

TOWN Reminder

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Funding for veterans memorial sought at town meeting

By Ben Hernandez
 Correspondent

GRANBY – A motion to fund the Granby Veterans Memorial was brought to the town meeting that took place on May 11. The proposition, which asked for \$40,000 in borrowed funds, was to construct a pavilion at the site.

“We need help with this pavilion because we can only raise approximately \$10,000 per year with our picnic and our golf outing, and this is an ongoing job with future sidewalks, benches, garden areas and this pavilion will be a centerpiece of the park,” said Granby Police Sergeant Jason Richard.

The initial bid for the park project rose over the past year due to increases in lumber costs and diesel fuel transportation, among other “kinds of things,” which has risen the

operating costs an additional \$2,000. The project began 14 years ago, according to Vietnam Veteran and Army Sergeant Thomas Russell, who was in the audience to comment on the project’s status during the Annual Town Meeting.

“We appreciate all the help and support from the town and its citizens,” said Russell during open discussion. “Seven years ago, a bid was submitted to us for \$650,000 to build what had been designed. We did not have anywhere near that type of money. We have raised and spent \$170,000 by doing it ourselves with donated, skilled labor and material and there was no shoddy workmanship so far. We need help with this pavilion.”

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The Granby Veterans Memorial needs funding to construct a pavilion at the site. It was brought to the town meeting.

Submitted photo

Budget cuts impact police services

By Ben Hernandez
 Correspondent

SOUTH HADLEY – “We’re looking at, I think, \$171,000 worth of cuts,” said Town Administrator Lisa Wong during the South Hadley Select Board and Appropriations Committee meeting held on April 28. “So, reduction in one supervisor, one patrol officer. Again, looking to do that through attrition versus actively laying anybody off.”

The news comes in light of both the recent proposition override failing at the ballot and final agreements with the

“If we’re able to start the dispatch sooner than October 1st, then those savings will be realized within the budget.”

– Lisa Wong
 Town Administrator

town of Westfield for joint district police dispatch finalizing in early April.

“We will be reducing about 300,000 within the budget for the dispatch and line items. That transition is probably going to be in the early fall or late summer,” Wong said. “So there is still

a few months of dispatching within the budget. That will go away next year because we have an E-911 grant that will fully fund the first three years, fiscal 27, 28, 29 on the IMA side. So we’re still covering dispatch within our budget for a few years.” Wong went on to discuss

how 50% of the cost will be reabsorbed by the town in year four, followed by 75% of the cost in year five and 100% covered in year six. The \$200,000 projected for expenses is below the current town operating costs.

“So we will have savings indefinitely, but we will see more significant savings in the first three years,” said Wong. “If we’re able to start the dispatch sooner than October 1st, then those savings will be realized within the budget.”

“We plan on being able Please see **POLICE**, page 2

Selectboard hopefuls split on regionalization

Stress budget pressures ahead of May 18 vote

By Melina Bourdeau
 Correspondent

GRANBY – Granby Selectboard candidates Rosemarie Rosen and Jeff Lawson outlined contrasting approaches to school regionalization and town finances during a recent forum, each arguing their experience makes them best positioned to guide the town through challenges.

Speaking to voters ahead of the May 18 town election, Rosen and Lawson agreed Granby faces mounting financial pressures, from health insurance to school and infrastructure costs. But they drew sharp distinctions on whether regionalizing the schools should be on the table and how best to protect core services without overburdening taxpayers.

Candidates for other positions include:

- Richard Bombardier and Mael Walkowiak are running for one seat on the Board of Health
- Gregg A. Leonard is running uncontested for a three-year seat on the Board of Assessors
- Nita Abbott is running uncontested for a five-year seat on the Planning Board
- Travor Augustino is running uncontested for a three-year seat on the School Committee
- Matthew Skipton is running uncontested for a three-year seat at the Commissioner of Burial Grounds
- Nita Abbott, Paula Beaulieu, Candace Ribeiro and Angela Chagnon are running three seats for three-year terms as Library Trustees

- Louisa Davis-Freeman is running unopposed for a one year seat as a Library Trustee

Rosen leans on state finance, education experience in bid for Granby Selectboard seat

Rosen, a relative newcomer to Granby with decades of state and municipal experience, pitched herself as the candidate best prepared to navigate complex budgets and labor negotiations.

She told voters she once managed a \$300 million budget and 10,000 employees in Boston, negotiating with 26 bargaining units “mostly on television and in the newspaper.” She later served as assistant deputy comptroller in New York’s Division of Municipal Affairs, working with both the smallest towns and large municipalities on “the costs of trash collection, paving, snow removal, unlicensed dogs, problems that beset towns and villages.”

Rosen also pointed to her local service as a volunteer and elected library trustee since moving to town to be closer to her daughter.

She said Granby “really felt the most comfortable and really inviting” when she chose a new home.

The town, she cautioned, is entering a period of tough choices as the cost of maintaining basic services rises faster than revenues.

“I’m experiencing personally that the cost of maintaining the services in this town are going to go up, and they’re going to go up dramatically,” Rosen said. Health insurance, energy and other “fixed costs,” she added, will force decisions about what Granby can continue to provide.

She cited a recent letter from the Finance Committee warning of “difficult decisions ahead” and said voters

Please see **VOTE**, page 10

Mayor opposes state income tax reduction

By Gregory A. Scibelli
 gscibelli@turley.com

HOLYOKE – Mayor Joshua Garcia was among a contingent of Massachusetts municipal leadership, which recently spoke out against a ballot initiative that would cut the state income tax rate.

There is currently an initiative to reduce the income tax rate, and Garcia, among the leaders opposing the ballot question, say the reduction in income tax collected in the Commonwealth would adversely affect communities like Holyoke.

Garcia, who earlier this year was named president of the Massachusetts Mayor’s Association, said in a press event that “mayors and municipal officials ‘immediately understand’ the implications when a reduction of state revenue is proposed.

According to the press release from Garcia, a reduction in state-collected revenue would create a lot of anxiety among officials because there may not be enough funding to cover needed programs throughout the state.

“It means uncertainty,” Garcia said. “It means jeopardizing or reversing progress that residents already see in their neighborhoods.



Submitted photo

Holyoke Mayor Joshua A. Garcia, speaking on the State House steps Tuesday, May 12, expressed his opposition to a ballot initiative that he says will reduce state aid to cities and towns.

And for gateway cities and communities with significant needs, the impact can be even more severe.

“We cannot afford to pull resources away from education, transportation, public safety, and local government at a time when residents are asking us to do more, not

less,” he said.

Garcia spoke at the State House on the front steps on Tuesday, May 12 to represent the mayor’s association on Beacon Hills

His press release states the proposed cut in the state income tax rate “would result in a projected \$5 billion

reduction of revenue collections which cities and towns would feel in reduced state aid.” Garcia emphasized that every dollar that goes to a city like Holyoke is not bonus funding or surplus, but is part of the bare bottom line

Please see **TAX**, page 2

Pathfinder receives record-breaking grant to expand opportunities

By Marcelo Gusmão
Staff Writer
mgusmao@turley.com

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

Last week, 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.

Superintendent Eric 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.”

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 location is expected to create new

educational opportunities, generate local job growth, and strengthen community partnerships by preserving a valuable community asset and addressing the increased need for skilled career training.

“This is truly a win-win,” added Duda. “We’re expanding opportunities for students, creating jobs, and keeping an important school building in Belchertown alive with purpose. The excitement will only continue to build as we move closer to opening our doors in 2026.”

Duda emphasized that the expansion is intended to significantly increase access to career technical education opportunities for students throughout the district’s nine member communities.

“If a student from Palmer, Monson, Belchertown, Granby, Ware, Warren, Oakham, Hardwick, or New Braintree wants a Career Technical Education, now is the time to apply,” Duda said. “Pathfinder Tech will have a seat and space available for you

quests, and without immediate impacts to local taxpayers assessments.

This strategic initiative is being accomplished solely through strategic financial planning, along with grant funding secured from the commonwealth.

“Support for this planned expansion has been comprehensive and widespread,” Duda said. “Senators, state representatives, and elected officials from all nine member communities have signed on in support of this creative, forward-thinking, and affordable approach to increasing access to career and technical education opportunities for students throughout the region.”

Now in his fifth year as superintendent and his 20th year serving the district, Duda has made strategic long-term planning into a strength of his leadership. In recent years, the district has received record levels of grant funding. These include over \$5 million in competitive grant funding to increase student access,

purchase equipment, renovate facilities, and add square footage to support expansion efforts, and an additional \$1.5 million to support new adult and continue education programming, and to help keep the campus active and vibrant during the evenings and weekends when it’s used by adult learners.

Compared to other school districts in the region that are struggling with budget cuts, declining enrollment, and closures, Pathfinder is a notable exception, with its record levels of enrollment, carrying no debt, and requesting no major capital funding from its nine member towns.

Duda described Pathfinder as a model for what’s possible in education throughout the region. As a graduate from Pathfinder himself, Duda said he understands firsthand the life-changing opportunities this model of education can provide students. While some districts in the region are attempting to replicate aspects of Pathfinder Tech’s programming, Duda emphasized that Pathfinder already belongs to the nine member communities and exists to serve their students.

“Pathfinder Tech is already your school,” Duda noted. “It belongs to the students and families of our nine



Governor Maura Healey spoke about how Career and Technical Education provides students with hands-on learning for skilled jobs and great careers.

Submitted photos



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

next school year beginning in September. We are ready to prepare students for direct entry into a high-wage career, college, military service, or any other aspirations they may have.”

This 150-seat expansion is possible thanks to the Cold Spring expanded campus in Belchertown, and represents the single largest student expansion in the district’s history. Duda reported that this initiative is being completed without incurring debt to the nine member towns, as well as without major capital re-

member towns.”

“There’s no need for member school districts to waste money, time, and resources on introductory elective type career courses like the ones occurring in the towns of Palmer and Monson,” Duda said. “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.”

Duda recommended that the towns “encourage students to apply and take advantage of the career and technical education already available to them, should that be the desired educational model they want to pursue.”

In addition to Governor Healey, the event was attended by Lieutenant Governor Kim Driscoll, Secretary of Education Stephen Zrike, and Commissioner of Education Pedro Martinez, as well as several additional cabinet members, mayors, and state and local officials.

Pathfinder Tech plans to continue pursuing funding sources to support the expansion, including the recently announced \$100 million CTE Capacity Expansion Grant Initiative from the Healey-Driscoll Administration.

Pathfinder Tech is currently accepting applications for the 2026-2027 school year. Prospective students can apply at PathfinderTech.org.

HCC celebrates Phi Theta Kappa inductees for 2026

Holyoke Community College is proud to announce that 169 HCC students have been accepted for membership into the Alpha Xi Omega chapter of the Phi Theta Kappa national honor society for 2026. Students are invited to join Phi Theta Kappa when they have completed 15 college credits while maintaining a GPA of 3.5 or higher.

HCC’s 2026 inductees were recognized during a campus celebration on Thursday, May 7.

South Hadley:

Patricia Bisson, Caitlin Blaney, Jennifer Cheever, Alyssa Dusseault, Marc Rogers, Nicole Veloz.

TAX from page 1

the city needs to function.

“State funding is not ‘extra’ for communities like ours,” Garcia said. “It is foundational support that allows us to deliver core services and make long-term improvements as prudently as possible.”

“For residents,” he said, “this debate is ultimately about what kind of communities we want to live in. Do we want communities with strong schools? Safe neighborhoods? Reliable emergency services? Maintained roads? A responsive local government?”

“If we do, then we must strongly oppose this ballot question,” Garcia said.

Also gathered on the State House steps to voice opposition were Massachusetts Municipal Association Executive Director Adam Chapdelaine.

“When municipalities lose state support,” Chapdelaine said, “there are only a

few options available: significantly reduce services, delay investments, or shift more pressure onto local property taxpayers.”

Amesbury Mayor Kasandra Gove, president of the Massachusetts Municipal Association, said a significant reduction in state income tax revenues “deeply jeopardizes progress” in her city and across the state — threatening critical services and adding to the burden on local property taxpayers.

“This adds insult to injury at a time when communities are already facing inflationary pressures, rising construction costs, health insurance increases, workforce challenges, and so much more,” she said. “Municipal leaders are not asking for luxuries. We are asking for stability, predictability, and the ability to continue providing the services our residents depend on.”

POLICE from page 1

to absorb, like Wong said, the two reductions and sworn staff with a removal of our school resource officer positions from the schools,” said South Hadley Police Chief Jennifer Gundersen. The chief stated that one position was already removed due to current staffing limitations. The second SRO currently assigned will be reassigned to the patrol division on July 1.

“I know from my perspective I’ve always valued the relationship to have SROs in the school. I believe it improves safety for the students and the staff. I believe it improves communication between the police department and the school department, but we’re still committed to being able to do that,” said Gundersen.

Gundersen stated that she already submitted five layoff notices, three of which were for former dispatchers, and that the police department was down to two full-time dispatchers. Six part-time dispatchers were brought on

board with the assistance of Assistant Town Administrator and Human Resources Director Chuck Romboletti to cover the gap.

“There was no surprise that we were going to lose some because that’s what every of the 40 communities in the Commonwealth that have gone to regionalized dispatch from hosting their own; their dispatches leave to go get other jobs,” said Gundersen. “So we’re really piecemealing downstairs in our communication center. I’m grateful for our two that have stayed employees, a true commitment to the community.”

Additional measures that the police chief discussed included active police officers being pulled from active road service to cover dispatch throughout the summer. Gundersen called the situation “unfortunate and really unavoidable” given the circumstances.

“We are going as quickly as we are, but it is a heavy lift in what we’re doing,” said Gundersen.

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HG&E's LNG Infrastructure and Resiliency project gets green light

HOLYOKE — After three years of deliberation, the Massachusetts Energy Facilities Siting Board has approved, with conditions, HG&E's Liquefied Natural Gas Infrastructure and Resiliency Project.

A new LNG tank is tentatively scheduled to be installed and operational by the end of 2027, or the first quarter of 2028, pending final delivery commitment from the manufacturer.

Holyoke's natural gas moratorium remains in effect for new service requests for which there is an economically viable alternative. Customers interested in new or expanded natural gas service are encouraged to complete HG&E's natural gas interest form. HG&E will review all requests for gas service and will approve those that it has the capacity to serve and for which no economically viable alternative exists, or where service is determined to be in the best interest of the City, including supporting critical economic development initiatives.

According to its website, HG&E's natural gas supply relies on the Tennessee Gas Pipeline and liquefied natural gas stored at HG&E's West Holyoke facility. During peak periods (typically the coldest days of the year when customers are consuming elevated levels of energy), the West Holyoke LNG facility supplies approximately 40% of HG&E's natural gas supply to customers. The facility enhances the reliability and flexibility of HG&E's natural gas supply, reducing dependence on a single pipeline source. With increasing peak loads, due to severe weather and other impacts, HG&E sought to increase capacity at the LNG facility in order to ensure natural gas service is available when customers need

it most.

The website notes that the West Holyoke LNG facility was designed for five storage tanks but only four were installed when the site was developed. HG&E's plan is to install the fifth storage tank on the site, as well as an additional vaporization system, all within the existing facility footprint. The facility has been operating safely and reliably for over fifty years. No new pipelines or infrastructure will be required outside of the boundaries of the existing site. HG&E states, "There will be very limited construction and operational impacts related to this project."

Holyoke Mayor Joshua A. Garcia applauded the Siting Board's approval and expressed his appreciation for the cooperation of Gov. Healey's Administration.

"We're grateful to Governor Healey's office for supporting this necessary and forward-looking reliability improvement and storage expansion of HG&E's natural gas resource," Garcia said. "Approval of this additional storage tank is in the best interests of Holyoke's residential and commercial customers."

Holyoke Planning and Economic Development Director Eric Nakajima noted that the Siting Board's approval will support the city's economic competitiveness.

"Energy supply bottlenecks are a barrier to new investment and growth in Holyoke," Nakajima said. "This decision will support jobs and businesses in the city in the coming decade."

HGE will continue to update the website and outreach materials as additional information becomes available. Natural Gas Interest Form: <https://www.hged.com/services/gas-service/ng-interest.aspx>

Editor's Note: The Granby Police Department responded to 89 calls for the week May 1, through May 7. Those arrested are presumed innocent until proven guilty in a court of law. The Granby Police Department provides all information.

Friday, May 1
12:02 a.m. – A motorist reported striking a tree and later reported that the vehicle was on fire. Granby Police and Fire responded. The vehicle was fully engulfed on arrival. The fire was extinguished and there were no injuries.

Saturday, May 2
6:45 p.m. – A motorist reported striking a utility pole. There was no damage to the pole and there were no injuries.

Monday, May 4
10:46 a.m. – A motorist reported striking a low hanging wire with their vehicle. Officers responded to the area and found a low hanging cable line. The utility company was contacted and raised the wire.

Tuesday, May 5
5:54 a.m. – While on patrol, an officer observed a vehicle traveling at a high rate of speed. Radar con-

firmed the vehicle was traveling at 56MPH in a posted 35MPH zone. The vehicle was stopped and the operator was issued a civil citation for speeding.

Wednesday, May 6
7:04 a.m. – A motorist reported that a vehicle drove off the road and struck a drainage culvert and a cement post. The operator left the scene prior to police arrival. Officers found the vehicle involved and later spoke with the operator. There were no injuries.

4:39 p.m. – Several callers reported a two-car accident Chicopee Street and Baggs Hill Road. Granby

Police and Fire responded. Officers found that one of the vehicles crossed marked lanes and struck the other head on before going off the road and down an embankment. The operator was issued a citation for crossing marked lanes. There were no injuries.

Thursday, May 7
12:33 p.m. – A resident reported being the victim of a scam. A report was completed.

9:29 p.m. – A motorist reported a minor two-car accident Chicopee Street and East State Street. There were no injuries.

South Hadley Democrats sponsor mini-golf fundraiser

SOUTH HADLEY — Community and area residents are invited to attend a mini-golf fundraiser from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturday, May 16, at Stony Falls Miniature Golf and Country Creamery at McCray's Farm (55 Alvord St., South Hadley; www.facebook.com/McCraysFarm).

Entrance tickets are \$10 for adults and \$5 for children 12 and under. Entrance includes unlimited play during

the event and a one-scoop cone or cup of McCray's homemade ice cream (or \$3.25 toward another food purchase).

Tickets are available at the event. No advance purchase is necessary, but advance tickets are available by emailing southhadleydemocrats@gmail.com. In case of a rainout, advance tickets may be redeemed for one round of mini-golf and a scoop of ice cream (or \$3.25 toward other food purchase)

through June 30, 2026.

Proceeds from the event will be used to help fund various events and causes sponsored by the South Hadley Democratic Town Committee, including a twice-annual food drive and support for Democratic candidates for state and national political office.

Support from hole sponsors also helps to fund free tickets for deserving families from the greater South Had-

ley area to enjoy a fun day of mini-golf and some of McCray's famous home-made ice cream.

Additional information about the May 16 event is available at southhadleydems.com. Questions can be sent to southhadleydemocrats@gmail.org. You can also follow South Hadley Democrats on Facebook (facebook.com/SouthHadleyDTC) and on Instagram (instagram.com/southhadleydems).

Grace Notes

Enjoy an evening of music

SOUTH HADLEY - Join Music Director and Chicopee Native, Ania Binczewski along with her music students for an afternoon of piano music.

The event is free to the public.

A free-will offering will benefit the South Hadley food pantry: Neighbors Helping Neighbors, Inc.

There will be a brief intermission with refreshments. Parking on-site is free and plentiful.

When: May 17 2 to 4 p.m.

Where: Our Savior's Lutheran Church, 319 Granby Road, South Hadley

To learn more, call 413-533-1925 or visit www.oursaviorssouthhadley.org.

Lions Club announces fundraiser winners

GRANBY – The Granby Lions Club held the drawings for our 120 Club fundraiser at our Lions meeting on April 21. The first prize winner of \$250 was Roger Jones, the second prize winner of \$100 was Conor O'Shea and the third winner of \$50 was Odette Dardenne.

In addition, there were 10 preliminary prize drawings of \$10 each and those winners

were Bob Langevin, George Knight, Brian Roberts, Denis Lafleur, Steve Labelle, Conor O'Shea, Eric Gustafson, Rite Petithory, Jim Freeman, and Carol Cote.

The Granby Lions Club appreciates the support of all who purchased tickets for this fundraiser and the proceeds will be used for the support of our vision and scholarship programs.

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Opinion

SOCIAL SECURITY

Matters

By Russell Gloor

I'm still working; why didn't I get a higher Social Security benefit?

Dear Rusty:

I began collecting benefits at age 72 and am now 78.

Since that time, I have continued to work and have contributed over \$40,000 to Social Security over the last six years. At the time of my retirement, I was informed that the Social Security Administration would review my contributions annually and replace lower-earning years from my 35-year record with my current higher-earning years.

Despite my current annual income exceeding \$100,000, I have not seen an increase in my benefit amount over the past six years. I recently met with an SSA representative, who confirmed that my benefits are being reviewed annually but did not provide specific details or evidence of these adjustments. Could you please advise me on how to formally verify that my benefits are being accurately reviewed and updated to reflect my continued contributions?

Signed: Collecting and Still Working

Dear Collecting:

For information, your contributions from Federal Insurance Contributions Act payroll taxes to Social Security over the last six years are not what determines if you get an increase to your monthly SS benefit.

Although you contributed to SS since you started receiving SS benefits, those contributions do not affect your monthly SS benefit. Your monthly SS benefit is based only the highest inflation-adjusted 35 years of earnings over your lifetime. And for your monthly benefit to change, your current earnings each year would need to replace at least one of those 35 historical, inflation-adjusted year earnings.

We regularly hear from those who do benefit from SSA's regular review of work earnings after they start receiving monthly SS benefits, and our Advisory staff includes two individuals with a combined 70 years of service with the Social Security Administration. Thus, we are comfortable saying that SSA does, in fact, review your earnings annually to see if your monthly SS payment should be higher.

From a process standpoint, SSA receives your annual earnings information from the IRS (i.e., directly from your annual tax return) by mid-year annually, after which SSA evaluates your recent earnings to see if an increase in your monthly SS benefit is warranted. If so, that increase is automatically applied, usually around October each year and you are paid the extra amount retroactively to the beginning of the year.

What you may not realize is that your lifetime

earnings (your historical earnings) are adjusted for inflation. This is a good thing, because that means your current monthly SS benefit is calculated using today's dollar values for your past earnings, rather than the actual money amounts you originally earned and received.

For example, \$50,000 of 1990 earnings would be worth about \$125,000 today. Which also means that those 1990 earnings would only yield a higher current Social Security benefit if your recent earnings were more than \$125,000. And this is true for all 35 years of lifetime earnings used to calculate your current monthly Social Security benefit.

The best way for you to ensure that you are getting the right monthly benefit amount is to first obtain your lifetime earnings history from Social Security. This is most easily obtained through your online "my Social Security" account at www.ssa.gov/myaccount. If you don't have an online account set up, you can also request an "Earnings Statement" by calling Social Security at 1.800.772.1213 (or call your local SS field office to request it). Next, I suggest you use Social Security's "Online Benefits Calculator" explained and available at this link:

<https://www.ssa.gov/benefits/retirement/planner/AnyPiaApplet.html>

If, after this, you believe you should be getting a higher monthly SS benefit because of your recent earnings, you can again contact SSA and tell them you believe they did not properly adjust your current SS benefit for your most recent earnings. Following that, you can submit a "Request for Reconsideration" (form SSA-561) which will result in a full separate review of your case by an independent SSA person, followed (some months later) by a formal written determination on your assertion. If you received a letter from SSA because of your previous meeting with them, include a copy of that letter with your "Request for Reconsideration."

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 ssadviser@amacfoundation.org. Russell Gloor is a Social Security advisor for AMAC.

Rhubarb, a perennial fruit worth growing

Recently I was chatting with a coworker who has a dozen varieties of rhubarb.

Yes, rhubarb. He asked if I wanted a division or two.

Although I love all things old, and this fruit (yes, fruit) is considered about as old-fashioned as they come, I politely declined. Rhubarb and I don't particularly get along.

But, that doesn't mean I'll knock anyone who can eat it and not visit the bathroom. All the more power to them.

Read on for some rhubarb trivia that just may earn you a prize on your next cruise.

Back in the day when everyone made time for baking, or baked out of necessity, rhubarb was indispensable in the garden. Today, most folks figure they can buy what they need when they long to make a strawberry-rhubarb pie or some preserves.

I say, "Why buy it, when it is so easy to grow?" And, as an added bonus, it may just out live you!

Rhubarb was featured on a cooking show and a lengthy discussion evolved between the celebrity cooks about whether it was a fruit or a vegetable. I never did hear the resolution, but did a little research of my own.

Apparently, rhubarb is a vegetable but after a court decision in 1947 it is legally a fruit and was not subject to taxation of the time.

The best time for planting rhubarb is early through mid-spring. If you are lucky enough to know someone with an established patch, it is very likely they will give you all of the divisions you need and then some.

You can also purchase roots or small potted plants from local nurseries. For an average family of four, plan on two or three divisions.

Rhubarb will do best in a spot in the yard that is in full sun or light shade.



Most gardeners locate it separately from or at one end of the main vegetable garden.

Since we are dealing with a perennial plant, think carefully about where you site it - you may have to live with your decision for decades! Amend the soil with lots of organic matter prior to planting; the richer the better.

Finished compost or aged manure fit the bill just fine, and since rhubarb prefers slightly acidic soil, you'll want to hold the lime.

If you are getting divisions from a friend's garden, ask for some from the outer portion of the patch - these roots will be the least fibrous and most eager to thrive. Keep as much soil as possible around them during transport to prevent dehydration.

If you can't transplant them the same day dig a quick hole somewhere else in the garden and "heel them in." Your other alternative would be to pot up the divisions.

In either case, water well until you can plant them attentively.

When it's time for your plants to make their way to a permanent spot, dig holes two

to three feet apart. The depth of the holes will depend on the size of the divisions you have and how big their roots are.

Plant them at the same depth they were growing in your friend's garden or in the pot you bought them in. If you are planting roots, go by the buds - they should be planted about two inches below the soil surface.

During the first growing season our emphasis should be on root building. For that reason be sure that you water well and keep weeds at bay.

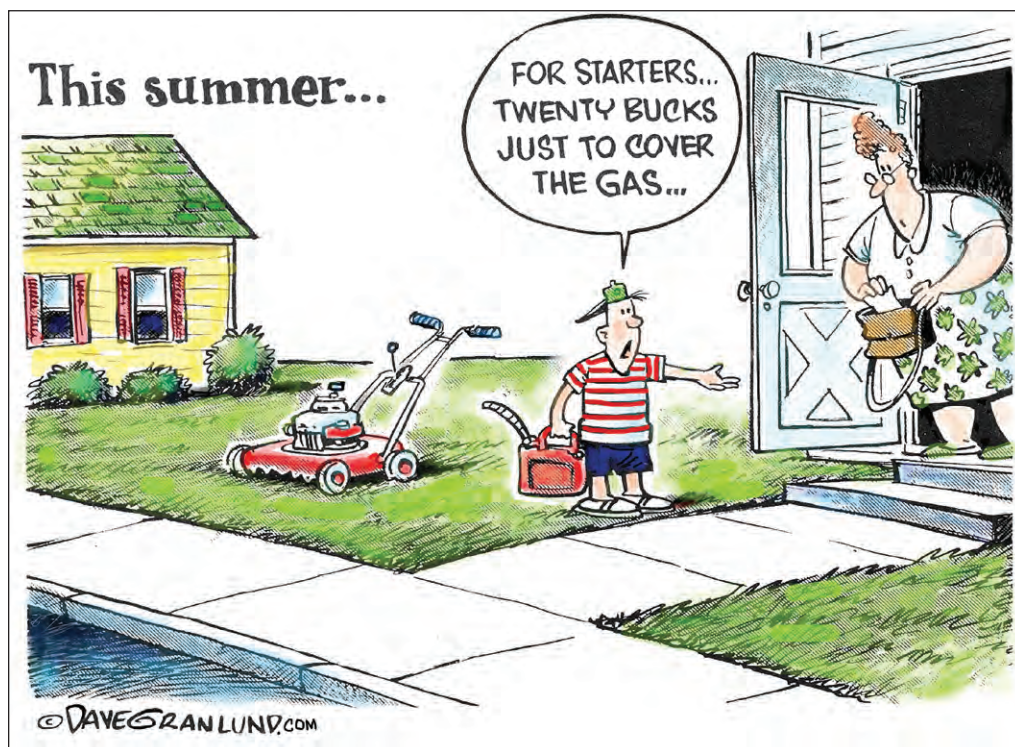
Do not pick stalks until the following spring, but do break off any flower buds that form. Once your patch has established itself there is no stopping it! All you'll need to do to maintain it is provide a topdressing of compost or rotted manure each spring and weed as needed.

Of course, you will also want to pick as much as you can! No knife is needed: simply hold the stem near the base and give it a quick pull along with a gentle twist.

Use only the stem since the foliage is known to be toxic.

The patch will need dividing every 5-10 years; the perfect time to offer up divisions to your friends!

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.



Stone House holding living history event

BELCHERTOWN - The sights, smells, and sounds of the period come alive as we celebrate the 250th anniversary of the American Revolution.

The Stone House Museum is hosting an 18th century living history on Saturday, May 16 from 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Our event highlights The Green Valley Homestead Reenactment Group. Immerse yourself in history while engaging with the living historians as they demonstrate 18th century life during one of the most important periods in American history.

Engage with a master tinsmith as he demonstrates and discusses the making of military items for the militia during the siege of Boston. Learn about militia groups, who alongside the "regulars" fought for American Independence from Great Britain. There will be musket demonstrations during the day.

Meet an herbal apothecary as she discusses plants for healing. Healers and



Submitted photo
The Stone House Museum will hold a living history event on Saturday, May 16 from 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.

apothecaries were able to brew medicinal teas, make poultices, and provide soothing remedies for a variety of ailments and injuries of the period.

Textile production was an important part of life in the 18th century. Visit the stations and participate in hands-on activities of wool

production including carding, spinning, and dyeing.

Visit the ladies in the house who will discuss fashion, sewing, and clothing production.

This is a family focused event. Children will have fun playing games, visiting small farm animals, and making copy books for school. Visit the friendly heritage breed farm animals including sheep and discuss their economic importance in the dominantly agrarian colonial economy.

The Stone House is open for guided tours including their special exhibit featuring their American Revolutionary War artifacts. There is a small entrance fee of \$5 for adults, free to children under 18.

Parking will be located at Center School, Beers and Story Funeral Home if available, and the Belchertown Common. For more information please contact: Caren Harrington 413-484-6146, sallyshattuck54@gmail.com or 413-230-2022.

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.

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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.

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Belchertown Community Band celebrates 40 years

By Ben Hernandez
Correspondent

BELCHERTOWN – The Belchertown Community Band has been a town staple for 40 years. Established in 1986, the band was formed by Michael Bauer; the Belchertown High School band director at the time and Pennsylvania transplant with a background in community bands.

“The group of citizens realized that there was a need for the love of music to continue in our town,” said Melissa Hurst, the president of the board of directors for the BCB. Hurst is a public interest lawyer, public legal services attorney and French horn player for the band.

“It started off quite small, kind of a ragtag bag of musicians, bundle of musicians,” Hurst said. “We skipped 2020 and came back with an abbreviated schedule in 2021 but we

love being a part of this town.”

Passion was the key take-away as Hurst described the BCB and mentioned that band players come from all walks of life, from different age brackets and even from different states. Hurst mentioned that there are active members from places as far as Connecticut and Worcester that contribute their talents. Practice is comprehensive over the eight-week season, four weeks of rehearsal twice a week with Tuesday rehearsals and Thursday concerts on the Common.

“If there’s bad weather for those Thursday concerts, we go into Belchertown High School,” said Hurst. “And then we have a Sunday concert...if the weather doesn’t cooperate with us, then it’s canceled. But it’s a nice way to kind of bring our community together.”

The BCB plays only one event during the season, the Memorial Day service at the



Submitted photos

The Belchertown Community Band about to perform on the Common.

Quabbin Cemetery; a commemoration ceremony that Hurst described as a service “which recognizes not just the lost war debt from the four towns, but also what those four towns gave to support the water needs of our Commonwealth.”

Unlike many community bands, the BCB doesn’t have a direct affiliation with the town. The band is a nonprofit that receives grant funding from the Belchertown Cultural Council, which in part receives their funds from the Massachusetts Cultural Council. The band also partners with the schools to use their space, compensate the custodians for their time,

and also rent space on the Common.

“It really is a community,” said Hurst. “I’m there with retired folks, with college students, with middle school students, nurses, directors, accountants, farmers, really anyone and everyone who loves music and loves performing and building something together can participate.”

Legacy is an essential part of the BCB. Multiple generations have contributed to the band, with current members brought into the fold that were once children of former players and concert attendees. Hurst mentioned that three generations of players once

played in the same section, all trumpeters by her recollection. She also stated one of the most satisfying aspects of being a member is seeing the children connect to music and learn about historical pieces.

“It spirals into them wanting to learn about other things,” Hurst said. “They’re like ‘oh, well, this person wrote that song.’ My nephew, Jack, was telling me how ‘Mancini wrote this one. He also wrote this one’ and it’s really cute...it’s really sweet and it’s nice.”

The band serves as common ground for the entire community, a means of connecting people regardless of

their age, ethnicity, education, orientation or other forms of identity. To Hurst, that essential element is the key factor to not only the BCB’s continued success but the success of Belchertown overall.

“I’m really hoping that it continues to bring our community together in times that are so divisive, where the tenor of the national conversation is so angry and aggressive, that we can recognize that there’s things that much more brings us together than divides us,” Hurst said. “Yes it’s band. It’s also community. And for us, that’s kind of everything...you have a home here.”



The BCB captured in mid-performance.

Kelli Vey
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Tigers take down Hampshire in Dunkin' Park game

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

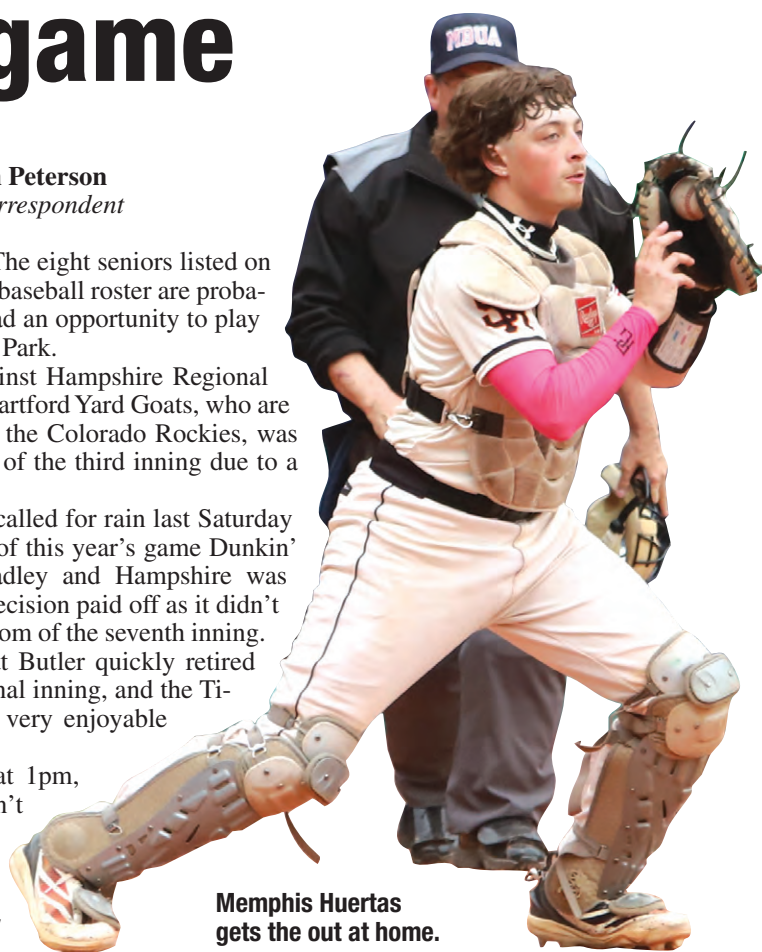
HARTFORD, CT— The eight seniors listed on the South Hadley varsity baseball roster are probably very glad that they had an opportunity to play another game at Dunkin' Park.

Last year's game against Hampshire Regional at the home field of the Hartford Yard Goats, who are the Double A affiliate of the Colorado Rockies, was suspended in the bottom of the third inning due to a thunderstorm.

Because the forecast called for rain last Saturday afternoon, the start time of this year's game Dunkin' Park between South Hadley and Hampshire was moved up an hour. The decision paid off as it didn't start raining until the bottom of the seventh inning. Junior relief pitcher Matt Butler quickly retired the side in order in the final inning, and the Tigers bus ride home was very enjoyable following a 6-2 victory.

"If the game began at 1pm, we probably wouldn't have been able to finish

Please see **TIGERS**, page 7



Memphis Huertas gets the out at home.



Griffin Soderbaum fires a pitch home.

Turley photos by Gregory A. Scibelli

Granby boys volleyball headed for state tournament

GRANBY – Despite a couple of setbacks during recent action, the Granby High School boys volleyball team is in-

deed headed for the state tournament. The Rams have an impressive 11-6 record, especially with recent action pitting the

Rams against some big schools, including West Springfield and East Longmeadow. The Rams defeated East Longmead-

ow 3-0 last Tuesday and they were scheduled to face Longmeadow in their final regular season game earlier this week.

The Rams hope to participate in the Western Mass. tournament next week, followed by the state tournament.



Turley photos by David Henry www.sweetdogphotos.com

Nathan Walsh sets toward the net.



Durrant Garden looks to keep the ball in play near the net.



Braeden Gallagher grabs a bump.



Jake Gagnon goes for a spike.

Pacers take down host Rams

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

GRANBY—After outscoring their previous three opponents, 39-0, the Chicopee High School softball team found themselves locked in a closely contested battle with Suburban East League foe Granby.

The Lady Rams had the potential tying run at the plate with one out in the bottom of the seventh inning, but the Lady Pacers escaped with an exciting 8-6 victory on a very windy afternoon at Granby High School, last Tuesday. The road win improved the

Lady Pacers overall record to a perfect 14-0. They also had a 10-0 league record.

"Granby is a very good softball team, and they put a lot of pressure on us in today's game," said Chicopee High varsity softball coach Mel Sasser. "This is also a very big victory for us because we clinched at least a share of the league title."

The last time that Chicopee captured a league title on the softball diamond was in 2021. The Lady Pacers were also league champions in 2012 with a 14-6 overall record.

The Lady Rams (11-3, 8-2), who also lost to the Lady

Pacers, 5-2, in the first meeting of the regular season at Sotz Park on April 10, needed to win the second meeting to keep their league title hopes alive.

"If we had won today's game, we would've still had a chance to tie for the league title," said Granby head coach Mike Affitto. "We're not mathematically eliminated yet, but it's going to be a very difficult task now."

The Lady Rams, who haven't celebrated the league title since 2011, also lost a league game at Frontier Regional, 4-0, back in April.

The Chicopee and Gran-

by softball teams most likely won't be competing in the upcoming Western Mass. tournament, but both squads have already qualified for the state tournament.

The Lady Pacers, who have clinched a berth in the Division 3 state tournament, took a quick 2-0 lead in last Tuesday's contest without the benefit of a base hit.

Freshman catcher Adeline Olbrych was hit-by-a-pitch thrown by Granby junior righthander Meredith Bartosz leading off the first inning. Senior shortstop Lorraine Ol-

Please see **PACERS**, page 7

T-Birds complete upset of Bruins to advance in playoffs

SPRINGFIELD – The Springfield Thunderbirds outlasted the Providence Bruins, 1-0, in a goaltending duel for the ages on Thursday night inside the MassMutual Center, defeating Providence in four games to advance to the Atlantic Division Finals against the Wilkes-Barre/Scranton Penguins.

By completing the upset of the Macgreor Kilpatrick Trophy winners, Springfield, which finished 38 points behind Providence during the regular season, completed the largest upset by point differential in Calder Cup Playoff history.

Georgi Romanov's dream postseason continued rolling along in the first period for the T-Birds, as the goaltender made a highlight-reel stop for the series, stretching post-to-post to make a tremendous left pad save on Riley Tufto on a 3-on-1 Bruins rush.

Not to be outdone at the other end, AHL regular season MVP Michael DiPietro had answers for each of Springfield's eight shots on net in the first period. The Providence backstop would not be very busy at all in the

Please see **T-BIRDS**, page 7

TIGERS from page 6

it," said South Hadley head coach Matt Foley. "Last year's game here was rained out, and we didn't want the same thing to happen again this year. We really appreciated how accommodating everyone was and want to express our thanks. They did everything they could to get the game in before it started to rain."

The Tigers (9-7) also defeated the Raiders (7-6) by the final score of 3-1 in their first ever game at Dunkin Park two years ago.

While Butler, who's a righthander, pitched the final inning, senior righty Griffin Soderbaum was on the mound for the first six innings and was the winning pitcher.

"I'm very happy that we were able to finish the game before it started to rain very

hard," Soderbaum said. "I was pumped up when coach Foley told me that I would be the starting pitcher in today's game. It was a very cool experience."

Soderbaum, who also played football and basketball, allowed two runs on six hits. He also walked two and struck out nine batters.

Soderbaum, who's normally a relief pitcher, pitched nine innings in his first start of the regular season against the Lenox Millionaires on May 1. The Tigers lost that game 6-5 in 10 innings.

Senior Justin Moskal, who has been recovering from an injury, made his first start of the 2026 campaign in a 7-2 home win against Northampton two days earlier.

The other South Hadley seniors are Caiden Drohan, Memphis Huertas, Logan

Carpenter, Gavin Carpenter, Noah Carillon, Ryan Netkovick,

"I thought all of the seniors stepped up in today's game," Foley said. "They played very well in their final game here. Most of them played in our game against Greenfield at Cooperstown when they were freshmen. They're going to be very difficult to replace next year."

Gavin Carpenter led the way offensively with three of South Hadley's ten base hits. He also had an RBI single to center with two outs in the top of the seventh, which capped off the Tigers scoring.

The Tigers, who were the visiting team, took a 2-0 lead in the first inning. Junior Lincoln Belsky drove home the first run with a sacrifice fly to left. Netkovick followed with an RBI single to left field.

The Raiders loaded the bases in the bottom half of the opening inning, but Soderbaum got himself out of the jam with a strikeout.

Two innings later, Soderbaum gave up back-to-back singles and issued a walk, which loaded the bases again with one out. The Raiders couldn't capitalize, as Soderbaum ended the threat with a forceout at the plate and another strikeout.

"After I loaded the bases, I just kept battling out there," Soderbaum said. "I didn't want them to score any runs against me."

The score remained 2-0 until the sixth inning.

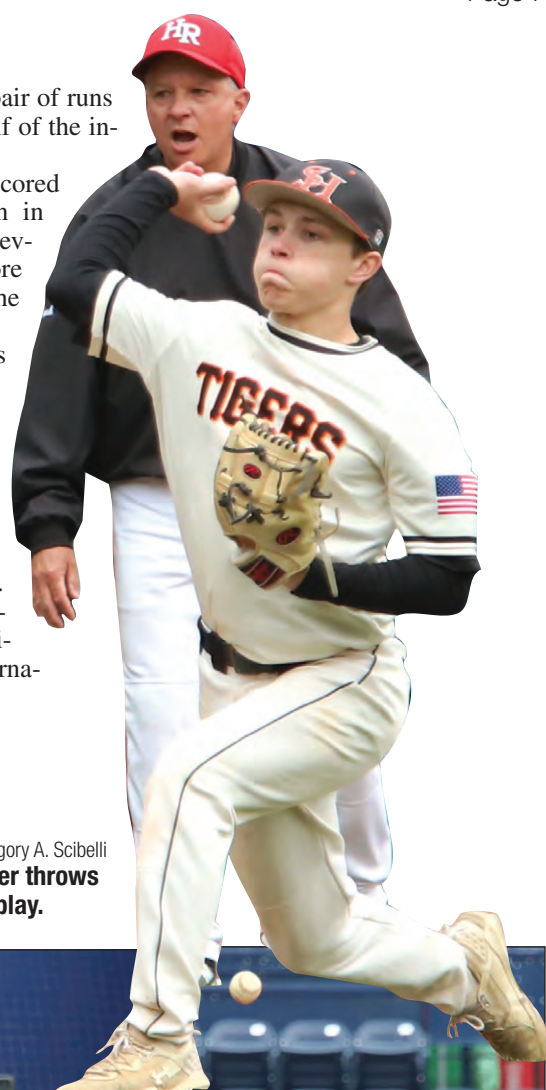
With runners on second and third, an infield hit by Carillon (2-for-3) scored the Tigers third run. Belsky followed with a two-run double down the right field line.

Those three runs were huge, as the Raiders re-

sponded with a pair of runs in the bottom half of the inning.

The Tigers scored an insurance run in the top of the seventh inning before Butler sealed the deal.

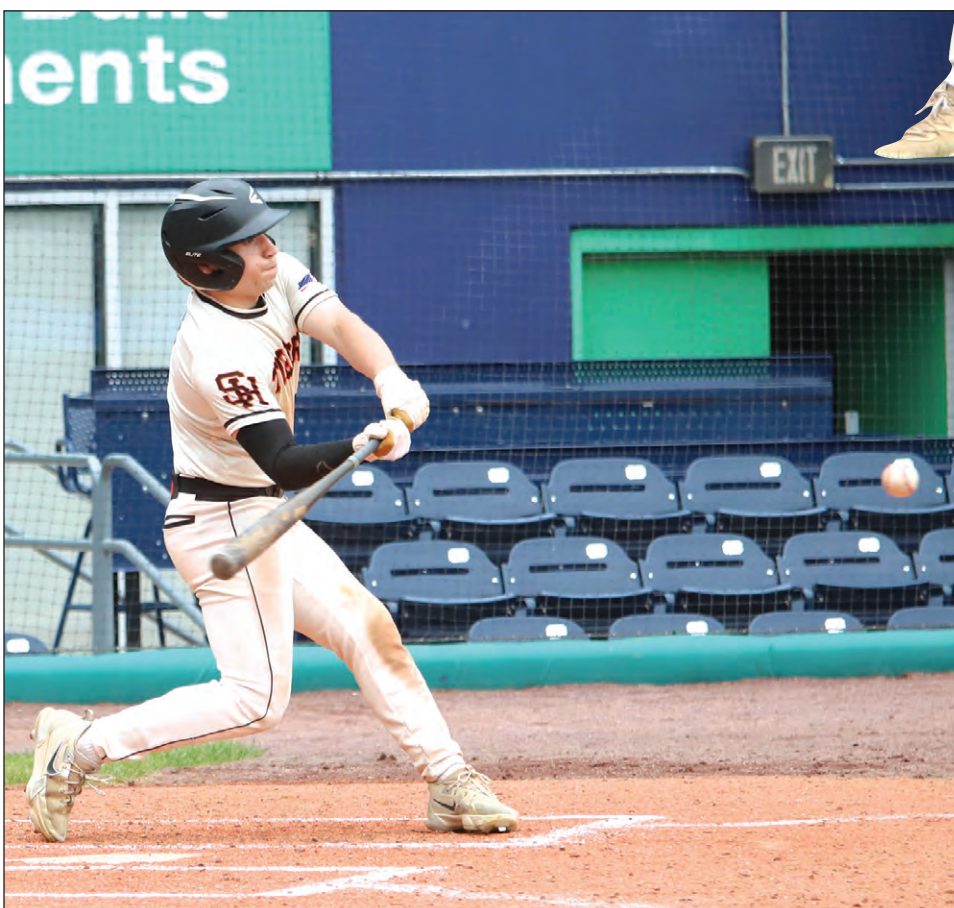
The Tigers will be wrapping up the regular season this week before beginning their postseason journey in the Western Mass. Class B tournament and the Division 4 state tournament.



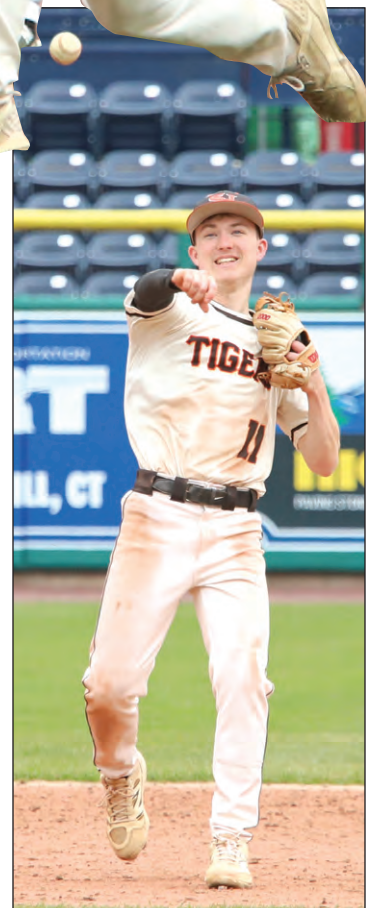
Turley photos by Gregory A. Scibelli
Cameron Carpenter throws home for a force play.



Matthew Butler hustles to first.



Logan Carpenter takes a swing.



Ryan Netkovick makes a throw to first.

T-BIRDS from page 6

second period, needing to make just five saves, but one was notable when he flashed out the glove hand to deny a broken play attempt from the left slot by Akil Thomas.

Providence had a tremendous chance presented to them with a power play in the closing minutes of period two, but the Springfield penalty kill

continued to shine, improving to 13 out of 15 for the series and 22-for-24 in the postseason.

Neither Romanov nor DiPietro showed any signs of blinking in a busy third period for both netminders, which featured a combined 23 stops between the backstops.



For a second straight game, overtime was required, and for a third straight extra session in the postseason, the T-Birds had a hero rise to the occasion.

Romanov was the first hero, as he kicked out the right leg to deny a Navrin Mutter breakaway early in the session.

Then, at 4:01 of the extra

session, Otto Stenberg carried the puck over the blue line, slipped a cross-ice pass to Chris Wagner, and from there, Wagner spotted Dillon Dube crashing the left side of the crease. The veteran winger did the honors from there, beating DiPietro and completing the upset with his second goal and fourth point in the four-game series.

With the win, the T-Birds will now take on the Wil-

kes-Barre/Scranton Penguins in the Atlantic Division Finals, beginning on Tuesday, May 12 at Mohegan Arena at Casey Plaza for a 7:05 p.m. puck drop. Tickets for Game 3

(Tuesday, May 19) and Game 4 if necessary (Thursday, May 21) at the MassMutual Center are available now at www.SpringfieldThunderbirds.com.

PACERS from page 6

brych followed with a walk. A wild pitch moved both runners into scoring position. The Olbrych's crossed the plated on back-to-back sacrifice flies by sophomore first baseman Aviah Blankenship and eighth grade starting pitcher Raelyn Loud.

Lorraine Olbrych suffered an injury in bottom half of the first inning and was forced to leave the game.

The Lady Rams, who qualified for the Division 5 state tournament, tied the score in their first at-bats of the game against Loud, who allowed six runs on eight hits.

With two outs, senior second baseman Kaitlyn Curran beat out an infield hit to the shortstop before scoring on a

double to right field by junior shortstop Ellie Szlosek, who had three of the Lady Rams hits. Szlosek also scored on the play following a throwing error.

The game remained tied until the third inning.

Adeline Olbrych walked leading off the frame before stealing second base. She advanced to third on a perfect sacrifice bunt by eighth grade designated player Megan Prendergast before scoring the go-ahead run on a groundball out by Blankenship.

Chicopee scored two more runs during that same inning when freshman third baseman Izzabella Harper hit a groundball, which was misplayed by the shortstop for an error.

The Lady Pacers held a 6-2 advantage after scoring another run in the fourth.

Szlosek led off the bottom of the fourth inning with a flair single into left field. She proceeded to steal both second and third base before scoring on a bunt by the junior catcher Jaidyn Roberge.

After both teams failed to score in the fifth, Adeline Olbrych banged a double off the left field fence leading off the sixth inning. Blankenship, who finished game with three RBIs, drove her home with a hard groundball double into left.

Granby responded with a two run single up the middle into centerfield by freshman third baseman Kara White with two outs in the bottom half of the inning, which closed the gap to 7-5.

A sacrifice fly by Chicopee freshman Brianna Cole pushed the lead to three runs

in the top of the seventh inning.

With one-out in bottom of the seventh, Szlosek, who reached on a fielding error, scored on a groundout by junior left fielder Sydney Chateauf. Roberge also had an infield hit, and the tying run was standing in the batter's box, but Loud ended the game by recording her 14th strikeout.

"Playing a close game like this one will help us prepare for the postseason tournament," Sasser said. "We played very well defensively in today's game."

Bartosz, who gave up eight runs on seven hits against Chicopee, recorded her 200th career strikeout in the Lady Rams 10-6 road win against the Springfield International Charter School two days later.

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Legal Notices

**TOWN OF SOUTH HADLEY
Public Hearing –
June 2, 2026• 7:10 PM
South Hadley Town Hall,
Room M20
116 Main Street,
South Hadley, MA 01075
FY24 CDBG Performance
Hearing Proposed Amend-
ment**

The Town of South Hadley, in association with the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, will conduct a public hearing regarding the FY24 Community Development Block Grant Program. The hearing will take place at **7:10 PM on Tuesday, June 2, 2026, in person at the South Hadley Town Hall, 116 Main Street, South Hadley, MA 01075.** If the meeting is cancelled due to inclement weather, the hearing will take place during the rescheduled Selectboard meeting.

The hearing will review the FY24 South Hadley Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) awarded to the town for infrastructure improvement work on Center, Warner, and Graves Streets.

Additionally, a proposed program amendment for this grant award will be presented. The proposed amendment will utilize uncommitted and available funds from the Center Street Neighborhood project to create a line item for new sidewalk installation, potentially on Bolton Street and/or Lincoln Street. The Center Street Neighborhood project has met its grant program goal, construction has been completed, and this project is now closed.

All residents with questions or comments will have an opportunity to be heard. Written comments will be received by the Town can be sent to the Selectboard Office: 116 Main Street, Room M20, South Hadley, MA 01075. Written comments will be read aloud during the hearing. For further information or to submit a written comment, contact Evan Mastroianni at the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission at (413) 781-6045 or emastroianni@pvpc.org. Persons who require special accommodations should contact the Town prior to the hearing date at (413) 862-6200.x 05/15/2026

**Town of Granby
Board of Appeals**

The Granby Board of Appeals will hold the following Public Hearings on **May 27, 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
05/08, 05/15/2026

MEMORIAL from page 1

The Friends of Granby Veterans, the non-profit organization that is constructing and funding the memorial, requested the funds due to difficulties raising further capital. Russell stated that the organization is unable to raise more than \$10,000 for the project from their picnics and golf outings. Questions centered around the rising operating costs and included queries around the initial \$50,000 borrowed in 2021. The funds requested would bring the project's borrowed grand total costs to \$90,000.

The additional phases in question are creating a parking lot located where Aldridge Hall once was, a sidewalk to connect the parking lot to the tank and hiking trails that travel behind the

public safety complex over the 11 acres of town owned land in the surrounding region.

A follow up question was about the memorial wall that will feature at the memorial. The wall has around 1,000 names inscribed on it at the moment and questions arose around the eligibility requirements to have a veteran's name inscribed on it.

"So, the criteria is if you were a veteran that was called to service while living in the town of Granby, then you're eligible," said Richard. "You're also eligible if you lived in the town of Granby for at least ten years."

Outspoken veterans applauded the initiative and asked the town members in attendance to pass the motion. One such veteran was

George Randall, a self-described proud Army veteran of the Vietnam War.

"It's really important to the town of Granby," Randall said during the open hearing and thanked those that spearheaded the initiative. "I commend this group for all the hard work that they've done over the years."

The pavilion will also have power, lighting and a ceiling fan for hosting events. The power will also run to the evergreen tree by 2027 for Christmas tree lighting ceremonies. Without further questions, the motion for additional funds passed unanimously.

"We hope to honor all the veterans that have signed the dotted lines," said Russell. "We want to build a very nice park for everyone to enjoy."

Job Connection

HELPING YOU FIND HELP

The South Hadley Fire District No. 2 Water Department is seeking applicants for the position of Administrative Assistant
South Hadley Fire District No. 2 Water Department
24 Woodbridge St., South Hadley MA

SUMMARY OF POSITION RESPONSIBILITIES:

Coordinates and manages the activities of the Water Department. Performs highly skilled administrative and clerical duties to ensure effective and efficient operations. The Administrative Assistant exercises leadership, independent judgment and initiative in the administration and execution of the Department's services. The Administrative Assistant works under the direct supervision of the Superintendent and is overseen by the Water Commissioners.

GENERAL DUTIES:

- Provides administrative support to Water Superintendent, Board of Water Commissioners, including word and data processing, filing, copying, scanning, and handling correspondence
- Frequently interacts with members of the general public, federal, state and/or local government officials, and Town employees
- Coordinates and assists with projects relating to personnel management, Department operations, and other areas
- Plans, coordinates, and calendars meetings and events
- Posts and attends all Board meetings; takes, prepares and distributes meeting minutes
- Acts as a liaison to other Town Departments, State Officials, Town Counsel and Engineers
- Maintains Department records
- Receives and screens visitors and telephone calls, providing information and handling issues that may require sensitivity and the use of sound independent judgment, or refer to appropriate individual(s)
- Periodic bank deposits and monthly account balancing with the Clerk/Treasurer
- Assist Water Superintendent in preparing and managing department needs
- Prepare, review and mail bi-monthly water bills
- Update and maintain utility billing database
- Process all demand bills, shut off notices and final readings
- Process and track all department payroll and accounts payable warrants
- Process, track, and file all other fees associated with the Water Department needs
- Completes periodic report required by state and federal governments and regulatory agencies
- Ability to communicate effectively and professionally with, and establish and maintain cooperative relationships with, Town officials, employees and staff, governmental representatives, state and federal agencies, contractors, vendors and/or the public
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- Operates standard office equipment, including a computer, Printers, Copier, etc.
- Working knowledge of Open Meeting Law, Public Records Law, State Ethics Law, Public Procurement laws
- Proficiency in typing, basic word processing, spreadsheet, presentation and database software (such as MS Word and Excel).
- Specialized software related to functional areas such as Water Utility Billing Software, Meter Reading Software, etc.

EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE/OTHER REQUIREMENTS:

- High School diploma or G.E.D. required
- Two (2) years of experience in relevant position (i.e., administrative assistant, office manager, or similar experience), and knowledge of general office procedures (e.g., correspondence, scheduling, filing) and previous experience in municipal government preferred.

This is a full-time position M-F from 7am to 3pm.

Starting pay is \$24.00 an hour and is negotiable depending on experience.

Applications and resumes will be accepted until Friday, May 29, 2026. Please submit to 20 Woodbridge Street, South Hadley MA 01075 ATTN: Tim Cauley or Tcauley@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.

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- CLUES ACROSS**
1. Notable casino destination
 6. Current units
 10. Roman military unit
 14. American lizard
 15. Fates
 17. The Yankees have lots of these
 19. Unhappy
 20. Mimic
 21. Remove from the record
 22. Where cargo ships dock (abbr.)
 23. A way to fight
 24. Turfs
 26. Contract
 29. Country along the Arabian peninsula
 31. Tree species
 32. Pituitary gland secretion (abbr.)
 34. Perfect
 35. "Partner" to groans
 37. Jewish calendar
 - month
 38. Where wrestlers work
 39. Egotistical
 40. Potted plants
 41. Containers
 43. Large, flightless birds
 45. Part of a book
 46. American spies
 47. Pancakes made of buckwheat flour
 49. Swiss river
 50. Disfigure
 53. Have surgery
 57. Formal withdrawal
 58. Early English council
 59. Area units
 60. 2,000 lbs.
 61. Siskel and ___
 - CLUES DOWN**
 1. Animal jaws
 2. Small water buffalo
 3. An appliance has
 - one
 4. Every
 5. Largest English dictionary (abbr.)
 6. Very skilled
 7. No more than what is specified
 8. Tire measurement
 9. Towers
 10. Forward
 11. Jacob ___, American journalist
 12. Vale
 13. Former CIA
 16. Middle Eastern nation
 18. Exhausts
 22. South Dakota
 23. The complete duration of something
 24. Kids love him
 25. Singular
 27. Cod genus
 28. Mild yellow Dutch cheese
 29. Resistance unit
 30. Ancient kingdom near Dead Sea
 31. Cast out
 33. 60-minute periods
 35. Most worn
 36. European river
 37. Atomic mass unit
 39. Items of food
 42. Body parts
 43. Ireland
 44. Partner to Pa
 46. Sammy ___, songwriter
 47. Dutch settler
 48. Full-grown pike fish
 49. Sun or solar disk
 50. Minute arachnid
 51. From a distance
 52. A monthly expense
 53. Young women's association
 54. Brazilian state
 55. Air freight provider
 56. Pointed end of a pen

Town Reminder
OBITUARY POLICY

Turley Publications offers two types of obituaries. One is a free, brief **Death Notice** listing the name of deceased, date of death and funeral date and place. The other is a **Paid Obituary**, costing \$275, which allows families to publish extended death notice information of their own choice (with a word limit of up to 500 words) and may include a photograph.

Death Notices & Paid Obituaries should be submitted through a funeral home to: obits@turley.com.

Exceptions will be made only when the family provides a death certificate and must be pre-paid.

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Public notice deadlines are Friday at 3 p.m.

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In observance of Memorial Day, **PUBLIC NOTICES EARLY AD DEADLINE** Place your public notice no later than **NOON Thursday, May 21**

– Thank you!

VOTE from page 1

should not assume “all the services that we’ve come to rely on in this town may continue without other decisions.”

Rosen praised the schools’ performance and called them “a large part of what this community provides,” representing more than half of the town budget.

But she said large-ticket items such as repairs to the Forge Pond Dam and school building needs will test the town’s finances, especially after the fiscal 2027 budget relied on reserves to stay balanced. “I am not sure if that’s even available for the future,” she said of using reserves again.

Rosen framed her candidacy around process as much as policy, emphasizing listening and consensus-building.

“One of the big lessons that I learned was that people have to be involved. Government only works if it is accomplishing the things that citizens, voters rely on it to accomplish and in a way that makes them feel involved and heard,” she said.

“There are no simple answers to this,” Rosen added later. “I will work as the Select Board has worked to bring people together in as many different settings, in as many different ways as possible to talk about the choices that have to be made.”

On regionalization, Rosen took a cautious, exploratory stance. Drawing on her work with the New York State Education Department and the Board of Regents, she called it “a really, really sensitive and complicated issue” tied to deeply held beliefs about local schools.

“It’s a word that’s fraught with emotion, but it’s something that can be looked at thoughtfully,” Rosen said. Regionalization does not automatically save money, she warned, but in the face of potential cuts to sports, arts and other programs, “you might consider partnering with other districts ... if you want to protect your curriculum, if you want to protect your program.” Any move, she stressed, must involve parents and residents and “is not the right answer in all cases.”

In her closing, Rosen praised Lawson personally but argued her background fits the moment.

“I have the exact kind of

experience and expertise — finance and human resources were my areas of specialty,” she said. “I’m the right candidate for this moment in time for Granby, the better candidate.”

Lawson leans on decades of local public safety service, rejects regionalization

Lawson, a 31-year resident of Granby, framed his campaign around long-standing local ties and hands-on public service in town.

“My name is Jeff Lawson, 56 years old,” he said, noting both his children attended Granby schools from kindergarten through 12th grade and “received an excellent education.” A retired Connecticut correction officer, he also served as a part-time Granby police officer for 10 years and now works as a 911 dispatcher on the evening shift.

“Public service is nothing new to me,” Lawson said. “I’ve served the community for many years. I’ve lived here. I love the town, and I want to continue serving as your next Select Board member.”

Lawson said he does not view himself as a politician.

“My intention is to serve the town as a leader,” he said. “The Select Board should be a board made of leaders, and I feel that’s what I bring to the community.”

On the budget, Lawson said Granby is in better shape than some nearby communities, citing South Hadley’s recent fiscal turmoil, but warned that state aid “is not covering basic needs in the town’s fixed costs.”

“We have to address that. We have to also put more pressure on Beacon Hill, the governor, to get us more state funding out in this part of the state,” he said.

Lawson also called on residents to engage more fully in town meeting. “It’s unfortunate when you only see 100, 150 people at town meeting,” he said. “We have a very unique form of government here in Granby ... and people need to take advantage of it, where every vote literally counts.”

A major plank of Lawson’s platform is tackling health care costs, which he described as “absolutely killing us” after a nearly 13% increase.

“I work for the town. I see what the costs are. I see what my co-workers pay, and

it’s not sustainable. It’s also not sustainable for the town. They pay the lion’s share of health care,” he said. Still, he added, “I’m cautiously optimistic that we will be able to solve this problem.”

Lawson devoted substantial time to the future of Granby Junior-Senior High School, which he called a “challenge” but defended as academically strong despite its aging building.

“Don’t judge a book by its cover,” he said. “Get past the brick and mortar, get past the facade, and once you enter the front doors of that school, you’re going to find yourself in an excellent district that provides a quality education.”

He outlined four broad options: doing nothing, regionalizing, renovating or demolishing and building a new school.

On regionalization, Lawson was firmly opposed based on what he knows today.

“Currently, I’m not in favor of regionalizing. I think learning should be local,” he said, pointing to his children’s “top tier education at this school.”

He added later that he worries regionalization would “disconnect ourselves from our child’s learning,” weaken relationships between parents and teachers, and risk using students “as bargaining tools to what I feel is address a fi-

nanacial crisis”.

“We need to make education a priority with the schools and dollars and cents secondary,” he said.

Lawson said he is open to information about potential partners and models but insisted any regionalization discussion cannot be “just dollar signs and decimal points” and must consider host community, class size and teacher-student ratios.

A full rebuild of the high school, he said, appears out of reach at an estimated \$80 million to \$100 million without a “big windfall revenue.” If that ever became feasible, he argued it should include vocational programs so the town

could “bring vocational back to Granby” rather than paying to send students to regional vocational schools.

NOTICE

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2x3 Black & White Grad Ad
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Love, Mom & Dad

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With your support, together we raised over \$58K!
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