million override with 58.2% against. The \$11 million override was rejected by 64.8% of voters.



In another area, those who want the override voted down.

Supporters of the override hold their signs at South Hadley High School on Tuesday.

Turley photos by Ben Hernandez

With the rejection of the overrides, the budget returns to town officials, including Town Administrator Lisa

Wong, and the Select Board. The officials will have to go back to the drawing board and look at their options in

order to address the budget deficits the town and school district are facing.

The *Town Reminder*

hopes to have more, including reaction from town officials in next week's edition of the paper.

Student creates free after school tutoring program

By Ben Hernandez
Correspondent

SOUTH HADLEY – Homework Hub, a mentorship program created by South Hadley High School student Rehan Shahid, is a tutoring service that runs out of the South Hadley Library every Thursday operating between the hours of 3:30 and 5 p.m. for the month of April.

"I've just seen a lot of students around here struggling with classwork," said Rehan Shahid, a junior at South Hadley High School, when asked about what in-

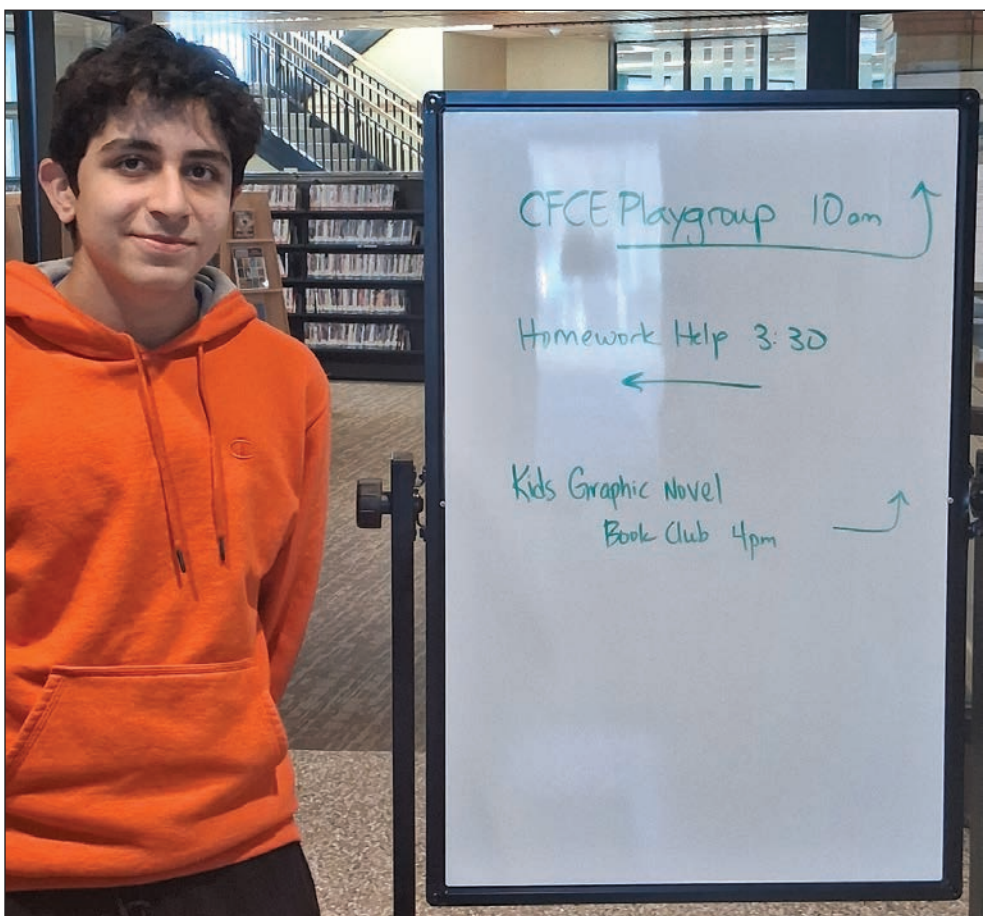
spired his mentorship program. "I just thought I needed to make a change to help them."

Having troubles with his own studies in the past and in turn experiencing trouble in asking for help himself, Shahid identified that "creating a space where students felt welcome" was an essential need for the local academic community. Taking it upon himself to fill that need, the high school student created Homework Hub, created his own advertisement flier for the tutoring program, and reached out to the South Hadley Library to reserve a

room for the proposed after school service.

"I'm hoping to get like every student that needs help and have them get the help they need," replied Shahid regarding his hopes for Homework Hub. He plans on expanding the volunteer program's reach to "other towns" once there are more kids signed up and when the program has more volunteers to support the workload. Though Shahid does most of the tutoring himself right now, there are occasions where he needs

Please see **TUTOR**, page 5



Turley photos by Ben Hernandez

Rehan Shahid proudly stands in front of the sign that advertises his homework help services.

Granby OKs FY27 sewer hikes

Officials warn of multimillion-dollar Forge Pond Dam fix

By Melina Bourdeau
Correspondent

GRANBY – Officials adopted new sewer rates and reviewed a fragile but balanced fiscal 2027 budget, while warning that looming costs, from trash and recycling to dam repairs, could force difficult choices.

Granby's FY27 budget will balance without an override and keep basic services running for another year, but Selectboard members and the town's longtime former administrator warned that major infrastructure and operating pressures are closing in.

In a wide-ranging presentation, interim financial adviser Chris Martin opened with the bottom line on the budget.

Martin explained that he was asked to assemble the FY27 spending plan because the current interim town administrator was uncomfortable building the full municipal budget.

The plan uses borrowing for larger capital items and includes \$500,000 in free cash for the schools as an "above minimum contribution," continuing a recent practice. Even so, school officials have signaled they want substantially more.

"I believe a number I've heard out there is they are going to be about \$700,000 short of what they're looking for. We do not have that type of money available period, unless you want to put an override together for that figure," Martin said.

Sewer rates rise as costs climb

Acting as sewer commissioners, the Selectboard voted to increase rates for all sewer users beginning in FY27, driven largely by outside charges, including South Hadley's higher sewer use fee.

Martin laid out the new annual charges per Equivalent Dwelling Unit (EDU):

"We are looking at for the community's septic system users to go from 335 per EDU per year to \$337 per EDU per year for the five corners portion of the sewer to go from \$804 per year per EDU to \$857 per year, or per EDU per year. And for the houses that are on the South

Please see **FY27**, page 10

Granby schools wrestle with volatile SPED costs and looming deficit

By Melina Bourdeau
Correspondent

GRANBY – School leaders are grappling with soaring special education costs, unstable state aid and rising insurance and transportation expenses, leaving a cushion of reserves and an FY27 budget gap that approaches \$400,000 despite town support.

A single change in one student's special education placement has become the latest symbol of how unpredictable costs are straining the district's finances and forcing difficult choices for the coming fiscal year.

During the April 7 School Committee budget hearing and subsequent meeting, Superintendent Mary Jane

Rickson and School Committee Chair Jennifer Bartosz returned repeatedly to six interconnected themes: surging special education expenses, the remaining FY27 deficit, major budget drivers like insurance and transportation, the limits of a "level service" budget, athletic safety coverage and donations and growing concern about the budget and oversight at Pathfinder Regional Vocational Technical High School.

Special education costs and budget whiplash

Rickson opened the hearing by explaining how special education has reshaped the budget since the committee's last meeting.

She said that while the district had already pared its

initial \$1.4 million wish-list deficit, a recent change in an out-of-district student's placement quickly erased anticipated savings. To keep the budget afloat, the district tapped its last major safety net.

Bartosz, stressing she was not opposed to meeting any student's needs, said the speed and size of the financial swing was alarming.

"We were negative, I don't know, whatever it was, 12% or something last week, and now we're up 9% so that's a 21% change in a week," she said. "So what's to say that this... we're not going to have another 21% change next week?"

The chair likened the

Please see **SCHOOLS**, page 4

Local photographer's exhibit on display at State House

By Ben Hernandez
Staff Writer

BELCHERTOWN – The Quabbin Reservoir is on display at the Massachusetts State House Senate Gallery. The exhibit, entitled “Quabbin – Yesterday and Today,” is a photography collage of the Quabbin, which is a combination of old archival photos of the region as well as photos taken by local nature photographer and Friends of the Quabbin board member Ed Comeau.

“It’s just amazing,” said Comeau as he reflected on the three pictures featured in the gallery that were taken by Bert Brooks, a well-known photographer from the 1800s. “Back in those days, cameras were pretty substantial pieces of equipment. Every day he was out walking around taking pictures just like that of everyday life in the valley.”

The reservoir today is the largest unfiltered public water source in the region, supplying about 2.7 million people across Massachusetts with clean drinking water. The majority of the supply feeds into the metro Boston area; with Wilbraham, South Hadley, and Chicopee also getting their water from the reservoir.

The region is protected by a stewardship between the twelve towns that remain in the area, as well as the Department of Conservation and Recreation’s Division of Water Supply Protection. This partnership also protects thousands of acres of open space, which are used for both public recreation and land conservation. Comeau’s main reason for the exhibit is to raise legislative awareness. While working with Senator Oliveira on “some quadrant related legislation,” Comeau saw an opportunity to educate Boston politicians on where their

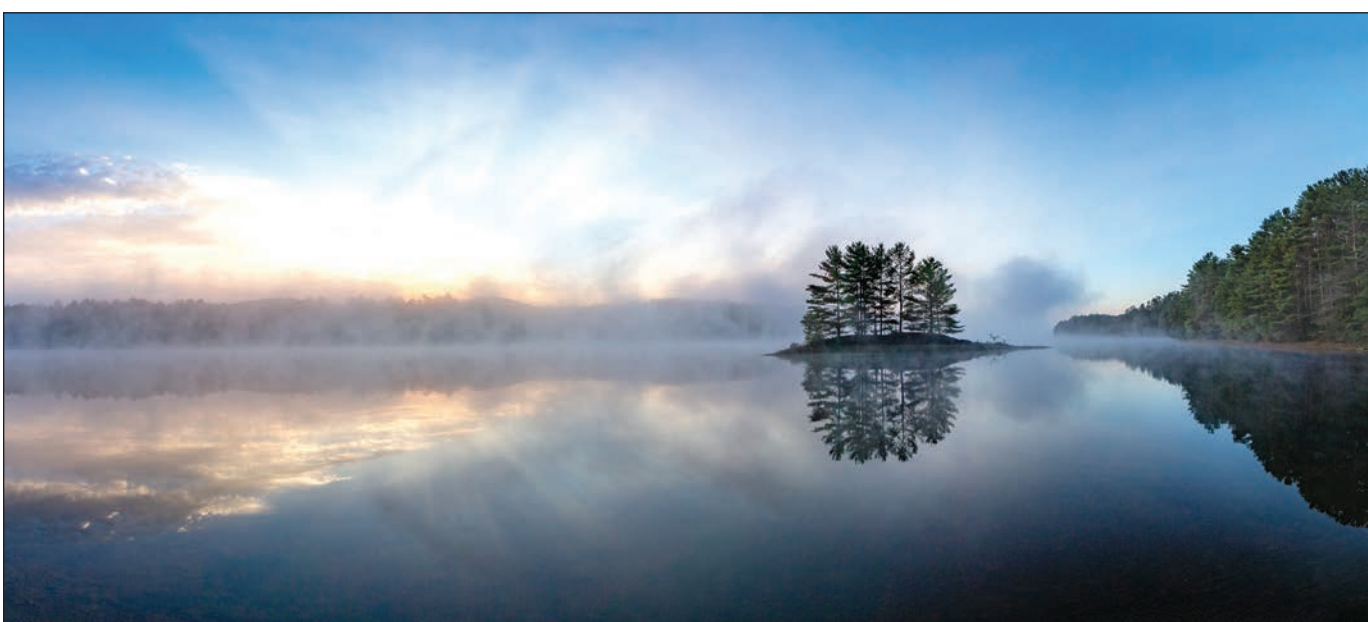
city’s drinking water comes from.

“Many people in Boston have no idea where their water comes from,” said Comeau. “So I said, well, what if we had some sort of exhibit at the State House to educate the other senators from the Boston area about the Quabbin?”

The Quabbin was constructed between the years of 1930 and 1946 through the damming and intentional flooding the Swift River Valley. Four towns, Dana, Enfield, Greenwich, and Prescott, were flooded for the sake of the project. The clearing of the valley moved and razed town buildings, as well as relocated over two thousand five hundred residents through eminent domain land reclamation.

Comeau also explained that a massive tunnel was dug between the Quabbin and Wachuset reservoirs, a key engineering project when developing the region. The stark contrast captured in the exhibit between the modern day area and the valley before the project is striking. The exhibit includes snapshots of past everyday life in the Quabbin. From a young boy displaying a caught fish to a group of children returning home from school, the archival photos offer a rare glimpse into the valley’s past.

The exhibit includes photos of regional wildlife, landscape portraits of the reservoir itself, and slice of life pictures taken from the region. The exhibit will be hosted throughout April and May at the Massachusetts Senate Gallery located in the State House in Boston. A virtual tour of the exhibit may also be accessed on photographer Ed Comeau’s website at www.ComeauPhotography.com/StateHouseExhibit and was possible by a Mass Cultural Council grant to the Friends of the Quabbin..



Charming vistas bring the region to life.



Local fisherman keep the tradition alive in the valley.



Local natural wildlife is on display as part of the Quabbin Reservoir Exhibit.

CLERK / TREASURER SOUTH HADLEY FIRE DISTRICT NO. 2

South Hadley Fire District No. 2 seeks a qualified professional to fill the fulltime (40 hour) position of Clerk/Treasurer. The Clerk/Treasurer serves as the District’s Financial Manager. The Clerk/Treasurer is responsible for district funds, accounts payable, payroll, employee benefits, debt management, cash flow, the annual district election, annual district meeting, budget preparation, publishing the Annual Report of Officers and ensuring compliance with state and federal regulations and reporting requirements.

Municipal financial experience with a working knowledge of municipal procedures and state and federal laws is highly advantageous. Minimum qualifications include: three years of progressive accounting and financial management experience, experience managing a budget of 2.5 million; payroll processes, auditing and the demonstrated ability to utilize multiple financial software platforms. The successful candidate must be bondable, and must attain CMMT designation within four years.

Desired qualifications include a bachelor’s degree in finance, business administration, accounting or public administration, previous municipal experience and SoftRight software experience. CMMT, MMAAA or MCPPO designation additionally advantageous. A combination of experience and education will be considered.

This fully benefited position works under a three-year, renewable memorandum of agreement. Hiring salary range is \$75,000 to \$82,000. The top salary step exceeds the hiring range. Visit the District website shdistrict2.org for the full job description. Applications will be accepted until the position is filled. Review of applications will begin immediately.

Send cover letter and resume to:
Barbara Miller, Clerk/Treasurer, South Hadley Fire District No. 2, 20 Woodbridge Street, South Hadley, MA 01075
Electronic submissions in PDF format: BMiller@shdistrict2.org

South Hadley Fire District No. 2 is an equal opportunity employer and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, age, disability or veteran status.

PART-TIME CLERK / TREASURER SOUTH HADLEY FIRE DISTRICT NO. 2

South Hadley Fire District No. 2 seeks a qualified professional to fill the part-time (19-24 hour) position of Clerk/Treasurer. The Clerk/Treasurer maintains oversight of the District’s financial health, under the policy direction of the Prudential Committee. The Clerk/Treasurer is responsible for receipt and disbursement of district funds, payroll processes, employee benefits, debt management, cash flow, the annual district election, ensuring compliance with state and federal regulations and reporting requirements.

Municipal financial experience with a working knowledge of municipal procedures and state and federal laws is highly advantageous. Minimum qualifications include: three years of progressive experience in financial management, administration of payroll, employee benefits and other human resource functions, and the demonstrated ability to utilize multiple financial software platforms. The successful candidate must be bondable, and must attain Certified Massachusetts Municipal Treasurer (CMMT) status within four years.

Desired qualifications include a bachelor’s degree in finance, business administration, accounting or public administration, previous municipal experience and SoftRight software experience. CMMT, MMAAA or MCPPO designation additionally advantageous. A combination of experience and education will be considered.

The successful candidate will work under a three-year, renewable memorandum of agreement. The hiring range is \$35.00 to \$39.00 hourly. The top step exceeds the hiring range. Visit the District website shdistrict2.org for the full job description. Applications will be accepted until the position is filled. Review of applications will begin immediately.

Send cover letter and resume to:
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Grinspoon banquets scheduled for next month

HOLYOKE – The Pioneer Valley Excellence in Teaching Awards will honor 90 teachers from over 20 Western Massachusetts school districts at celebratory banquets at the Log Cabin in Holyoke on May 6, 12 and 20.

The program will feature an awards presentation honoring the winners, who will each receive an engraved plaque and monetary award in recognition of their achievement, along with generous tuition incentives and scholarships offered by the following colleges and universities in the region: American International College, Bay Path University, Elms College, Springfield College, Western New England University, Westfield State University, and the University of Massachusetts.

Winners also receive a 3-month membership to one of the six regional YMCAs and a 1-month membership to the Springfield Jewish Community Center.

The Pioneer Valley Ex-

cellence in Teaching Awards program, now in its 23rd year, is made possible by the Harold Grinspoon Charitable Foundation in partnership with the Irene E. & George A. Davis Foundation and supported by the American International College, Smith College, Arrha Credit Union a division of BrightBridge Credit Union, Country Bank, and Meyers Brothers Kalicka.

“Our teachers serve not only as educators, but also as mentors, community leaders, and innovators. They play a fundamental role in supporting families and building communities. It is a great privilege to recognize outstanding teachers in the Pioneer Valley.” Michelle Moon, Director, Excellence in Teaching Awards at the Harold Grinspoon Charitable Foundation.

For a complete list of the 2026 award winners, please visit the Harold Grinspoon Charitable Foundation website: hgcf.org.

Women’s Club to hold Fashion Show

WILBRAHAM – The Wilbraham Women’s Club is sponsoring a Fashion Show Luncheon on Thursday, April 23, at the St. Cecilia Parish Center, 42 Main St., Wilbraham.

Clothing from CHICO’S in the Longmeadow Shops will be featured. The catered luncheon choices are Salmon with dill sauce or Chicken Francaise. There will also be a raffle for many prizes and gift certificates.

Join us at 11:30 a.m. for a social time with

hors d’oeuvres, followed by lunch at noon. The donation is \$42 and is a fundraiser for the club’s scholarships and charitable donations to needy organizations in the area. For reservations, please make checks payable to Wilbraham Women’s Club and mail them to Sue Agnew, 7 Aspen Dr., Wilbraham, 01095. For questions, call Sue at 596-9480. Be sure to include the meal choice in the memo of the check. Also, include whom you wish to sit with.

Granby holding candidates night

GRANBY – The Town of Granby Communications Committee is hosting a Meet The Candidate’s night at the East Meadow School Cafeteria on Wednesday, May 6 at 6:30

p.m. All candidates running for local office will be given an opportunity to speak, with Q&A from attendees. Childcare will be provided by the Granby National Honor Society.

Harmony House to host Pizza for a Purpose fundraiser April 23

CHICOPEE – Local non-profit Harmony House of Western Massachusetts invites the community to its upcoming Pizza for a Purpose fundraiser on Thursday, April 23 from 5 to 8 p.m. at View Street Tavern, 92 View Street in Chicopee.

This family-friendly event will directly support Harmony House’s mission of providing a home with compassionate end-of-life care and companionship to hospice patients in need. Guests can enjoy all-you-can-eat pizza, along with raffles, a cash bar with local celebrity bartenders, and a

50/50 drawing. Tickets are \$20 for adults, \$10 for children ages 3–17, and free for children 2 and under. Tickets can be purchased at the door or online in advance. View Street Tavern is generously donating the pizza and space for this event, ensuring that funds raised directly support Harmony House and its residents. Harmony House is seeking additional sponsors to help meet its fundraising goal. Visit HarmonyHouseWMA.org/PizzaNight to purchase tickets, become a sponsor, or learn more about the event and the nonprofit.

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South Hadley Residents

Smith Educational Fund

Applications for financial assistance through the Smith Educational Fund are available in the Superintendent’s Office, South Hadley Public Schools, 116 Main St, South Hadley, MA 01075.

Applicants must be: A resident of South Hadley
Under twenty-one years of age
Registered to attend a post-secondary school

Application deadline: May 22, 2026



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Opinion

SOCIAL SECURITY

Matters

By Russell Gloor

When a spouse dies will the other get a Social Security Survivor Benefit?

Dear Rusty: I am 79. My husband is also 79 and we both receive Social Security benefits. We were both married before and we married each other at the age of 58. Am I to understand correctly that when either of us dies, the surviving spouse is not eligible to collect the deceased spouse's Social Security benefits? Please correct me if I am wrong.

Signed: Curious Spouse

Dear Curious Spouse:

A surviving spouse only gets one benefit - either their own SS retirement amount, or their deceased spouse's amount, whichever is more. So, the Social Security benefit that the deceased was receiving at death will be paid to the surviving spouse, replacing any smaller SS payment the survivor was already collecting. To be sure you are aware, the surviving spouse will also be eligible for a one-time lump sum death benefit of \$255 (I know it isn't much, but it should be claimed anyway).

Also, unless the surviving spouse was already receiving a spousal benefit while both partners were living, the surviving spouse will need to contact Social Security at 1-800-772-1213 or at the local SS field office to make an appointment to apply for their survivor benefit.

One other thing to be aware of since you were both married before: if either of you die, and your first marriage lasted at least 10 years and your ex-spouse has also died, the surviving spouse will have a choice to collect a survivor benefit from

either the ex-spouse or the most recently deceased spouse, whichever amount is more. But, again, you can only collect one benefit payment as a surviving spouse either from your ex-spouse or from your recently deceased spouse, whichever benefit is higher.

FYI, survivor benefits are a confusing area of Social Security, so you might also find informative this article I recently published, as it goes more deeply into surviving spouse benefits including benefits for surviving minor children and surviving adult disabled children. Read the article titled "Demystifying Social Security Survivor Benefits" at www.amacfoundation.org/demystifying-social-security-survivor-benefits/. Of course, if you have any further questions, please contact us at 1-888-750-2622 or email us at ssadvisor@amacfoundation.org. There is never a fee for our services.

The Association Mature Citizens Foundation and its staff are not affiliated with or endorsed by the Social Security Administration or any other governmental entity. This article is intended for information purposes and does not represent legal or financial guidance. It presents the opinions and interpretations of the Association Mature Citizens Foundation's staff, trained and accredited by the National Social Security Association. To submit a question, visit amacfoundation.org/programs/social-security-advisory or email us at ssadvisor@amacfoundation.org. Russell Gloor is a Social Security advisor for AMAC.

What I did last weekend in the garden

I was so looking forward to last Saturday, a day in which I did not have to drive anywhere. I could simply stay put and work on getting the yard in shape.

Boy, was it a long winter, and there was proof of that no matter where I turned.

Read on to learn which outdoor and indoor gardening activities kept me busy.

First I decided to tackle the perennial and shrub borders that I walk by the most often. Half of the reason we garden is because we like to stand back in admiration, so I figured if I cleaned those up I'd have something to feel good about on my way to the car or the chicken coop.

I leave many perennials standing through the winter, especially those with seed heads the birds might like to dine on.

So, before I got out the rake, I went plant by plant with my hedge clippers, cutting the dead and brown stalks to about "fist" height from the ground. Hedge clippers make fast work of this task. After that came the rake, with which I carefully cleaned the bed of matted leaves and the plant parts I just cut back. As I was working, I weeded out clover, and some perennial grasses that appeared within

the bed, and although I am nowhere near ready to apply bark mulch, I got out the spade and did my best to put a crisp edge on the border with the lawn. Looking good.

While I was putting tools



away I found (gasp) some hyacinth and daffodil bulbs that never got planted in the fall. I cannot even believe that there were green tips on these bulbs that sat in an empty pot in my unheated subarctic garden shed over the winter months.

I figured that after that torture they deserved to be planted. I sunk them twice their height deep and watered them in. Say a prayer.

My "Redbud garden" shares a stone wall with some thornless blackberry bushes. It may not have been smart on my account to have an ornamental garden opposite plants that like to sucker like crazy but such is life when you want to squeeze in as many plants as you can into the space you've got...Anyway, ten foot long

canes jumped the wall into the bed where I have a few bulbs and biennials at the base of the Redbud.

I was able to give the canes a strong yank and lo and behold I have three new blackberry bushes free for the taking. I separated them from the mother plant, potted them up and will delight a friend with them, just as my friend Kelly's husband had done for me some years back.

These berries are so wonderful. Even with a small patch I am always able to freeze a couple of quarts for use in the offseason. Yum!

With stems cut back, leaves raked, weeds and suckers removed and the beds given a crisp edge, I felt good enough about leaving outlying gardens for another day. It was time to turn my attention to tomato seedlings that had long since outgrown the seed packs the seeds were sown in the third week of March.

Typically we transplant when the first true leaves form. I am maybe a week late.

Carefully I lifted out the clumps of seedlings and gently pried the roots apart. Tomato seedlings can be sunk deeply, almost up to their leaves; new roots will form on the stems.

After a gentle watering they will go back under the grow lights they until they are

Please see **GARDEN**, page 5

OPINION PAGE/ LETTERS POLICY

Letters to the Editor have a maximum of 350 words. We require writers to include their name, address and phone number in order for our office to authenticate authorship prior to publication. Addresses and phone numbers are not published.

Unsigned or anonymous letters will NOT be published.

We reserve the right to edit or withhold any submissions. Libelous, unsubstantiated allegations, personal attacks or defamation of character are not allowed. Deadline for submissions is Wednesday at noon.

Please email (preferred) letters to townreminder@turley.com. Mailed letters can be sent to Town Reminder, 24 Water Street, Palmer, MA 01069.

Turley Election Policy

This newspaper will print free self-submitted statements of candidacy only four weeks or more out from the election. All candidates running in both contested and uncontested races are asked to submit their statements to the editor to include only biographical and campaign platform details. Total word count for statements is limited to between 300-500 words maximum. Please include a photo. We will not publish any statements of candidacy inside the four weeks from election threshold. To publish any other campaign publicity during the race, please contact our advertising representatives. We also do not allow personal attacks against other candidates or political parties in statements of candidacy, nor do we publish for free any information about key endorsements or political fundraisers.

Letters to the editor of no more than 250 words from supporters endorsing specific candidates or discussing campaign issues are limited to three total per author during the election season. No election letters will appear in the final edition before the election. We reserve the right to edit all statements of candidacy and letters to the editor to meet our guidelines.



SCHOOLS from page 1

process to a board game rather than serious budgeting.

"It feels like we're playing with Monopoly money... or the game of life. We're going to spin the... spin and... we have no control over some of those things," Bartosz said.

With circuit breaker funds fully committed for FY27, both acknowledged that any high-cost student moving into Granby, even on Aug. 1, could force cuts elsewhere in the budget.

Deficit shrinks but still looms

Despite the volatility, Rickson emphasized that careful trimming and new help from the town have narrowed, but not erased, the FY27 budget gap.

The district's initial internal budget development, which included principals' and departments' full "wish lists," produced a roughly \$1.4 million deficit. After multiple rounds of reductions and offsets, Rickson said: "Our working deficit is, right now, as of today, is \$390,000," she told the committee.

Bartosz thanked the town for stepping up with more aid than anticipated.

"I appreciate the fact that the town even found \$500,000 because it could have been \$150 or it could have been \$10 and been like, 'Here you go,'" she said. Even so, she pointed

out that if another special education change had cost \$100,000 less, the district would "still [be] almost \$300,000" in the hole.

Insurance, inflation and state aid gaps

Rickson devoted a significant portion of her presentation to explaining the structural pressures behind the numbers: health insurance hikes, inflation, transportation and a mismatch between state aid and required local spending.

She noted that Hampshire County Trust insurance rates jumped, and the foundation for employee benefits increased 8.29%, with insurance driving up the town's in-kind contribution.

At the same time, she said, the state's main school funding program isn't keeping pace.

"When the governor creates a budget, they talk about how much money you're going to get per pupil. Right now, it is allocated at \$75 per pupil," Rickson said.

She added that Chapter 70 state funding increased "only by every 1%" while required local spending rose 4.4%, calling it "a huge disconnect."

Inflation, especially for fuel, remains another wild card.

"We never know what next week price is going to be on something else, diesel fuel," Rickson said.

Level service goals, but real tradeoffs

The superintendent framed the FY27 request as a "level service" budget — an attempt to provide the same services as last year without program cuts.

"We're looking for a level service budget this year. We want to make sure that our teachers and students are getting the best for them. Now we're doing the best we can with what we have," Rickson said.

She said the district aims to preserve core instruction, Advanced Placement and early college offerings, sports and after-school activities, specials like art and music, technology and building maintenance.

But to close the gap, Rickson outlined likely impacts:

- No new positions that administrators had hoped to add.
- Reduced professional development funding.
- Complete depletion of the circuit breaker reserve.
- Possible cuts to Chromebook repair and replacement, playground mulch, baseball and softball field work, gym floor refinishing and some contracted special education services.

"Our total operating budget from FY 26 what we're asking should be only 2.8%... from last year," Rickson said, noting that while 2.8 to 2.86% might sound modest, "it is a small town. So \$356,000 is a good chunk of change."

Athletic trainer coverage and potential donations

Some proposed trims focused on athletics and facilities, prompting questions about student safety and community support.

Bartosz asked about reducing athletic trainer hours, given state requirements.

"What do we do in that case? Because aren't we required by Mia to have a trainer or EMT or some kind of service on site," she said.

An administrator explained that Granby would still meet mandatory coverage for specific sports and tournament rounds through contractual services but would not be able to add extra hours.

"We will meet our obligations, but we're not able to expand what we offer," he said.

Bartosz then raised the possibility of volunteers and donations, asking if licensed EMTs who are parents could donate sideline services and whether the district could accept donations for playground mulch, field maintenance and even Chromebooks.

"Is that something that we can accept donations for?" she asked of the playground and fields, then added, "Same for other things too, like Chromebooks and other things."

Administrators indicated they were open to exploring those ideas.

Pathfinder budget and oversight worries

The meeting also turned to Pathfinder Regional Vocational Technical High School, where rising assessments for member towns are adding another layer of concern.

Rickson, speaking with care to praise the school's educational value, said local superintendents are uneasy about how easily Pathfinder's budget is approved.

"Pathfinder is a great school. We love our students to get a technical education... however, our concern really is... oftentimes... Pathfinder puts forward their budget, they don't really question their budget," she said.

She cited reports that Palmer's Pathfinder costs are going up about 10% and other districts' increases are also steep, while Granby is facing a 5% hike this year.

At the same time, Pathfinder has accepted a large incoming class of Granby ninth graders — 17.

Rickson proposed sending a letter, modeled on one used in Palmer, asking for more detailed justification and oversight and inviting Granby's Pathfinder representative to present regularly.

As the committee heads toward a late-April budget vote, members said they will keep pressing both for local solutions and for broader changes at the state and regional level to stabilize school funding in the years ahead.

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TUTOR from page 1

to reach out to his friends to help cover the spread.

"I'd say I'm the strongest at math and science," said Shahid when asked about his specialties, who hopes to attend college to become an engineer. He believes that his strong base in the subjects is the reason why struggling students seek out Homework Hub. As word-of-mouth spreads, Shahid hopes to scale the program "a lot" and that he hopes to make it a "household name" for local students seeking help with their education. Currently, the majority of enrolled students are "middle schoolers" by Shahid's admission, with children from "fifth grade, sixth grade, seventh, and eighth" flocking to the program for the high school student's aid.

"I'm hoping to continue the session every week on Thursdays," said Shahid when asked about his scheduling and growth plans for the program. "I'm hoping to grow the number of students and grow the number of people working for the program."

Those seeking to volunteer may reach out to the program through email at shhomeworkhub@gmail.com. Prospective students seeking help through Homework Hub will need to complete a Google Form before they may attend a tutoring

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- April: 2nd, 9th, 16th, 23rd, 30th
- Additional sessions may continue based on interest.

Complete the form below before attending your preferred session

For Questions: shhomeworkhub@gmail.com

Students wishing to enroll in the program may scan the QR Code on the Homework Hub flier to schedule their appointments.

session. The form is provided through a QR code included with the flier.

"I'd like to shout out the hospitality of the library, letting me have this opportunity and helping me set this up," said Shahid. He cited that the flier "lists all the dates" for the current schedule, which

extends through the month of April. He hopes that the month will give him further feedback to inform of how to "continue working the sessions."

"Don't be afraid to reach out if you need help," said Shahid. "Homework Hub is here to help you."



Turley photos by Ben Hernandez

The tutoring program is free and available to local South Hadley students.

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Legion to host Patriots Day ceremony

SOUTH HADLEY – On Saturday, Apr. 18 at 11 a.m., the South Hadley American Legion Post 260, in collaboration with the South Hadley Historical Commission, will conduct a Patriots Day program at the Old Burial Ground, which is located in the back of Evergreen Cemetery.

The event will include a parade of flags, fife and drum corps, musket demonstration, veteran speakers, historical presentations and a special historical sign dedication honoring South Had-

ley's hometown heroes of the Revolutionary War. The ceremony will also include a rifle salute and the sounding of Taps, honoring the lives and selfless service of our local Patriots who answered the alarm beginning in April 1775 at Lexington & Concord, and their continued service in the Revolutionary War insuring the birth of our Nation.

There will be a special tribute to a South Hadley African American slave who purchased his freedom to join the fight for inde-

pendence. The public will be invited to assist with the placement of 13 star "Betsy Ross Flags" at the gravesites of Revolutionary War veterans, and small American flags will be available at no cost as we prepare to celebrate America 250 this July.

The entrance to Evergreen Cemetery is on Rt. 47, below the South Hadley Commons and directly across from 25 Hadley Street, South Hadley, Massachusetts

This is an all ages event, and is rain or shine.

GARDEN from page 4

big enough to be moved from the six packs to a four inch pot. Probably by May 1.

What is next on the agenda? Next weekend I have to assess my potato patch. I'll probably pull up old red raspberry canes nearby to expand the bed.

Blueberry bushes need some fertilizer. Asparagus could use lime and compost, probably some weeding as well.

There is never a dull moment this time of year, and I am not sure I'd want it any other way.

Roberta McQuaid graduated from the Stockbridge School of Agriculture at the University of Massachusetts. For the last 34 years,

she has held the position of staff horticulturist at Old Sturbridge Village. She enjoys growing food as well as flowers. Have a question for her? Email it to pouimette@turley.com with "Gardening Question" in the subject line.

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April 28th
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This recognition is part of the BusinessRate BEST of 2026 Awards, which identify local leaders in customer satisfaction, brand reputation, and service excellence. Your BusinessRate Score is a complete performance metric that combines all factors with a simple, easy-to-understand score. This comprehensive rating shows how your business ranks against local competitors.

Congratulations again on this outstanding achievement; earned not by application or nomination, but by the authentic feedback of your own customers.

Warm regards,
Kyle Pittman
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Tigers outlast Easthampton in extra innings

SOUTH HADLEY – On Monday afternoon, South Hadley High School baseball defeated Easthampton 5-4 at home in eight innings. Lincoln Belsky, Noah Carillon, and Logan Carpenter all recorded two hits. Matthew Butler managed to pitch a complete game. He went all eight innings, allowing four runs on five hits. He walked two and struck out seven to earn the win. South Hadley is 4-3 on the season and they next face Northbridge on the road Saturday, Apr. 18 at 11 a.m.



Matthew Butler delivers a pitch home.



Memphis Huertas fouls off a pitch.

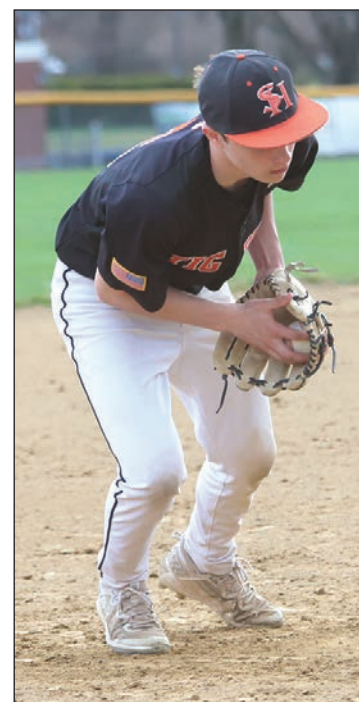
Turley photos by Gregory A. Scibelli



Griffin Soderbaum makes an off-balance throw to first.



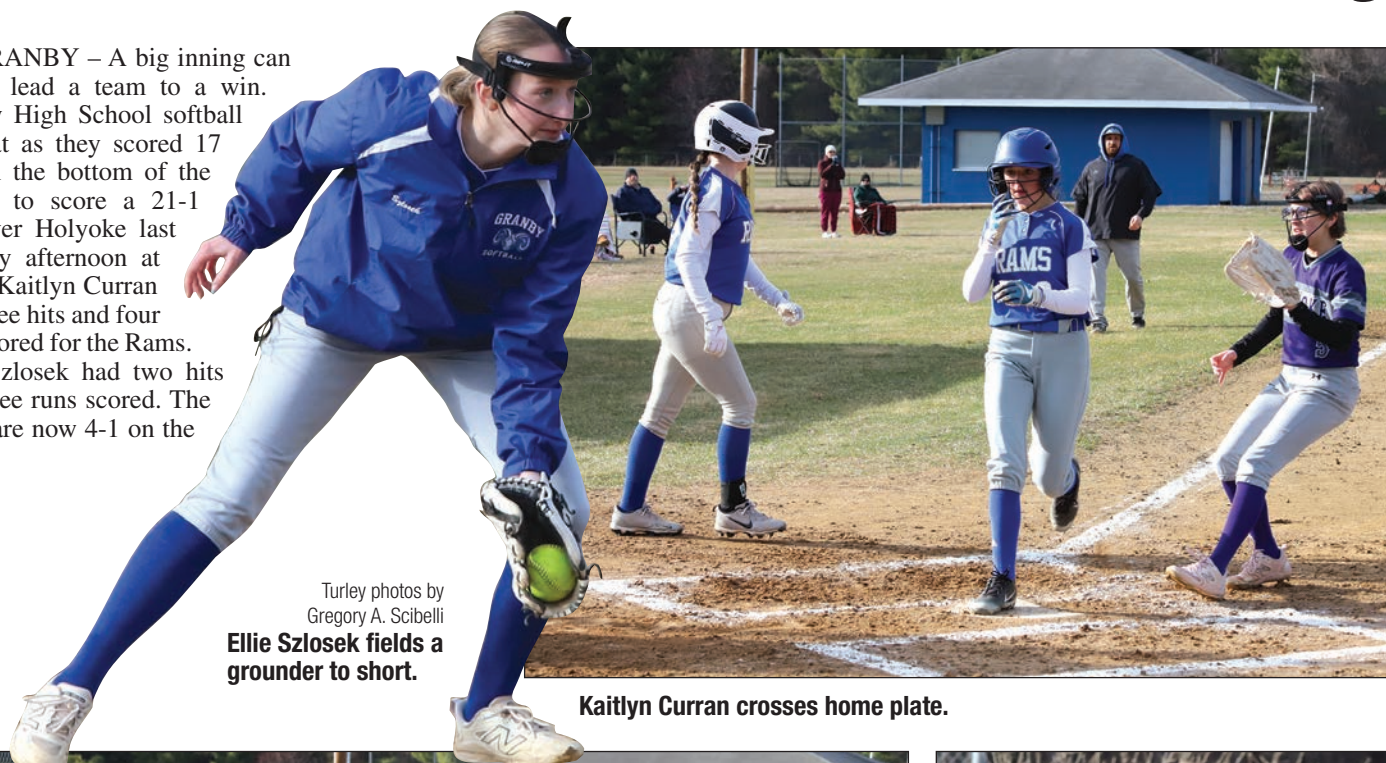
Ryan Netkovich connects on a fly ball.



Cameron Carpenter rushes to tag the third base bag.

Rams softball score 17 runs in one inning

GRANBY – A big inning can always lead a team to a win. Granby High School softball got that as they scored 17 runs in the bottom of the second to score a 21-1 win over Holyoke last Monday afternoon at home. Kaitlyn Curran had three hits and four runs scored for the Rams. Ellie Szlosek had two hits and three runs scored. The Rams are now 4-1 on the season.



Turley photos by Gregory A. Scibelli
Ellie Szlosek fields a grounder to short.

Kaitlyn Curran crosses home plate.



Meredith Bartosz winds and fires to the plate.



Kiki Gaj swings and connects.



Sydney Chateaufeuf sends a throw to the infield.



Abby LaDuke pinch-runs at first base.

Worcester Railers ground Gargoyles in win

GREENSBORO, NC — The Worcester Railers HC (31-30-5-2, 69 pts) bested the Greensboro Gargoyles for a second straight time (18-43-6-1, 43 pts) on Saturday, April 11, with a final score of 3-1 in front of a crowd of 6,035 at the First Horizon Coliseum. The Railers will close out their weekend in Greensboro against the Gargoyles with a 3:00 p.m. EDT puck drop on Sunday, April 12th.

Max Dorrington (1-0-1) broke the goal drought at 10:55 in the second and picked up the lone goal of the period for a 1-0 Railers lead. Greg Smith responded for Greensboro with a finishing feed off defenseman Caleb Price's wrap around play early in the third (1-1). Worcester reclaimed their lead with a top-shelf tally from Drew Callin (1-0-1) at 15:41 (2-1). Anthony Repaci's (1-0-1) empty net goal at 19:11 cemented the Railers' 3-1 victory at the evening's close.

It was a scoreless start to the night as Thomas Gale for the Railers and Ruslan Khazheyev for Greensboro kept their opponents shut out through the initial frame. No penalties were assessed in the period, as Worcester closed the first leading in shots with 15 to Greensboro's 9.

Worcester gained an edge over the Gargoyles as the second period turned to its latter half. Max Dorrington (5th) broke the goal drought with a forceful drive from atop the far face-off circle, the play set up by a cross-ice pass from Gleb Veremyev at 10:55. The Railers held on to their narrow 1-0 lead heading into the third as Dorrington's

goal remained the sole tally scored in the period when the horn sounded. Worcester and Greensboro were nodded up with penalties at one a piece, Blake Swetlikoff for delay of game and Anthony Callin for hooking, while Worcester led once more in shots 16-9.

Greensboro came out with a quick reply to Worcester's second-period play as Greg Smith tied the game at 3:10 in the third with a chip off of a failed wrap-around bid from Caleb Price. The evening heated up as Gleb Veremyev squared off against Blake Dangos, with the Railers forward quickly shutting down the Gargoyle defenseman before heading into the box at the start of the final five minutes of play. Adam Samuelsson and Drew Kuzma followed shortly with their own brief exchange, but the pair were ushered to their respective benches with no penalties. Soon after, the possibility of overtime was wiped away by Drew Callin (23rd), unassisted at 15:41. Callin walked in on Khazheyev after a turnover in the offensive zone and lit the lamp on the top shelf for a 2-1 Railers lead. The Greensboro netminder was soon pulled for an extra attacker, but the decision proved costly for the Gargoyles as Anthony Repaci (22nd) sent the puck the full 200 feet into the awaiting empty net at 19:11 for the 3-1 regulation final in favor of the Railers. Veremyev and Dangos were the only penalties called in the third, while shots for the period favored the Gargoyles 11-9. Final shots totalled 40 for Worcester and 29 for Greensboro.

Lions defeat Granby in six innings

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

LUDLOW—The first of two regular season meetings between the Granby and Ludlow varsity baseball teams took place on a chilly afternoon at the Ludlow Sports Complex.

While the fans tried to stay warm by wearing winter coats and blankets, the frigid conditions didn't seem to impact Ludlow junior Christian Kochanek very much.

The righthander tossed a two-hitter as the Lions moved above the .500 mark with an 11-1 victory over the Rams, last Tuesday. The Bi-County North contest ended with no outs in the bottom of the sixth inning due to the 10-run mercy rule.

"I actually love pitching in the cold weather," said Kochanek, who threw a total of 100 pitches. "I feel more energized on cold days. It's a lot better than sweating on hot days. I also pitched on a cold day against Monson last year."

Ludlow head coach Cam Rivest, who's also an assistant hockey coach at Ludlow High School under his father, Paul, also didn't mind the cold temperatures.

"I wore shorts while I was throwing batting practice before today's game," said Rivest, who also wore a short sleeve jacket. "I'm used to the cold weather due to hockey."

The home victory pushed the Lions overall record to 2-1, while the Rams fell to 1-3.

The Lions swept the season series a year ago after the Rams had accomplished the same feat in 2024.

Granby threatened to take an early lead in the first meeting of this season when junior shortstop Brandon Carillon walked with two outs in the top of the first inning before stealing second base. Carillon was stranded there, as Kochanek struck out the next batter. The righthander finished the game with 9 K's and six walks.

"Christian is a very good pitcher," Rivest said. "He threw a one-hitter against Amherst last year. He's gaining a lot of confidence."

The Lions failed to score a run against Granby junior righthander Joe Barrett in the bottom half of the opening frame.

Barrett worked the first three innings before being replaced on the mound by eighth grader Raymond Bar-

rett, who's also a righty.

The Lions, who banged out ten base hits, scored three runs in the second inning with a little bit of help from the Rams defense.

Junior shortstop Luke Stejna swung at a strike three pitch leading off the inning, but he was safe at first base following a wild pitch. After stealing second base, Stejna advanced to third on another wild pitch before scoring on a passed ball. Senior third baseman Mason Morace drove home the Lions' second run with a double to center before scoring on a throwing error by the catcher.

Kochanek, who was 2-for-3 at the plate, helped himself with an RBI single to right with one-out in the third. Two batters later, sophomore right fielder Kellan Steigmeyer singled home another run, which was followed by a run scoring triple by junior leftfielder Connor Castro (2-for-3). He scored when senior second baseman Drayden Keirse hit a double to center. The last three runs were scored with two outs.

Granby senior Brodie Funk leadoff the third inning with a single up the middle into center field, which ended

Kochanek's no-hit bid. Following a flyball out, the inning ended with a double play.

The Rams ended Kochanek's shutout bid with one swing of the bat with one out in the top of the fourth.

Granby's rally began with walks to Joe Barrett, junior left fielder Liam Everson, and junior second baseman Sam Moure, which loaded the bases with one out. Then freshman right fielder Andrew Grabherr hit a flyball single, which scored a run.

The next batter grounded into an inning ending double play.

The Lions responded by scoring three more runs in the bottom half of the fourth inning.

Senior centerfielder Alex Spurlock was hit-by-a-pitch leading off the frame before scoring on a wild pitch. Their other two runs were scored on groundball outs by senior catcher Ethan Steigmeyer and Stejna.

The game came to an end two innings later when Spurlock hit a leadoff off double past the third baseman down the left field line. He scored when Ethan Steigmeyer lined a single into left field making the score 11-1.

T-Birds suffer tough loss against rival Hartford Wolf Pack

SPRINGFIELD — The Springfield Thunderbirds (30-30-6-2) unleashed 37 attempts at the net of the Hartford Wolf Pack (25-35-5-3) but were kept in check in a 3-1 defeat at the hands of their Braman I-91 Rivalry Series opponents in front of a sellout crowd of 6,793 inside the MassMutual Center on Saturday night.

The T-Birds were sluggish out of the gates, and despite a seven-game losing streak coming into the game, the

Wolf Pack took advantage of early mistakes, beginning with an Anton Blidh goal off a cross-crease setup by Bryce McConnell-Barker at 7:58 of the first.

A Springfield penalty set the stage for Hartford's first and only power play of the game, and just 1:03 after Blidh's goal, Brendan Brisson made a highlight-reel play, putting the puck between his legs and chipping a forehander past Vadim Zherenko at 9:01 to make it a 2-0

score.

Thunderbirds head coach Steve Ott called a timeout to try to quell Hartford's momentum, but even that proved futile as Scott Morrow blasted a slapper that squeezed through Zherenko 39 seconds later to make it a 3-0 score.

The T-Birds finally got one back at 13:28 when Zach Dean sauced a perfect 2-on-1 pass to Hugh McGing, who elevated a shot through Callum Tung to cut the lead to 3-1.

From that point, Zhe-

renko's night was relatively quiet, with Hartford only registering 13 shots for the remainder of the game after their three-goal blitz in the opening period. The Springfield power play had a half-dozen chances to try to cut into the deficit, but the Hartford penalty killing in front of Tung held the fort, and the rookie backstop finished his night with 36 stops for his sixth win of the season and second in three starts against Springfield.

Memory Loss talk offered at senior center

SOUTH HADLEY — Remembering Together: A Dinner & Conversation on Memory Loss will be held on Thursday, May 7 at 4 p.m. at the Senior Center.

Insight and guidance on supporting loved ones who are experiencing memory loss will be the focus of this valuable and informative program being hosted at the Senior Center. A short documentary titled "Taking Care, The Legacies We'll Accept, And Those We Won't" will

be shown during the meal, followed by an engaging panel discussion focused on understanding memory loss and conditions such as Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia. Cost is \$5, payable upon registration at the Senior Center. Meal includes chicken & broccoli penne in garlic & olive oil, salad, rolls, dessert, and beverage. RSVP by May 1. All are welcome. This program is sponsored by the Friends of the South Hadley Seniors.

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Interested candidates should email holyokewilds@gmail.com with their contact information and brief work history.

Holyoke Wilds is an equal opportunity employer. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, disability, or veteran status.

HELP WANTED

SEASONAL FACILITIES CREW wanted at Norcross Wildlife Foundation. For a full job description, please visit www.norcrosswildlife.org or email info@norcrosswildlife.org

The Town of North Brookfield is looking for a **part-time Program Assistant** for the Council on Aging. Please submit a resume with a letter of interest to the **Selectmen's Office, 215 Main St., North Brookfield, MA 01535**; or by email to selectmen@northbrookfield.net.

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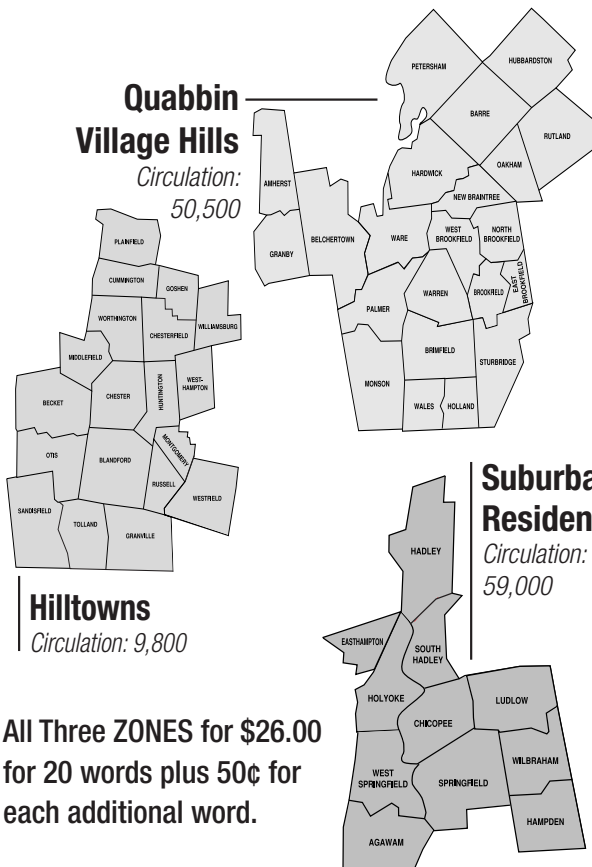
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Legal Notices

TOWN OF SOUTH HADLEY PLANNING BOARD NOTICE OF HYBRID PUBLIC HEARING

460 Newton Street – 9 Space Parking Lot
The Planning Board will hold a hybrid public hearing on **April 27, 2026 at 6:30 p.m.** to consider applications for Site Plan Review a filed by Kemp Realty LLC for development of a 9-space parking lot located at 460 Newton Street, Map 28 Parcels 269 and 314. This application is being filed pursuant to South Hadley Zoning Bylaw Chapter 255 Article XII (Site Plan Review); 255-86 (Parking Requirements); and the Zoning Use and Dimensional Regulation Schedules.

The public hearing will be held through hybrid format with in-person attendance to be located in the multipurpose room of the South Hadley Senior Center, 45 Dayton Street South Hadley MA 01075. Virtual attendance will be hosted through the log-in information below:
URL to join: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87613120497?pwd=>

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Or join by phone: +1 312 626 6799 **Webinar ID:** 876 1312 0497 **Passcode:** 069571

The subject property includes an existing office building – Pet-tengill Insurance Agency and formerly TD Bank - and is located within the Business A zoning district. The new parking spaces are proposed to be located on the western portion of the site.

The application is on file in the Planning & Conservation Department Office (Room U6) in Town Hall and is posted at www.southhadley.org on the Planning Department page under 'Permit Applications' - 'Site Plan Review' under section 'Newton Street (460) - 9 Space Parking Lot' or can be viewed at: <https://www.southhadley.org/1179/Site-Plan-Review>. Any person interested in, or wishing to be heard, should appear/join the hearing at the time and in the manner designated.

Brad Hutchison, Clerk
South Hadley Planning Board
04/10, 04/17/2026

Town of Granby Board of Appeals

The Granby Board of Appeals will hold the following Public Hearings on **May 04, 2026**, at the Carnegie Building, Top Floor, 1-Library Lane, Granby MA 01033.

6:00 PM- to consider the petition of Linda Healy, Applicant/ Owner seeking a variance of Section III- Regulations, 3, Table 2. - Dimensional and Density Regulation, regarding insufficient minimum side setbacks regarding proposed construction of a garage on a preexisting non-conforming foundation located at 128 South Street, known as Map 5B-A-1 in the Town of Granby, MA.

In addition to the above hearing, the Board of Appeals intends to conduct a public meeting following said hearing as time permits. This notice is given pursuant to Chapter 40A and Chapter 39, Section 23B of the Massachusetts General Laws.

Steven Nally, Chairman
Granby Board of Appeals
04/17, 04/24/2026

Residential Lock Box Promotion

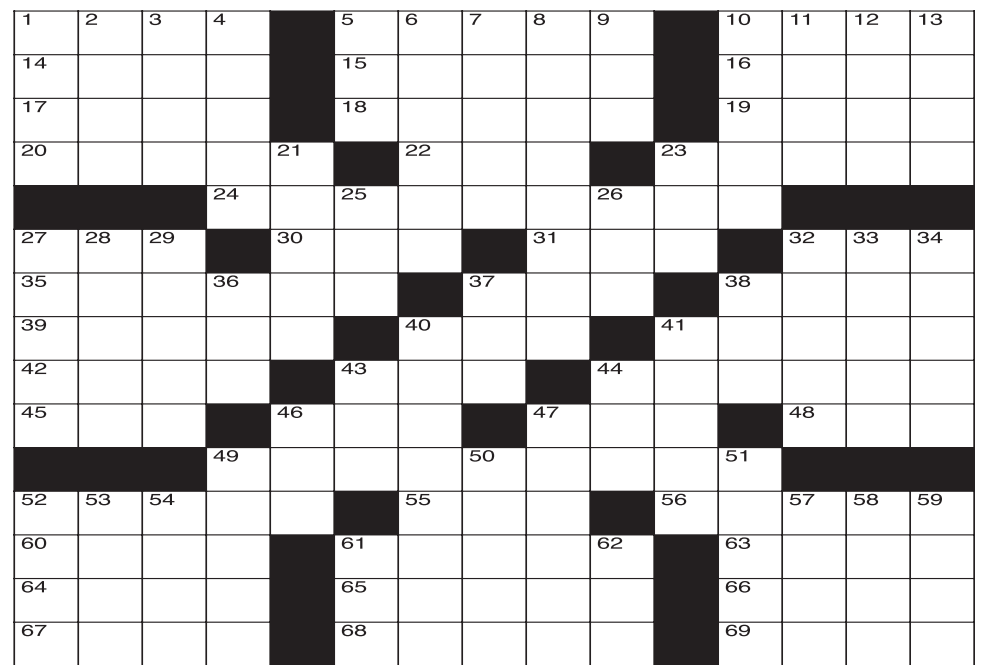
SOUTH HADLEY – To celebrate Older American's Month, the Friends of the South Hadley Seniors will be subsidizing the cost of a lock box installation for any applications received by May 31. For the month of May, a lock box can be purchased for just \$10. This program, sponsored by TRIAD, normally offers lock boxes for \$35. Lock boxes provide a secure, exterior storage for house keys, which allows emergency responders access without having to breakdown doors. Applications are avail-

able from the Council on Aging and can be returned to the COA with the \$10 payment (checks payable to TRIAD). Applications must be received by May 31st to receive the discount.

Want to learn more about this program? Drop in at the Senior Center on May 1 between 9am-10:30am where representatives from South Hadley Fire Districts 1 and 2 will be on hand to answer any questions. Free coffee and refreshments will be provided by the Friends of the South Hadley Seniors.

Library to host blood drive

SOUTH HADLEY – On Saturday, May 11 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. South Hadley Health Department will host a blood drive. Appointments are strongly recommended. The event will be held in the community room and eligible donors will also receive a \$10 gift card to Starbucks, Amazon, Big Y, or Panera Bread. To register, contact Fiona Cioch at fcioch@southhadleyma.gov or call 413-887-8008.



- | | | | |
|-----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| CLUES ACROSS | 41. Fabric | CLUES DOWN | 34. Discharge |
| 1. Greek goddess of marriage | 42. Ancient kingdom near Dead Sea | 1. Greek cupbearer of the Gods | 36. Arrest |
| 5. Tropical American blue jay-like bird | 43. Defunct regional economic organization | 2. Ancient Syrian city | 37. Partner to cheese |
| 10. Abba __, Israeli politician | 44. Philly footballers | 3. Small Eurasian deer (pl.) | 38. Coffee receptacle |
| 14. Dark olive black | 45. Female sibling | 4. Range of mountains | 40. Stagnate |
| 15. Light, crinkled fabric | 46. Peter Griffin's daughter | 5. One thousand cubic feet (abbr.) | 41. Satisfies |
| 16. Notre Dame has a golden one | 47. Digital audiotape | 6. Spoke | 43. Snake-like fish |
| 17. Leaked blood | 48. Insecticide | 7. City in Georgia | 44. Consume food |
| 18. Confronted | 49. Scientific instrument | 8. Theatrical | 46. Type of school |
| 19. Negligible amount | 52. Pages may be dog-__ | 9. CNN's founder | 47. Erase |
| 20. Facilitated | 55. Israeli city __ Aviv | 10. Icelandic poems | 49. Inform |
| 22. Hill or rocky peak | 56. Type of sword | 11. Bjorn __, tennis player | 50. Girl's given name |
| 23. Minneapolis suburb | 60. Middle Eastern military title | 12. Bowfin genus | 51. Spiritual leader of a Jewish congregation |
| 24. Songs to one's beloved | 61. Wise individuals | 13. One point north of northeast Greece | 52. Every one of two or more things |
| 27. Brake horsepower | 63. French Polynesian island Bora __ | 23. Electroencephalograph | 53. Northern India city |
| 30. Angry | 64. Popular shoe type | 25. Cool! | 54. Seventeenth stars in a constellation |
| 31. Children's game | 65. One of 50 | 26. Male parent | 57. Weapon |
| 32. Spelling is a type of one | 66. Divulge a secret | 27. Where some gymnasts work | 58. Amounts of time |
| 35. Obtained in return for labor | 67. Dish of cooked meat mixed with potatoes | 28. Capital of Vietnam | 59. Isodor __, American Nobel physicist |
| 37. Indicates center | 68. Actress Zellweger | 29. Sailboats | 61. Soviet Socialist Republic |
| 38. Chinese dynasty | 69. Romanian city | 32. Shelter (Scottish) | 62. Witness |
| 39. Old World buffaloes | | 33. Completed | |
| 40. Slang for time off | | | |

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FY27 from page 1

Hadley line, to go from \$450 per EDU to \$500," he said.

South Hadley's decision to raise what it charges Granby for sewer treatment is a major factor.

He also spelled out the percentage hikes and the overall budget increase:

"For the community septic's, it's a point five 9% increase. For the Five Corners users, it's a 6.59% increase. And for the South Hadley users, it's an 11.11% increase, and the total budget increased 8.76% over FY 26," Martin said.

The board unanimously approved the FY27 sewer rates after brief discussion and a motion by Glenn Sexton to adopt the new schedule acting as sewer commissioners.

Fiscal outlook: one more year, but warning lights flashing

While FY27 avoids an override, Martin repeatedly cautioned that the town is

running out of room to absorb cost spikes — especially in trash and recycling and in education assessments.

He noted that Granby's assessment from the Pathfinder Regional Vocational School jumped by roughly \$150,000 because the number of Granby students increased by seven.

Granby also expects to pay for additional students attending Smith Vocational School, raising vocational costs further.

"We currently pay for three students to go to Smith vote that is projected to go up to five students," Martin said.

On the solid waste side, Martin described steep increases in the cost of processing recyclables and the push by Waste Management toward automated collection — issues he labeled "stressors" on the town's finances.

"Last year it was costing us around \$45 to \$50 per ton

for processing of the recyclables. This year it's jumped to about \$75 to \$80 a ton," he said.

That translates into a recurring monthly hit.

He reminded the board that Granby resorted to a \$300,000 trash override less than a decade ago and may be headed back to that territory if the town wants to maintain curbside collection.

"You may have to start looking at maybe doing another \$300,000 override to try and get you through these additional costs that have been going on," Martin said.

Selectboard Chair Mark Bail recalled how contentious that last override was.

"There are some large issues that this board has to face, and we can't keep delaying the decisions," Martin warned.

Forge Pond Dam and Dike: multimillion-dollar decision looming

One of the largest of those

issues is the Forge Pond dam and dike, where the town has completed initial engineering and planning but still must decide whether to repair, replace or remove the aging structure.

Martin explained that Granby previously secured a \$100,000 state grant for planning and phase-one engineering. The next round of state funding allows for up to \$1 million, but even the maximum award would cover only a fraction of the total cost.

"The state has another round of the grant... \$1 million the price to replace the dam is \$3.3 million the price to take it down is \$4.8 million so," Martin told the board.

Removing the dam is actually more expensive than replacing it, he said.

"The reason it costs more is because of all the ecological studies and environmental impact studies that would have to be done," Martin added.

State regulators are signaling that inaction is not an option.

"We ignore it, because the Office of Dam Safety has indicated that the condition of the dam and dike are poor, and they are expecting the town to address the situation," Martin said.

Beyond construction, any decision to rebuild would lock the town into a long-term maintenance obligation.

"Once if the town decides to go forward to replace the dam, you then have to put together a maintenance plan so that it doesn't get to this condition again in the future, which would be vegetation control, regular maintenance monitoring, so on and so forth," Martin said.

Bail underlined the potential consequences of a structural failure at Forge Pond.

"If the thing collapses, it's only literally disastrous, contaminating wells, taking out buildings," he said.

Sexton suggested the town will need help from higher levels of government.

"That might be a good discussion. Then we reach out to our legislative delegation, see if there's anything the state can help us with," he said.

Martin recommended that the board create a dedicated group to shepherd the project and ensure environmental concerns are addressed.

"You should have a member of the Conservation Commission as part of that committee. You've been creating a separate committee that way they can make sure that we're addressing any environmental concerns with this," he said.

Bail was open to the idea.

"I would almost like to appoint a committee or something to actually look at this more... but you should have a member of the Conservation Commission as part of that committee," he said, referring to a "dam committee" to stay focused on the issue.



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