

# WARE RIVER NEWS

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Vol. 138 No. 48

16 Pages

(Plus Supplements)

USPS 666100

\$31 PER YEAR - \$1.00 A COPY

THURSDAY, JANUARY 2, 2025

A TURLEY PUBLICATION | www.turley.com

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## 2024 Year in Review



File Photo

Ware Police's Jake Crevier tips the ball out of Randy Gratton's reach to start the Class of 2026 Basketball Game Fundraiser held at Ware Jr./Sr. High School on Feb. 2.



Community members took part in Community Reading Day at Warren Community Elementary School.

### Supt. addressed union's concerns

By Paula Ouimette  
Editor  
pouimette@turley.com

WARE – School Committee Chair Brian Winslow read a statement regarding the Ware Teachers Associations' vote of no confidence at a meeting held on Dec. 18.

He said the School Committee "takes seriously" the concerns raised by the union members with their no confidence vote against Superintendent Dr. Michael Lovato.

"Since his appointment in July of 2023, Dr. Lovato has dedicated himself to implementing necessary changes, aims at addressing longstanding challenges and improving the educational experience for all students of Ware Public Schools," Winslow said. "These efforts reflect his commitment to fostering a student-centered system that meets the evolving needs of our society and the diverse learners we serve."

Winslow said the committee "stand behind Dr. Lovato's vision for educational progress," noting that change "often brings challenges especially during times of transition."

He said the committee also values the contributions of the school district's educators, whose expertise and dedication "are critical to the success of our students."

"Their voices, along with those of our staff, administrators, parents and guardians are essential in shaping the path forward," Winslow said.

Winslow said the key to achieving students success is to have collaboration and constructive dialogue between all shareholders. He talked about the impact COVID-19 had on the

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### WARE: A YEAR IN REVIEW

By Paula Ouimette  
Editor  
pouimette@turley.com

"About 10 years ago, the town of Ware passed a demolition delay bylaw," Chair Lynn Lak said at the Jan. 3 meeting. "We're here to discuss that tonight. We're here to discuss buildings."

Lak said the commission's members are familiar with the properties in question, with three of the members having been born at Mary Lane Hospital and two working there.

Commission member Elena Palladino, who has written a book about the Lost Towns of the Quabbin Reservoir, shared some background about historic homes and buildings in town. Palladino also serves on the Hospital Review Committee.

"These residences along with other landmarks in the downtown area give Ware its distinct visual character and are central to the town's identity and history," Palladino said. "The hospital is one of those landmark buildings."

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WARE – The year started with a packed Historical Commission meeting held upstairs in the Town Hall to discuss a request from Baystate Health to demolish the Mary Lane Hospital buildings; setting the tone for many conversations had at various committee and board meetings aimed at finding ways to bring healthcare back to town and make use of the property.

The town also formed an Infrastructure Asset Improvement Committee to find ways to improve the town's water and wastewater systems.

#### Mary Lane Hospital demolition

The Historical Commission met with representatives from Baystate Health and Westmass Area Development Corporation to determine if Mary Lane Hospital met the criteria needed to enact the demolition delay.

### WARREN: A YEAR IN REVIEW

By Paula Ouimette  
Editor  
pouimette@turley.com

WARREN – The town continued making strides toward improving its infrastructure, including making updates to its buildings, and looking for ways to provide adequate space for its police and fire departments.

Through the use of a grant, the town conducted a feasibility study to determine the cost and location for a public safety complex, as both departments face challenges in their respective spaces.

Public safety complex study  
On Jan. 11, representatives from Tecton Architects gave a progress update to the Board of Selectmen on the financial feasibility study for a new public safety/municipal complex.

The goals of the financial feasibility study are to provide the town with information to analyze the financial costs of a public



File Photos

These children arrived dressed in their Easter best to enjoy the annual Easter egg hunt at Lucy Stone Park this past Saturday.

safety/municipal complex and to identify potential savings or cost offsets. The study will also educate the residents on the financial

impact the project would have on its taxpayers.

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### HARDWICK: A YEAR IN REVIEW



Auctioneer Paul Varney started the live auction at the Friends of the Stone Church's Valentine Gala held at Hardwick Crossing Country Club in February of last year. This year's event will be held on Saturday, Feb. 8 at 4 p.m. with tickets available at friendsofthestonechurch.org.

By Paula Ouimette  
Editor  
pouimette@turley.com

HARDWICK – Residents were divided on another proposal for a large project that could have brought a steady stream of revenue to the town, but not without the potential for significant impact to the environment and way of life.

When Casella Waste Systems Inc. submitted a proposal to reopen and expand the landfill, many remembered previous arguments and resistance to this site, which caused years of conflict.

Concerns about contamination and pollution, noise and traffic, and changes to the town's zoning bylaws were laid to rest when the Planning Board voted against recommending the proposed changes brought forward by Casella Waste Systems, Inc.

Please see **HARDWICK**, page 7



File Photos

Marking its 30th anniversary year, the East Quabbin Land Trust held its annual New Year's Day walk on the Mass Central Rail Trail to kickoff 2024 events.

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Indians defeat Renaissance

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Free COVID//flu vaccine clinic

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#### VETERANS

AMVETS members enjoy party

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POLICY**

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## Berthiaume and Durant hold office hours across region

State Rep. Donnie Berthiaume's Chief of Staff Donna Farmer and State Sen. Peter Durant's District Liaison Jared Grigg and Communications Director Kim Mongeau invite constituents and town officials to meet them to express any concerns, ideas or issues that they may need assistance with.

Upcoming dates include Monday, Jan. 6, East Brookfield Senior Center from 9-10 a.m., Brookfield Town Hall from 10:15-11:15 a.m. and West Brookfield Senior Center from 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.; Wednesday, Jan. 8, Ware Senior Center from 9-10 a.m.,

Hardwick Municipal Offices from 10:15-11:15 a.m., New Braintree Town Hall from 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. and North Brookfield Senior Center from 12:45-1:45 p.m.; Monday, Jan. 13, Hubbardston Senior Center from 9:30-10:30 a.m., Barre Senior Center from 10:45-11:45 a.m. and Oakham Town Hall from noon-1 p.m.; Tuesday, Jan. 14, Spencer Town Hall (Tammy Ruda from State Rep. John Marsi's office will also attend) from 10-11 a.m. and Leicester Senior Center from 11:15 a.m.-12:15 p.m.

To arrange a private meeting, contact Farmer by calling 774-402-4742.

## Cold weather clothing drive ongoing through spring

WARE – The Recovery Center of HOPE and the Quaboag Hills Substance Use Alliance will be hosting a Community Cold Weather Drive to benefit local individuals and families facing hardships.

They will be accepting new and gently used gloves, mittens, scarves, sweaters, blankets, base-layers, jackets and coats and new beanies and socks.

Items will be collected through the spring and can be dropped off at the following locations: Town Hall, 126 Main St., Mondays and Tuesdays from 8 a.m.-4 p.m.; Recovery on Main, 78 Main St., Wednesdays from 1-3 p.m.; Ware Library, 37 Main St., Thursdays from 10 a.m.-7 p.m.; and Recovery Center of HOPE, Fridays from 2-4 p.m.

# 2024 Year in Review

WARE from page 1

She said a lot of studying and consideration has already gone into finding potential use for the site and its buildings, and there are challenges and complications.

"Given the hospital's importance to the history of Ware, and its significance as a historic building, it's important to give full and careful consideration to potential reuse," Palladino said. "It would be a shame to lose this piece of the town's history."

Lak said the town enacted a demolition delay bylaw in 2014 for any building in town that is 75 years old or older (all or in part) that meets a certain criteria.

"Because of those reasons, the demolition delay will kick in," Lak said. "That is the law."

Baystate Health's President of Regional Community Hospitals, Ronald Bryant, said that Baystate Health has solicited interest in the property from several major developers throughout New England, including leading walkthroughs of the buildings, but none have expressed interest.

Westmass Development's President and CEO Jeff Daley said they are considering saving a building, but it would most likely be the medical office building in the back of the property. He said there is a "significant investment" just to separate the building from the others and it would cost around \$400,000-500,000 to do that.

Daley said he respects the historical significance of the buildings, but the buildings in the front of the property are "floor to ceiling, wall-to-wall, loaded with asbestos," and he said redevelopment is almost impossible.

"Maybe you will find somebody...I've talked to many, many developers, I know Baystate has, nobody is interested, the finances



State Rep. Aaron Saunders (left) presented a citation to Gail Gramarossa along with state Sen. Jake Oliveira (right). Gramarossa retired from her role as the Prevention and Community Health Director for the town of Ware as well as the Program Director of the Quaboag Hills Substance Use Alliance.

just don't work," Daley said. "You will have to go wall by wall, floor by floor to redevelop those and its tens and hundreds of millions of dollars to do that."

Daley said his professional opinion is that the buildings are not reusable, and he didn't think a nine month moratorium would change that outcome.

"The market isn't there to support those types of buildings anymore, unfortunately," Daley said.

On April 11, the Hospital Review Committee held a joint meeting with the Historical Commission to share updates about the Mary Lane Hospital property.

Members of the Historical Commission have been reaching out to medical companies since enacting a nine-month demolition delay on the property at the beginning of the year.

Commission member Claudia Kadra said they have reached out to 33 potential companies, starting with sending letters, then follow-up phone calls when they didn't get a response.

Kadra said the commission "didn't get any hits."

Friends of Mary Lane Hospital Chair Cindy Allen Bourcier has submitted a packet of information to the attorney, and she has also

filed a petition with the Hampshire County Court to halt distributions from the trust.

Bourcier said in her research, she has found more trusts that have been moved to the Baystate Health Foundation, the fundraising entity for Baystate Health, which owns the Mary Lane Hospital site.

"It's not just the Lewis Gilbert Trust, it's a whole bunch of them," she said.

Bourcier said very little money from the trust has come back to benefit the residents of Ware and Gilbertville as was intended. She said of \$4.8 million, only \$80,000 came back to Mary Lane Hospital.

Bourcier said she met with Emily Gabrault, Assistant Attorney General and Senior Health Care Policy Advisor in the Non-Profit Organization/Charities Division of the Massachusetts Office of the Attorney General. She said Gabrault is looking at all endowments managed through the Baystate Health Foundation.

"We need to get some kind of agreement sooner or later," Bourcier said.

Bourcier said distributions from the trust have been on hold since the hospital closed in 2023.

Please see **WARE**, page 3

# Are You Old News?



Each week the Ware River News digs into its submitted photo archives and selects a people photo to publish. We need your help to help identify those pictured.

Email your answers by Monday at noon to [pouimette@turley.com](mailto:pouimette@turley.com).



File Photo Last week's photo from 1977 showed Phil Hamel of Ware Bottle Gas Co., who was the guest speaker in the new Career Exploration course at Ware High School. If you recognize the folks in this week's photo, please send their names and your full name to [pouimette@turley.com](mailto:pouimette@turley.com).

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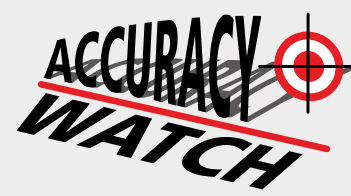


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Mass Central Rail Trail supporters and cyclists participated in the inaugural RideN2B from Northampton to Boston held over three days in September. The cyclists made a stop at Grenville Park in Ware.



The Ware River News will gladly correct factual errors that appear in this paper. Corrections or clarifications will always appear on Page 3. To request a correction, send information to [pouimette@turley.com](mailto:pouimette@turley.com), or call 967-3505. Corrections may also be requested in writing at: Ware River News, Attn: Editor, 80 Main St., Ware, MA 01082.

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# 2024 Year in Review

WARE from page 2

In July, residents were given the opportunity to review and edit conceptual designs provided by HKT Architects, Inc.; looking at potential reuse of the Mary Lane Hospital site.

The charette was attended by over 100 residents, who worked together to review three design options provided by the firm, and give feedback on what they would like to see at the 21-acre South Street property.

Amy Dunlap, principal and project manager for HKT Architects, Inc. said her firm has been working with the town since last year to conduct a feasibility study, to help the town envision the future of the Mary Lane Hospital site.

"We've been trying to get the community engaged," Dunlap said of the study, which included a listening session last September.

Dunlap gave an overview of the



Participants plunged into the cold water of Beaver Lake in March to support the Special Olympics. Officer Jeannine Bonnayer is shown alongside high school students who did the Polar Plunge for the very first time.

property, noting that the buildings could have continued as healthcare and that to have any other use go in "would be very, very costly."

The majority of the hospital's buildings have been unused for some time, with the last services being shifted to Baystate Wing Hospital in December of 2023.

Later in July, the Hospital Review Committee received an update from Attorney Patricia Davidson regarding her progress in researching the Lewis Gilbert trust.

"This is a type of situation that calls out, ideally for, a negotiated

resolution here, that achieves a plan that is as consistent as possible with the terms of the estate planning documents that govern the situation and certainly the interests of the citizens of Ware and the priorities of this committee," Davidson said.

Davidson said she has met with Bank of America (the trustee of the trust) as well as representatives of Baystate Health, with the primary goal of reaching a resolution that "makes sense" to the community. This includes utilization of the real estate and the trust funds.

She said both Bank of America and Baystate Health "seem amenable" to working out a plan or proposal and continuing to have discussions.

"At least at this stage we have receptivity," she said.

In September, Hospital Review Committee Chair Howard Trietsch said he met with representatives from Baystate Health, including new President and CEO Peter D. Banko, which resulted in positive news to share with the community.

Trietsch said he asked Banko to provide him with a written summary of the meeting to share with the committee and public.

Banko said Baystate Health will be flexible with the timeline for demolition of the buildings at Mary Lane Hospital in order to "afford a reasonable period of time for interested parties to evaluate potential development." Banko said Baystate Health will not move forward with its planned demolition when the Historical Commission's demolition delay expires on Oct. 17.

Banko said Baystate Health will work with the Historical Commission to identify an "appropriate, meaningful, and visible way to memorialize Mary Lane and its place in the history of Ware."

#### Water and wastewater assets

The Infrastructure Asset Improvement Committee was formed at the beginning of the

year, and members set to work to address the town's water and wastewater needs.

At the May annual town meeting, voters approved three articles related to the town's water system and how to improve it while at the same time, looking ahead to the future.

Article 18 asked voters to appropriate \$125,000 from the Water Enterprise Reserve Fund for the design of the refurbishment of the water tanks on Church Street and Anderson Road.

Matt Palladino, chair of the Infrastructure Asset Improvement Committee, said the money will be used to pay for engineering design and studies for the two tanks.

"This is planning for now and the future," he said.

Article 19 asked that the town appropriate \$2,000,000 for the refurbishment of the tanks, with \$500,000 coming from the Water Enterprise reserves and the rest from borrowing.

Palladino said estimates from engineers Tighe & Bond are showing that this will be an expensive project.

"We know it will be a large sum of money to complete the work," he said.

Article 20 asked voters to appropriate \$50,000 from Water Enterprise Reserve Fund in order to develop a plan for the town's water system in anticipation of the pending Environmental Protection Act regulations related to per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances more commonly known as PFAS.

At the November special town meeting, voters also approved the borrowing of \$2,190,000 for the construction and refurbishment of the Church Street and Anderson Road water tanks, including engineering and incidental costs. This cost will be added to the \$2.1 million that was approved at the annual town meeting this past spring.

Based on reports completed by the town's engineers, the additional funds will be necessary to update both tanks and these funds would be borrowed and repaid with receipts from the Water Enterprise.

#### Senior center volunteers recognized

Ware Senior Center volunteer Craig Simmons said he set a goal when he retired from his career with the town of Ware many years ago; to help people as much as he could.

"I really did what I set out to do," Simmons told those present at a party held in his honor on March 29.

Members of the Council on Aging and The Friends of the Ware Seniors Inc., surprised Simmons with a retirement party, complete with cake and ice cream and a certificate of appreciation for this service. After the presentation, they celebrated him by singing "He's a Jolly Good Fellow".

"To date, he has logged 5,778.08 volunteer hours, all of them in Ware (That's the equivalent of 2.7 years of full time employment)," Ware Senior Center Executive Director John Zienowicz said. "He was honored with the RSV Presidential Lifetime Achievement Award, for 4,000+ hours of service, in 2019."

Ware Senior Center Chef Alton Davis said Simmons has been a constant help, arriving in the early hours of the morning and helping carve the meat for parties.

"He's been wonderful," Davis said. "I'm going to miss him."

Volunteer Roxanne Vermette is known for her dedication and work ethic; and for being the first person to arrive to



Ware High School football players celebrated a victory over Palmer High School.



Community members held a moment of silence during a candlelight vigil for Overdose Awareness Day, hosted by the Recovery Center of HOPE at Veterans Park in August.



The Ware River Valley Domestic Violence Task Force held its annual walk this past October.



Team Ethan led the first ever Out of the Darkness Campus Walk to benefit the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention held at Grenville Park this past May.



Ware Senior Center volunteer Roxanne Vermette received the 2024 President's Lifetime Achievement Award.

the center, ready to start the day.

"Roxanne arrives at 6:30 every morning with her iced coffee, listening to disco in her car," Zienowicz said.

Vermette, who is a Coffee Café attendant at the Ware Senior Center, was recognized this year for volunteering over 4,000 hours to the center with the 2024 President's Lifetime Achievement Award, a rare achievement signed by President Joseph R. Biden Jr.

When asked what she likes best about her work at the center, Vermette said, "all of the people that are there."

Zienowicz said that Vermette is

a very special person and despite facing challenges in her life, she is

Please see WARE, page 6



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## GUEST COLUMN

### Audit recommends changes to police training records, certification process

BOSTON – Fulfilling a commitment made in her Social Justice & Equity Audit Plan, the State Auditor's Office has conducted an audit of the Municipal Police Training Committee to examine whether it developed and implemented trainings consistent with the 2018 Criminal Justice Reform Act and the 2020 Police Reform Law.

The audit reviewed the period of Jan. 1, 2021, through Dec. 31, 2022.

The MPTC exists within the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security. Its mission is to set the police training standards for all law enforcement officers certified by the Massachusetts Peace Officer Standards and Training Commission and to develop, deliver, and maintain a record of that training for over 23,000 police officers (municipal, Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority, environmental, campus, hospitals), deputy sheriffs, harbormasters, constables, and other personnel who perform police duties and functions in the Commonwealth.

The audit found MPTC did not sufficiently ensure that training academies delivered a standardized recruit officer course curriculum, as required. By not consistently delivering a standardized training curriculum, MPTC provided inadequate assurance that all police officers in the Commonwealth have been exposed to the concepts, skills, and tactics that have been determined to be critical for effective policing by the law and MPTC.

This may lead to inconsistent law enforcement practices, which may jeopardize the safety of the public and police officers, because law enforcement officers may not be properly equipped to perform their jobs safely and effectively. This also could create financial risk for municipalities that employ officers who are insufficiently trained.

Moreover, the audit found MPTC did not ensure that all ROCs were taught by certified instructors. Without proper certification, instructors may lack the expertise or experience necessary to effectively teach the concepts, skills, and tactics that MPTC has determined to be critical for effective policing.

This could lead to variations in the instruction that police officers receive, potentially impacting their ability to perform their jobs safely and effectively.

The audit also found MPTC's internal control plan was not updated annually, and did not address the impact of COVID-19 on its operations, in accordance with guidance issued by the Office of the Comptroller of the Commonwealth.

An ICP identifies objectives and risks and identifies control activities to mitigate risks that might prevent an agency from accomplishing its objectives, in service to the public. Without updating its ICP, MPTC may not identify and/or mitigate all the risks, including those that resulted from the pandemic.

In addition, during the course of the audit, an issue was identified regarding MPTC's management of police officer training records.

Although MPTC maintained its hard-copy training records in a locked room at their headquarters, it did not maintain an access log to track who accessed the room, when, and for what purpose(s). Some training records appeared to be stored in haphazard fashion – stacked on metal cabinets, without any apparent filing and retrieval method in place. In addition, there were several instances during the audit where hard-copy training records requested to perform our audit work were either missing, not readily available, not properly filed, incompletely prepared or were not certified when required.

It is critical that MPTC maintain a complete, accurate, and secure training record-keeping system. Without an organized record-keeping system, which would include a formal access log, training records are more vulnerable to inappropriate and/or unauthorized access.

This compromises the integrity of the records and could lead to: (1) officers attending training where the physical record becomes lost, destroyed or misfiled, resulting in their failing to receive appropriate credit for training, or (2) officers being inappropriately certified or appearing to have completed training they never received. Additionally, in the event there is a dispute regarding the integrity of training records, the lack of an effective record-keeping system makes it more difficult to resolve these issues definitively.

"The Municipal Police Training Committee plays a critical role in the public safety of our Commonwealth, establishing police training standards and maintaining records of that training," said Auditor Diana DiZoglio. "Our audit has identified areas for improvement at the MPTC to ensure increased accountability in its training, certification and record-keeping processes. MPTC's new leadership fully cooperated with our audit team and has committed to addressing these issues. As is customary, we will revisit these findings to track progress as part of our post-audit review process in roughly six months."



### A New Year of possibilities

I spent last night curled up on the couch with a seed catalog in hand. It was a nostalgic few hours for me, in which I was transported back decades, to when gardening was new and my time and energy were boundless.

Regardless of it being the present day, I began circling this and that, and even curled a few pages too. All the fruit and vegetables I could grow, and store, and preserve, and eat, all year long.

Could my homesteading nature be bubbling back up to the surface? Perhaps. And wouldn't that wonderful if it could be a reality? It surely would.

Talk about an admirable ambition for the New Year.

I started to think about what my family eats on a regular basis and what I would have to do to grow enough food to last throughout the year or at least seriously supplement what we typically buy. The most important considerations are taste and productivity.

If a variety is productive, but doesn't taste

great, then what is the point?

I have "plugged" Fedco Seeds a number of times through the years. The newsprint catalog is full of such great information; follow up by looking online (fedcoseeds.com) to get a color picture of what you will grow. I specifically enjoy reading the personal recommendations from the trialers in many of the descriptions!

The biggest problem I have growing tomatoes is with early blight. Last night I found a great disease resistant paste tomato called Plum Regal that will suit my needs well, hopefully yielding many quarts of sauce for the cupboards.

And what about that Little Dipper Butternut Squash? Disease resistance reigns true here, with taste and productivity ranking high too. Twenty-two fruits from three plants? I'll take it.

Succession planting is paramount if I want to grow lots of food consistently. This planting method is defined as "planting more than once."

It can be planting lettuce, for example, every two weeks throughout the growing season or planting beets in the spot the peas vacated. Reading the catalog reminded me that not every variety is suited for successional sowing.

In other words, the lettuce I sow for an early spring sowing might not be best for planting in the summer, and summer lettuce definitely won't be the best to extend my growing from fall into winter. I will definitely plan accordingly.

Likewise, I may love "Jade" green beans,

but they wouldn't be the best for my first sowing because they are white seeded and typically white seeded beans rot in cool soil. I'll start with a dark seeded bean.

I am really looking forward to trying to grow a few new things this year, watermelon and cantaloupe to be exact. Less fruit to buy is a good thing, right?

I learned some tips from the catalog. Namely, to start the melons indoors, then transplant at two or three weeks old, before the roots tangle, into soil that has been amended with lots of aged manure or compost and prewarmed with black plastic mulch.

Using row covers over the plants until flowers appear will keep off the cucumber beetles and provide additional heat. The catalog also provided some interesting tips on how to harvest ripe melons.

When I did manage to grow a plant to maturity, there is absolutely nothing worse than cutting into a melon notoriously unripe with no way to ripen it. Best to call it chicken food at that point.

So this year I will grow ripe melons, lots of lettuce and butternut squash along with gallons of tomato sauce. And more. A New Year of possibilities.

*Roberta McQuaid graduated from the Stockbridge School of Agriculture at the University of Massachusetts. For 33 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.*

## WARE RIVER NEWS TEAM

**EDITOR**  
Paula Quimette  
pouimette@turley.com

**ADVERTISING SALES**  
Dan Flynn  
dffynn@turley.com

**SPORTS EDITOR**  
Greg Scibelli  
sports@turley.com

**STAFF WRITER**  
Ryan Drago  
rdrago@turley.com

The Ware River News (USPS 666100) is published every Thursday by Turley Publications, Inc., 24 Water St., Palmer, Mass. 01069. Telephone (413) 283-8393, Fax (413) 289-1977. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Turley Publications, Inc., 24 Water St., Palmer, Mass. 01069.

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www.warivernews.turley.com

**PATRICK H. TURLEY**  
CEO

**KEITH TURLEY**  
President

**DEANNA SLOAT**  
Graphics Manager

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## OPINION POLICY

Letters to the editor should be 250 words or less in length, and "Your Turn" guest column between 500-800 words. No unsigned or anonymous opinions will be published. We require that the person submitting the opinion also include his or her town of residence and home telephone number. We must authenticate authorship prior to publication. We reserve the right to edit or withhold any submissions deemed to be libelous, unsubstantiated allegations, personal attacks, or defamation of character.

Send opinions to:  
Ware River News  
Letter to the Editor  
80 Main Street  
Ware, MA 01082  
or via email to:  
pouimette@turley.com

The deadline for submissions is Monday at noon.

## 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.

## SOCIAL SECURITY Matters

By Russell Gloor

### Can my wife claim her SS now and get half my SS benefit later?

**Dear Rusty:**  
My wife will reach her full Social Security benefit at 66.5 years of age which is just under two years away for her now.

If she were to begin to get her monthly check now (i.e. early), would that prevent her from being eligible for the spousal benefit to receive half of what I am currently drawing?

Signed: Curious Husband

**Dear Curious:**  
If your wife claims her own SS retirement benefit now (e.g., at 64.5 years) and you are already collecting your own SS benefit, then she will be automatically deemed to be filing for her spousal benefit immediately when she claims her own benefit. She does not have the option to defer claiming her spousal benefit until later.

This is a change made by the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015, which requires all those first claiming SS to file for all benefits they are eligible for when they claim. What that would mean is that your wife's benefit now, including her spousal boost from you, would be actuarially reduced by the number of months early she claimed.

Her own SS retirement benefit would be permanently reduced by about 15% and her "spousal boost," the additional amount she would get as your spouse, would be reduced by about 19%, yielding a combined benefit which is roughly 42% of your Full Retirement Age SS benefit.

The only way your wife can get half 50% of your FRA benefit entitlement is by waiting until her own full retirement age (66 years and 10 months) to claim. Note too that your wife's spousal benefit will be based on your FRA entitlement, so if you claimed earlier or later



than your own full retirement age, her spousal benefit will still be based on your FRA entitlement.

Also, your wife should be aware that anyone, who claims early, is subject to Social Security's "earnings test," which limits how much can be earned while collecting early benefits. Thus, if your wife is working, she will be restricted on how much she can earn before Social Security takes away some of her benefits.

FYI, the earnings limit changes annually, but for 2025 it is \$23,420 and, if that is exceeded, SS will take away \$1 in benefits for every \$2 over the limit. And, FYI, the earnings limit goes up a lot during the year FRA is attained and the earnings test no longer applies once full retirement age is reached.

I hope this answers your question, but if

you have need additional information, please feel free to contact us directly at SSAdvisor@amacfoundation.org, or call us at 1-888-750-2622.

*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.*



American wigeon

I received an email from a Brimfield resident on Dec. 15.

He said he checked out a pond in Ludlow in preparation for doing the Christmas Bird Count with the Allen Bird Club. He said, "My wife and I have been covering the town of Ludlow since 1989 and did my first count with the club in the late 1970s."

He saw four American Wigeons. He said, "Males with white crown/forehead and female

with gray head brown body was swimming with the males. The male's white spot was very visible even to the unaided eye."

The American wigeon is 21 inches long. The male has a white forehead and crown, gray head and a green iridescent patch through the eye. The male has a white spot before the tail, which the Brimfield mentioned in his email.

The female has brownish sides, grayish head and sides, a dark eyespot and light gray bill with black tip. The female wigeon lays six to 12 white eggs in a grassy nest. The nest is concealed in rushes, sedge or under tree clumps.

American wigeons feed on pond weeds, milfoil, wigeon grass, wild celery and eelgrass. They may eat vexation stirred up by diving ducks such as canvasbacks. They summer on lakes and marshes and winter on wet meadows, lakes and protected coastal waters. They are usually found in small flocks. During courtship competing males give whistling calls and lift folded wings nearly vertical above their back. Males give soft descending three syllable whistles.

### Other birds

Other birds seen by the Brimfield resident at the Ludlow Reservoir were 63 Canada geese, six mallards, 83 hooded mergansers, 161 common mergansers, one ring-billed gull, three common loons and one bald eagle flew directly overhead just above the tree tops. Other birds were two American crows, two tufted titmice and two dark-eyed juncos.

### Hooded mergansers

I received an email from a woman on Dec. 14. She said, "The ponds on Brook Road in West Warren have more treasures. Two days ago I saw a pair of hooded mergansers. I sat and watched for several minutes and they spent most of the time under water."

### Bird at feeder

I received an email from a woman on Dec. 20. She wrote, "I have spotted a bird I believe to be a yellow warbler coming to my feeder. My knowledge of the bird is that it migrates south or the winter." She sent a photo, but the bird was eating so the beak and head were not visible. It had two white wing bars, olive color and some yellow. It may be a male American goldfinch in winter plumage. They do spend the winter here and retain some of their yellow feathers.

### Loon fact

Most of the fish loons catch are small enough to be swallowed whole when they're still underwater. However, when a loon captures a larger fish, it may need to return to the surface to subdue it before it is able to consume it. Loons may slap a fish against the surface of the water or repeatedly drop and recapture it until the fish stops struggling and is manageable enough to be swallowed.

Loons swallow fish whole, headfirst. When a loon starts to swallow a large fish, it

Please see **BACKYARD**, page 5

# Feedback sought about station for East/West Rail Project

By Marcelo Gusmão  
Staff Writer  
mgusmao@turley.com

PALMER – The Department of Transportation held a meeting at the library to solicit feedback from the public about the East/West Rail Project.

Members of the public were invited to a public information meeting in the Palmer Public Library's Community Room on Dec. 16, where the project team provided an overview of the study's background, the station site alternatives and evaluation, and design considerations for the potential future rail station. After the presentation, the attendees were asked to provide feedback on the site alternatives and design considerations.

Andy Koziol, the director of the project, has been with MassDOT since June of last year.

"We received quite a bit of feedback, there was a lot of public participation," Koziol said.

Of the previous 11 sites, the project team has narrowed the focus to six that meet the ideal criteria for the new site.

"One of the reasons we went out for public feedback was to give public a chance to highlight anything we might have missed," Koziol said. "We feel pretty confident, with the local knowledge of

the Steering Committee, together with that we've done a comprehensive look at each site, but the public can bring additional factors. I think committee is being patient to make sure we use all the information available to us before we make any further decisions."

The meeting involved some controversy, much of which was centered on the elimination of Steaming Tender Restaurant as a potential site for the station.

"Very early in our process we identified what we refer to as the requirements for rail infrastructure," Koziol said.

Koziol explained that the designs require a high-level, 800-foot platform to allow for level boarding on all coaches. There will also need to be about 1,775 feet of an adjacent track.

Koziol said that this is complicated by the properties near Steaming Tender, citing the CSX yard across from the tracks.

"Part of that is the CSX yard right across from tracks," Koziol said. "Then the horizontal width beneath the South Main Street bridge. Not only would the bridge have to be reconstructed, but this particular layout would require purchasing several properties, which would make that not feasible."

Please see **RAIL**, page 10

# Planning Board sets rezoning public hearing date

By Ryan Drago  
Staff Writer

rdrago@turley.com

WARE – The Planning Board had a discussion prior to setting a public hearing date for the rezoning of lots on Mechanic Street and Maple Street.

The public hearing will be about possibly changing the zoning of the lots from Highway Commercial to Commercial Industrial.

The owners of the lots attended the Dec. 19 Planning Board meeting for clarification as to how the process works. The board was heavily focused on two parcels, whereas rezoning can be an issue and not satisfactory to residents in Town.

"Rezoning is the issue. You need other parcels in there," said Planning Board Secretary Elizabeth Hancock.

One of the lots that was referred to as a barn in the meeting is zoned as Suburban Residential. The issue the board believes might arise is

the property could encroach to the neighbors of the surrounding area near the lot.

Among the six lots being discussed for this future public hearing is some spots are zoned as Highway Commercial. Highway Commercial zoning is a subcategory of zoning that allows for uses and facilities that primarily serve areas that are intended for vehicle-oriented uses and sales along highway frontages, and may also include compatible retail, service, and administrative activities.

The board was looking to see if it's even possible to rezone one lot to Commercial Industrial. Warehousing does fall under industrial zoning and industrial zones are typically separated from residential areas to protect neighborhoods from potentially harmful industrial activities.

When identifying the lots, there appeared to be a lot that also includes Maple Street. According to the Planning Board the property could be removed from the poten-

tial article that could go to town meeting.

For legal purposes, Director of Planning & Community Development Paralee Smith wanted to write this public hearing correctly and wanted an organized list of the lots being discussed. There are two properties that are two separate lots, but have common ownership. There are a total of six lots numbered in the public hearing.

"Combine the lots by default due to not being developed," said Chris Dimarzio, Planning Board vice-chair.

The board reminded the owners who are looking to rezone the properties that the meeting they are having in December will only refine what the public hearing topic will be. The public hearing in January will allow the public to address their input.

There is a possibility that these parcels could be removed prior to being brought to the select board for consideration of being an article for the Town Meeting.

"We're setting a meeting and the town citizens can have their input into the process and then craft this bylaw," Dimarzio said.

The Planning Board voted to schedule the rezoning for Maple Street and Mechanic Street for their meeting on Jan. 16.

## Additional public hearings

The Planning Board also scheduled a public hearing for a Use Table Amendment on Jan. 16. The hearing will be about possibly allowing warehouse use in Highway Commercial zoning.

The Planning Board also continued the public hearing on Ware Solar Location III on Greenwich Road for special permit and reopening of the site plan. The public hearing was previously continued from the Nov. 21 meeting.

As of now, there have been no changes to the plans after the applicant recently spoke with National Heritage.

## BACKYARD from page 4

will first ensure that it is oriented properly, sometimes dropping the fish and picking it up several times until it is properly positioned. Once the fish is aligned so that it is headfirst in the loon's mouth, the loon begins the process of swallowing. Loons have sharp, rear-facing projections along the roof of their mouths and on their

tongues. These projections, called denticles, interlock with the fish's scales, ensuring that the fish is not able to escape back into the water. Loons then press their tongue into the fish and begin to inch it down the throat, into the esophagus.

Depending on the size of the fish a loon is trying to eat, it may take a few seconds to several minutes for the loon to swallow. Once in the esophagus, the fish moves

down into the gizzard. A loon may open its mouth and repeatedly extend its neck upward and then contract it back towards its body to help move particularly large fish through the esophagus to the gizzard.

## American crow

I saw about five or six American crows foraging on a lawn on my way to church this cold Sunday

morning. With the temperature registering 8 degrees F, the crows had their feathers all puffed up for warmth.

People may report a bird sighting or bird related experience by calling me at 413-967-3505, leaving a message at extension 100, emailing mybackyard88@aol.com or edowner@turley.com or mailing to Barre Gazette, P.O. Box 448, Barre, MA 01005.

## SUPT. from page 1

education system, with the focus on health and safety moving it away from a student-centered approach.

Winslow said the School Committee is reviewing the concerns outlined by the union in the no confidence vote.

"Together we can navigate this period of transition; embracing both the challenges and opportunities it presents," he said. "With the united commitment to progress, we believe Ware Public Schools can emerge stronger, better equipped to meet the needs of every student, and prepared to uphold the high standards our community expects and deserves."

Winslow encouraged people to share their comments, concerns or suggestions by emailing sc-comments@ware.k12.ma.us.

## Presentation from superintendent

Lovato reviewed data collected from assessments, sharing both the highlights and areas of concern for the school district, which included attendance and behavior. He also addressed concerns about special education and staffing levels.

Lovato started his presentation by sharing Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System scores from the past two years. He said that students at Stanley M. Koziol Elementary School have increased overall proficiency by 10% in English Language Arts and 6% for math.

He said there are gaps that need addressing, including special education.

"We have some things to work on...there's some areas that we need to address," he said.

Lovato said he needs to get together with teachers, families and students to solve these challenges.

Lovato said school districts also get assessed by the amount of student growth, which if it exceeds 50%, shows that gaps in education are being closed in on. He showed many areas where students exceeded 50% growth.

He said in the Middle School, there is a 9% increase in overall proficiency in science.

Lovato said one of the areas of concern is in the High School with students in grades seven and eight, which showed low student growth in ELA and math.

"We obviously need to do a number of things different within seventh and eighth grade," he said. "We have a very urgent need for seventh and eighth grade to do something quite different."

Lovato said he met with the seventh and eighth grade team the prior week and they shared ideas to address behavioral challenges which have impacted learning.

Aside from those two grade levels, Lovato said the data shows that the other grade levels require finetuning, rather than major changes.

Lovato said this past year, the school district had about 70 graduates, which is one of the highest numbers to date. He said he is very proud of the students who graduated, as several of them faced significant challenges.

"There was a lot of work being done by our teachers, our support staff, our administration on how to do things a little bit different," he said. "We have to continue thinking different."

In terms of advanced coursework, Lovato said there were no students with disabilities taking the classes.

"We all need to question ourselves, 'what are we doing?' 'why are our kids not included in these courses?'" he said.

He said districtwide, there needs to be changes in how the school district addresses behaviors seen with special education students.

Several residents spoke about the safety concerns arising from these behaviors, including hitting, destruction of property and spitting. They said these students need the proper resources in order to be successful and thrive.

Ware Teachers Association President Amber Boucher said she has discussed concerns about Individualized Education Programs not being followed

in the school district with Lovato.

"Those ed plans are still in effect and those ed plans are still being violated as we speak today," she said. "There still have been no changes to those students whose IEPs are currently being violated."

One student talked about the need for more staffing, and how teachers are not applying for the school district's open positions.

"Why would a teacher want to apply and get a job somewhere where the current teachers don't even want to work?" she asked.

Lovato said since 2020, the attrition rates haven't changed much, but he agreed that something needs to be done to address the lack of applicants for vacant positions. In terms of staff absenteeism, he said that the issue started before he began

**"Together we can navigate this period of transition; embracing both the challenges and opportunities it presents."**

— Brian Winslow,  
School Committee chair

working for the school district and that all districts are facing that same challenge.

"Absenteeism...it's a significant problem across the state," he said. "There's not a community in Massachusetts that is struggling with substitutes and there's not a community in Massachusetts that is not talking about staff attendance."

He said the school district has 26 substitutes, of which nine have yet to pick up any shifts. He said 18 substitutes are willing to work at the elementary school, 13 at the middle school and eight at the high

school.

Lovato said some of the onboarding needs to change when hiring substitutes and he needs to find out why they are less willing to work with the older

students.

Several high school students in attendance brought concerns about behavioral issues, overcrowded classrooms and lack of consistent consequences.

Former resident Doug Koczur thanked the School Committee for holding the meeting in an open forum style, and allowing anyone with concerns to voice them and get answers. He stressed the importance of having respectful conversations to hear all views.

"Change is not always easy," he said. "This can only be accomplished with cooperation, honesty, communication, all the while being cognizant of having an open mind. I think compromise is the key to success."

## Amendment to warrant

The School Committee voted to amend the warrants and hold the invoice for Clark Consulting. Winslow said the committee will review the firm and its invoice for payment at the Jan. 8 meeting.

## Time for New Year's financial resolutions

Now that the calendar has flipped, it's time for some New Year's resolutions. You could decide you're going to exercise more, lose weight, learn a new skill, reconnect with old friends — the possibilities are almost limitless. This year, why not add a few financial resolutions to your list?

Here are a few to consider:

• **Reduce your debts.** It may be easier said than done, but if you can cut down on your debt load, you'll increase your cash flow and have more money available to invest for your future. So, look for ways to lower your expenses and spending. You might find it helpful to use one of the budgeting apps available online.

• **Boost your retirement savings.** Try to put in as much as you can afford to your IRA and your 401(k) or other employer-sponsored retirement plan. If your salary goes up this year, you've got a good opportunity to increase your contributions to these retirement accounts. And once you turn 50, you can make pre-tax catch-up contributions for your 401(k) and traditional IRA. You might also want to review the investment mix within your 401(k) or similar plan to determine whether it's still providing the growth potential you need, given your risk tolerance and time horizon.

• **Build an emergency fund.** It's generally a good idea to maintain an emergency fund containing up to six months' worth of living expenses, with the money kept in a liquid, low-risk account. Without such a fund, you might be forced to dip into your long-term investments to pay for short-term needs, such as an expensive auto or home repair.

• **Keep funding your non-retirement goals.** Your traditional IRA and 401(k) are good ways to save for retirement — but you likely have other goals, too, and you'll need to save and invest for them. So, for example, if you want your children to go to college or receive some other type of post-secondary training, you might want to invest in a tax-advantaged 529 education savings plan. And if you have short-term goals, such as saving for a wedding or taking an overseas vacation, you might want to put some money away in a liquid account. For a short-term goal, you don't necessarily need to invest aggressively for growth — you just want the money to be there for you when you need it.

• **Review your estate plans.** If you haven't already created your estate plans, you may want to do so in 2025. Of course, if you're relatively young, you might not think you need to have estate plans in place just yet, but life is unpredictable, and the future is not ours to see. If you have already drawn up estate plans, you may want to review them, especially if you've recently experienced changes in your life and family situation, such as marriage, remarriage or the addition of a new child. Because estate planning can be complex, you'll want to work with a qualified legal professional.

You may not be able to tackle all these resolutions in 2025. But by addressing as many of them as you can, you may find that, by the end of the year, you have made progress toward your goals and set yourself on a positive course for all the years to come.

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National Art Honor Society at Quaboag Regional Middle High School held its annual art show.



Raianne Richards and Mark Mandeville performed during a stop of the Massachusetts Walking Tour at Lucy Stone Park in Warren this past June.



Local crafters set up during Vendor Night at Dean Park as part of the summer concert series.

# 2024 Year in Review

## WARREN from page 1

By the fall, the study was completed and the results were released to the public in a detailed, 270-page report which is both posted on the town's website, [www.warren-ma.gov](http://www.warren-ma.gov), and available in hard copy at the Shepard Municipal Building, 48 High St.

"This study took approximately a little over a year to complete," Town Administrator James Ferrera said.

Ferrera thanked everyone who was involved with the study, including the Police and Fire departments.

The town is facing a critical need for space for both the Police and Fire departments, as both have outgrown their current locations, and maintenance costs for the



Quaboag's Student Council ran a raffle table during the Small Business Craft Fair.

File Photos

aging structures continue to rise. In addition to assessing the existing facilities, Tecton Architects looked at a total of

six new locations (both town and privately owned) and looked at the square footage needs for the departments, projected over 30 years.

"We'll lay out different options for residents to consider," Ferrera said. "All of the factual information is made readily available to them to make an informed decision at annual town meeting next year."

Ferrera said Tecton Architects determined there are three different options for a public safety complex that will combine and streamline the space needs of the Police and Fire departments, while still allowing for future growth.

"We're planning for 25, 30 years down the road," he said. "We looked at all the different options."

Ferrera said all of the sites have both pros and cons, which he wants residents to be well aware of before the article goes to vote.

"The purpose of this is to have

a well-thought out study done," Ferrera said of Tecton Architects' results. "Let the public ask questions, provide constructive feedback...There's certainly a need for this."

Ferrera said the study shows the same building design on the three different locations.

"It's just the different locations that impact the cost," he said.

Ferrera said the study also showed that there is a "cost of doing nothing" as the current facilities continue to age and require more intensive maintenance and repairs.

Tecton Architects' study also looked at the values of these current facilities, factoring in both the value of the land and the structures.

Ferrera said the public safety complex will save the town on energy costs, as well as building maintenance costs.

"New construction would be

more energy efficient," he said. "We would obviously look to consolidate utility costs, insurance, by having one building. We'd have a state-of-the-art facility."

One of the sites identified in the study as a possible location for a new public safety complex is 87 and 0 Brimfield Road, just southwest of the Highway Department building. This site has a projected cost of approximately \$25.7 million.

The second site identified is located at 48 High St. and 100 Maple Avenue. This campus-style option looked at locating the public safety building adjacent to the Shepard Municipal Building.

Another site identified was a privately owned parcel that has access to Old West Warren Road and Route 67 and has the largest price tag, projected at \$29.5 million. It also provides the most room for future expansion and has good access for large emergency apparatus.

Ferrera said the study also looked at the best repayment method for taxpayers, should they vote to move forward with the construction of a new public safety complex. He said the numbers presented in the report are fixed and won't change.

"The 25-year repayment schedule would be best for the town to save on interest," Ferrera said.

Using the 25-year repayment plan with an estimated interest rate of 3.75% for a \$25 million project, the average single family home (valued at \$263,443) property owner would see a \$705 per year increase in their taxes. This breaks down to \$58.75 a month or \$1.93 a day.

For the \$30 million project with the same estimated interest rate, the average single family home property owner would see an annual increase of \$850, or \$70.83 a month or \$2.33 a day.

Ferrera said payment of the project would be determined by the passing of a debt exclusion question on a town meeting warrant.

"If approved at annual town meeting, it would go out to bid," he said.

Ferrera said public information sessions with representatives from Tecton Architects will be held starting in the new year, helping to generate discussion and feedback about the proposed public safety complex prior to the 2025 annual town meeting.

He said if a vote passes favorably, the project could be completed in 16 months with construction possibly starting in the spring of 2026.

## Master Plan update

The town received \$75,000 from the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities as part of the One Stop for Growth applications to update its Master Plan.

Representatives from the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission attended a Board of Selectmen's meeting in February for the kick-off of the Master Plan update process.

Christopher Dunphy of CMRPC has been working with the town for over 20 years to advance Community Development Block Grant projects.

"We've done a lot of work over the years replacing water lines, streets, sidewalks, throughout the village centers of Warren and West Warren," he said. "What's happening right now is a lot of synergy, and simultaneously we've got this Master Plan happening."

Dunphy said earlier that day the town was awarded a grant to conduct an accessibility needs study to evaluate public spaces in town. The study will determine what is accessible, what's not, and how to bring them into compliance.

He said the town has recently finished its Open Space and Recreation Plan and a study is occurring at the Wrights Mill complex.

"The energy and the enthusiasm I see is amazing. Hopefully we're

Please see **WARREN**, page 7



Chris Dunphy of Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission, right, alongside Richard Eichacker reviewed a map of the Town Common with residents who shared input on future plans.

## WARE from page 3

always positive and smiling. "Everybody should have a Roxanne," Zienowicz said.

### New Selectboard members

Selectboard members Keith Kruckas and Caitlin McCarthy both opted not to seek re-election at the annual town election this past April.

"I appreciate all the taxpayers and everything that they've done," Kruckas said. "I know people don't agree with everything I say or do, but I've been 100% honest and have never worked on conspiracy theories...it's all facts and truth and we're going to find out some more soon."

McCarthy said she "jumped in with two feet" when she ran for Selectboard three years ago, and had a lot of people help her along the way to learn her role.

"I'll be back at some point in time," she said, and will continue to sit on committees and be involved with the community.

The annual town election saw some newcomers securing seats on the Selectboard. Earning the majority of votes cast for two three-year terms were Terrance W. Smith and John A. Desmond.

### Mass Central Rail Trail

A dozen cyclists set off from Northampton in September, traveling across the commonwealth using segments of the Mass Central Rail Trail and roadways.

The cyclists, who are ambassadors for the rail trail, made stops at key communities along the length of the 104-mile trail which runs from Northampton into Boston, with the hope of spreading awareness for the work that still needs to be done to complete the trail along the former railroad corridor.



Members of the Hoisington family are shown under the scoreboard that was dedicated to the late Bobby Hoisington, who was known for his contributions to the Ware basketball community.

The second stop of this three-day event was at Greenville Park where the ambassadors met with town and state officials, as well as community members.

Craig Della Penna, volunteer coordinator for the Mass Central Rail Trail and president of the Norwottuck Network, said that Ware is a "pretty special place."

Della Penna said that Ware serves as a gateway town between two of the commonwealth's major

cities, and that having the rail trail, a "linear park," was important to both the residents of the town, and for increasing and promoting tourism.

"The smaller towns that were robust during the industrial times have fallen on hard times and are coming back," he said.

Helping create these linear parks is the East Quabbin Land Trust, a Hardwick-based land trust that has been instrumental in devel-

oping the Mass Central Rail Trail through the towns of Hardwick, New Braintree and Ware.

The East Quabbin Land Trust is working with the town to secure grant funding to purchase a parcel of land adjacent to Greenville Park in order to further expand the rail trail.

East Quabbin Land Trust's Executive Director Cynthia Henshaw also announced that additional mileage will be added to the rail trail in New Braintree with the recent acquisition of the Tanner-Hiller Airport property for the Department of Fish and Game.

"This is amazing," Della Penna said of the Mass Central Rail Trail's growth. "Nowhere else in the United States do you see this."

Also present at Greenville Park were state Sen. Peter Durant and

Director of Rural Affairs Anne Gobi.

Durant credited those supporting the rail trail for their passion and for getting people "fired up," about the project. Gobi said the ambassadors and advocates were making a big difference and helping to get people "singing the same song."

"It will happen," Gobi said about the completion of the Mass Central Rail Trail.

At the town's special town meeting in November, voters approved the purchase of a 39.2 acre parcel of land known as the Pelski Lot, located alongside and at the end of Walter Drive.

The land will be used to continue the Mass Central Rail Trail into Greenville Park, and increase the park's acreage.



Alessia, age 2, explores the aerial lift with her father, Jhan, and Lieutenant David Gambino at Ware Fire Department's annual open house.



Students and staff celebrated the grand re-opening of Café 171 (formerly known as the LEAP Café) at Ware Junior/Senior High School in September.

# 2024 Year in Review



Students in the certified nursing assistant program at Quaboag Regional Middle High School are shown with teacher Joanne Dulak, the school nurse.

**WARREN** from page 6  
going to bring all these things together," Dumphy said.  
The town's last Master Plan was from 2006 and it needs to be updated.

CMRPC Executive Director Janet Pierce said a One-Stop for Growth grant has allowed the town to update its Master Plan, and that she is looking forward to moving through this process.  
CMRPC's Community Development Planner Sarah O'Brien is project lead, and will work closely with the town, as well as residents.

O'Brien explained that a master plan involves everything a town does, its services and its facilities, along with housing, economic development, transportation, open space and recreation, natural and cultural resources and land use.

She said to start the process, CMRPC will engage the community for visioning sessions.

"Really building community power to work with the town, this process itself will be helpful to kind of push that and be entryway for residents to get involved in the processes," she said. "Once you have a master plan, we see they're super beneficial for how towns interact with residents and vice versa, especially with transparency, with making decisions."

Having an updated master plan also helps towns to secure grants.

O'Brien said the Master Plan will take about a year and a half to complete. The first phase will run now through May 2025, funded by the One-Stop for Growth grant and a small town match.

This phase involves the completion of half of the chapters, all of the community development and background data analysis.

The second phase of the Master

Plan development is not currently funded, but a grant is written and prepared for the spring through the Department of Energy and Environmental Affairs.

O'Brien said CMRPC will be using the Community Development Advisory Committee meetings every month to involve the community and talk about developing the Master Plan.

"It's very important to get as many voices as we can, from every single neighborhood in Warren," she said.

Drafts of Master Plan chapters will be available to residents in the summer of 2025, prior to finalization. The Board of Selectmen will then vote to accept the completed Master Plan in October of 2025.

**Capital Planning Committee**  
A Capital Planning Committee was formed in January, to work in an organized and thoughtful process with other departments in town and to be sure that money is spent appropriately.

"Capital plans are the greatest impact for the greatest number of residents," Ferrera said.  
The Capital Planning Committee wants to identify the main needs of a capital plan for the town and is looking into creating a fiscal year 2025 budget and a timeline for the budget.

The Capital Planning Committee will work coherently with other town departments and hear what requests they may ask for in the near future. For example, a new police cruiser, firetruck and dump truck.

**Regional agreement**  
Superintendent of Schools Stephen Duff gave an update on the Quaboag Regional School District's regionalization feasibility



The Warren Community Elementary School PTO hosted a block party to welcome new principal Eugene Rich (center). Rich is shown alongside Superintendent Stephen Duff and Quaboag Regional Middle High School Guidance Counselor Eric Urban.

study to include the town of North Brookfield.

The study was conducted by the Massachusetts Association of Regional Schools. The Regional Agreement Amendment Committee was formed and comprised of both district's school committees, a selectman from each town, and parents.

The next step is getting approval from DESE, then each school committee will vote on whether or not to continue moving forward. Duff said both committees need to vote in favor before it goes to a town meeting vote.

Duff said all three towns would need to vote in favor of regionalizing if the vote goes to town meeting. Duff said he didn't expect the vote to reach town meeting in the near future.

In November, School Committee Chair Andrew Schwenker said the Regional Agreement Amendment Committee distributed a draft of the updated agreement to both the Quaboag Regional School Committee and the North Brookfield School Committee for review and discussion.

If both school committees vote to accept the draft, it would then go before each town at town meeting.

A motion was made at the meeting to not move forward with the draft agreement. The motion passed with six in favor, three opposed and two abstained.

Committee members cited concerns about the financial risk of adding another town to the school district and being responsible for more buildings. Schwenker said the financial feasibility study conducted several years ago to determine any costs benefits for both districts was "inconclusive."

**Wright's Mill**  
The opening meeting of the Wright's Mill Recovery Master Plan was held at the Senior Center in September.

The town has contracted with Weston & Sampson, Gamble Associates and Jeanne Boyle to develop a project plan for the future of the Wright's Mill

Complex in West Warren. Funded by the Economic Development Administration, the plan will offer suggested development possibilities for the site to transform the historic Wright's Mill into a vibrant economic hub.

"There's a potential economic development piece to the town," Ferrera stated.  
With this meeting, Ferrera believes bringing in residents can help engage and attract some opportunities and shared ideas as to what the Wright's Mill complex could become in the future.

There were four stations set throughout the senior center covering some topics involving the Wright's Mill. The purpose is to identify opportunities for job creation, business attraction and infrastructure.

This gathering was the first of two public meetings that will take place during this study process to identify the best future for the Wright's Mill complex. Gamble will collect all the input that was given during this initial public meeting and will come up with the best redevelopment concepts.

From this initial meeting, the project team will develop three hypothetical development scenarios to test different uses and required infrastructural upgrades. These scenarios will be informed by market studies and will consider the feasibility of various uses like retail, residential, and office spaces.

These project materials will be used to create both a media and marketing plan, as well as a final project plan that will identify crucial next steps to make the redevelopment a reality. A final plan will be completed and presented in May of 2025.

The next meeting will take place sometime in February of 2025. There is an online survey at [tinyurl.com/wrightsmillsurvey](http://tinyurl.com/wrightsmillsurvey) for residents to take and provide feedback about the Wright's Mill Master Recovery Plan.

To get more involved or learn more about the master recovery plan, visit [www.wrightsmillmasterplan.com/get-involved](http://www.wrightsmillmasterplan.com/get-involved).

## HARDWICK: A YEAR IN REVIEW



Q-Drug welcomed former NBA player Chris Herren to Quabbin Regional High School last March to talk to students and families about substance use and addiction.

**HARDWICK** from page 1

The town also welcomed some new faces in its leadership, with the appointment of Town Administrator Justine Caggiano; Fire Chief Joshua Pease; Deputy Fire Chief Nicholas Gaumont and Select Board Clerk William Tinker.

### Landfill reopening/ expansion proposal

During a Feb. 21 Zoom meeting, the Select Board voted to forward a proposal to change existing zoning bylaws received from Casella Waste Systems, Inc. to the Planning Board.

Casella's proposal would require voters to act on three separate articles at a town meeting.  
Casella's Vice President Brian Oliver accompanied his proposal to the Select Board with draft articles, and an explanation of Casella's request.

"The reopening and expansion of the Hardwick Landfill would provide significant benefits to the Town of Hardwick," Oliver stated in the proposal. "We expect that a Host Community Agreement between Hardwick and Casella would provide substantial revenue to the town. Casella would also continue to provide revenue to the Gilbertville Wastewater Treatment Facility for leachate treatment and disposal...in order to proceed with the landfill project Casella seeks support from the town in the form of certain Town Meeting

votes."

On April 9, about 300 residents from Hardwick and surrounding towns attended a public hearing hosted by the Planning Board to discuss proposed zoning amendments.

These amendments were submitted by Casella Waste Systems for the purpose of reopening and expanding the solid waste landfill on Patril Hollow Road.

Oliver said his company was approached by Hardwick brothers Dan Roach and Darryl Roach about reopening the landfill and combining it with their adjacent gravel pit.

"We feel there's significant need," Oliver said of reopening the landfill.

He said Casella would only move forward with the project if they had support from the community.

Oliver said the Host Community Agreement drafted by Casella offers \$6 per ton tipped, or \$2.1 million a year. He said the HCA will remain in effect for the life of the landfill.

Previously, Casella had predicted about a 20 year lifespan, but due to the discovery of ledge, they believe it will be less than that. Oliver said Casella expects the landfill to be open for about 13 years.

Joining Oliver was Professional Engineer Steve

Please see **HARDWICK**, page 8



David Gamble of Gamble Associates describes some of the potential uses of the buildings at Wright's Mill



The Grandinetti family enjoyed the annual Easter egg hunt held on the town common this past April.

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# 2024 Year in Review

**HARDWICK** from page 7

Wright, who explained the need for zoning amendments in order for the project to move forward. This included re-zoning certain parcels of land on Patrill Hollow Road from Agricultural Residential (AR-60) to Industrial (I-40); adding language to the schedule of land intensity regulations for buildings, structures and uses (Zoning Bylaws, Section 2.3.2); and adding solid waste landfilling as an allowed use in the Industrial District.

The proposed landfill cover 48 acres, but a total of 146 acres (62 existing and 84 abutting) would need to be rezoned as Industrial (I-40), which was one of the zoning amendments brought forward by Casella.

Other zoning amendments



Students at Hardwick Elementary School created a field of flags in front of their school to recognize Memorial Day.

include increasing the 670 foot limit to 850 feet. Oliver said the final capped elevation would be 800 feet above Mean Sea Level, or 300 feet above ground level.

A portion of Patrill Hollow Road would also need to be discon-

tinued and reconfigured.

Many residents weighed in, making arguments both for and against the proposal. Owen Wright who has spent all 23 years of his life in Hardwick, spoke against the landfill.

"We really have something special here," he said. "We appreciate that every single day."

Following the closing of the public hearing, the board members voted unanimously against recommending the proposed zoning changes.

**New Town Administrator**

In April, Town Administrator Nicole Parker announced that she had accepted a job in Southwick and would be leaving her position in Hardwick, which she had held since 2021.

"I love the town," Parker said. "I think we did a lot of good work here...I really want to thank you for really giving me the opportunity three years ago."

After completing the final round of interviews with two candidates, the Select Board made the decision to offer the Town Administrator position to Justine Caggiano at its May 22 meeting.

Caggiano has previous municipal experience working as the Human Resources Director in Ware and the Assistant Town Administrator in Leicester.

During the final interview held the day before, Caggiano said finances would be the biggest challenge facing the town. She said as Town Administrator, she would look through the town's budget line by line looking for potential savings.



The Hardwick Farmers Co-Op celebrated its 110th anniversary. Manager Steve Gould, left, is shown alongside former Hardwick Farmers Co-Op manager Bob Bottomley.

"If I can bring any of my background and experience, and hopefully save the town a little bit of money, I will," Caggiano said.

Caggiano said she would welcome a lot of input from the Select Board and Finance Committee in creating the budget, especially as she learns more about the town.

"I'd be working very closely with the Finance Committee and making sure that it's in the best interest of the town," she said.

Caggiano said she will work to make the town more efficient and ensure that information is easily available for residents. She also wants to become involved in the community.

"My goal is to make an impact; it's not to change Hardwick," she said.

**New Fire Chief and Deputy Fire Chief**

The town welcomed new Fire Chief Joshua Pease to the position at the start of the new year, following the retirement of longtime Fire Chief Raymond Walker at the end of December.

Pease had previously served the department as Deputy Fire Chief, which was then filled by Nicholas Gaumond.

**Land trust celebrates 30 years**

Since 2012, the East Quabbin Land Trust has started each year with a New Year's Day group walk along the Mass Central Rail Trail, and this year was not different.

The walk serves to renew the organization's dedication and commitment to protecting open space.

In celebration of its 30th year, EQLT prepared for a year of events to celebrate this momentous milestone, including a Gala Dinner and Auction on April 20.

"2024 is a special year for us," Executive Director Cynthia Henshaw said.

EQLT has a lot to celebrate, including continued efforts to expand and improve the Mass Central Rail Trail, with segments from New Braintree to Wheelwright, New Braintree to Creamery Road in Gilbertville, Ware River Park in Gilbertville, near the Ware-Hardwick Covered Bridge, as well as Upper Church Street in Ware.

Henshaw credited volunteers with helping to replace timbers on the decking of the lattice truss and pony truss bridges along the Mass Central Rail Trail.

Please see **HARDWICK**, page 11



The Pumpkin Heads were one of the road biking clubs that participated in the East Quabbin Land Trust's inaugural Hills of East Quabbin Ride held June 22. Shown from left are Randy Thomas of Belchertown, Jen Ayre of Belchertown, Marcy Thomas of Belchertown, Karen Davis of Palmer, Lloyd Ortman of Belchertown, Jim Davis of Palmer, Melinda Rigney of Belchertown, Brad Hoffman of East Longmeadow, Moe Esposito of Lakewood Ranch, Florida and David Casey of South Hadley.



CJ Podkowka made a cut during the chainsaw portion of the Lumberjack Contest at the annual Hardwick Community Fair.



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# SPORTS

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## First-quarter shutout paces Indians win

WARE – The Ware High School boys basketball team cruised to a 21-0 lead after one quarter, and rode that momentum all the way to a 79-37 win over Renaissance School on Dec. 19, Ware’s final action before the Christmas holiday. In the win, Jack Gaudreau scored 17 points, while Brady Guimond finished with 16 points. Owen McKeever had 14 points. In all, 10 different players scored points for Ware, which is a perfect 4-0 this season.

Turley photos by Jack Cascio WNEAPsmug.com



Brodie Koczur drives to the basket as he blows by the defender.



Ben Torres takes control as he dismisses the defense with this jumper.



Owen McKeever goes in for a layup.



Brady Guimond takes control at the side line as he drives to the paint.



Alex Orszulak and Jack Gaudreau take ball control with this double team.



Turley photos by Gregory A. Scibelli

Mia Ducos attempts to get around an opponent.

## Panthers out to 3-2 start

BARRE – The Quabbin Regional High School girls basketball team is battling to open the regular season. The Panthers have been in tough games to start out the regular season, but are 3-2 heading into 2025. After winning their first two games, Quabbin fell to Clinton and Maynard. They rebounded with a win on Saturday, Dec. 28 against South Lancaster in the Gardner Holiday Tournament. They were scheduled to play in the finals of the tournament on Dec. 30. Quabbin returns to action on Jan. 3 at Lunenburg.



Lianna Leger keeps play moving around the perimeter.



Abby Rogowski gets set for a three-point attempt.



Brooke Austin hustles down the court.

## Hurricanes hold off Minnechaug

By Tim Peterson Sports Correspondent

SPRINGFIELD—The first line of the Amherst hockey team is made up of freshman Nathan Desbien, junior Ethan Mooney, and junior Benjamin Remensnyder.

Desbien and Mooney, who were teammates on a couple of youth hockey teams, helped the Hurricanes get into the win column for the first time this season against Minnechaug Regional.

Desbien netted Amherst’s first two goals before Mooney scored what turned out to be the game winning goal six minutes into the second period.

The Hurricanes, who held a one goal lead at the end of the second period, managed to keep the Falcons off the scoreboard for the final 15 minutes of the non-conference match before celebrating a 3-2 victory at the MassMutual Center in Springfield on Dec. 27.

“This is a very good win for us,” said Mooney, who was named as an assistant captain prior to the start of the regular season. “We played a little more physically than they did, and we were able to come out on top. It was also very cool to have the opportunity to play a hockey game in this building for the first time.”

Please see **HOCKEY**, page 11



Ava Swist gets ready to grapple.



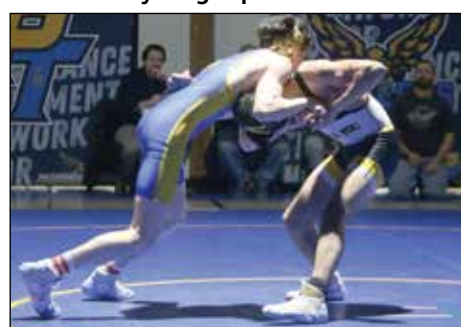
Jaiden Ambrose wrestles at the heavyweight position.

## Pioneers wrestle past Smith Voke

PALMER – In their first dual meet of the season, Pathfinder defeated Smith Voke 48-18. The Pioneers participated in a tournament at Monument Mountain High School on Dec. 27. Coming up, the Pioneers will host Belchertown Jan. 8 at 7 p.m.



Gavin Sawabi, of Ware, starts his match at 144 pounds.



Turley photos by David Henry www.sweetdogphotos.com Logan Hayes attempts a takedown.



Max Alicngena tries to avoid being tripped up.



Zander Auffrey keeps the leverage at 138 pounds.



The Quabbin defense swarms around the Maynard ball carrier.



Bella Smtih is pressured by the defense.

## Longtime referee Lavoie wins MIAA award

LUDLOW – Last month, longtime referee Joe Lavoie was recognized as the MIAA Football Official of the Year. According to information provided, Lavoie joined the Western Mass Football Officials Association (WMFOA) in 1974 (51 years) as a junior at AIC in Springfield, MA.

Lavoie was a 3-year starter for Milt Piepul’s 8-1 (‘75) AIC Yellowjackets. He was selected All-New England Honorable Mention by the AP and Boston Herald (‘75), and selected to the ECAC team of the week versus

Northeastern University.

After college, Lavoie taught and coached football in Ludlow for Steve Marino and subsequently in Agawam for Roger LeClerc, before joining private industry as a computer systems programmer/analyst. Retired from MassMutual with 30-plus years of service.



Joe Lavoie

Please see **LAVOIE**, page 10

# sports

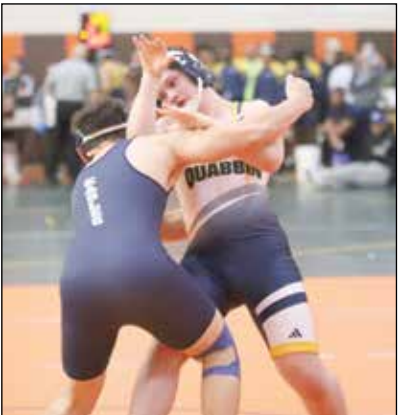
## Panthers have good showing at tourney

AGAWAM – The Phil Tomkiel Holiday Tournament is a mainstay in Western Mass. wrestling as well as Agawam High School's yearly schedule. Named after Agawam's legendary former wrestling coach, the tournament tradition continues, and has evolved into including a girls wrestling in the past few years. Agawam, with 92 points, captured the girls tournament win. The Brownies, as a whole, took second place in the main tournament, with 190.5 points. Quabbin Regional finished with 56 points and a runner-up in Davis Burch at 98 pounds. Granby finished eighth with 78.5 points. Chicopee had 49.5 points and finished 15th.



Brent Benoit goes for the pin.

Turley photos by Gregory A. Scibelli



Alex Fors goes for a takedown.



Desmin Neak tries to avoid a takedown.



Abe Brown tries to turn his opponent over.



Kailynn Schuster gets the advantage.



Andie St. Clair locks up in an early round match.

### LAVOIE from page 9

He was a 1971 graduate of Ludlow High School playing football for Chick Patullo and baseball for Bill Mullins.

In high school, he was selected All-Suburban League and All-Western-Mass as a tri-captain for Chick Patullo, Jim Cavallo, Dave Dzuira, and Joe Andreis, who instilled the love of football, hard work, and fair play into their teams.

As an official, he was elected president of the WMFOA in 1993, and started and taught a first, second, third-year official's training class, and game sign-in requirement for new officials to attend pre-games and work the chains in varsity games. That process is still in effect today. In 1994, amended the training classes to have a separate class for first-year officials and started instructing the second and third-year officials' class, and still instruct that class today.

Among his many accomplishments, he officiated numerous MIAA playoff and championship games around the state and at Gillette Stadium. He joined the Western Mass Basketball Officials Association in 1980, was elected



Referee Joe Lavoie (center) officiates with his crew on a rainy Thanksgiving morning at Agawam High School this year.

Turley photo by Gregory A. Scibelli

board President in 2013, subsequently elected sec-treasurer from 2015-2017. He still officiates basketball games.

Lavoie earned a CAGS from Springfield College, an MS in management from RPI Hartford, and an MBA from Western New England College. He has taught business and computer systems courses at HCC for over 25 years.

Lavoie has been married to high school sweetheart, Edna (Robertson) Lavoie, for over 45 years, and has three wonderful sons. Two sons live and work in Boston, and one son lives in Longmeadow and is an attorney in Springfield.

## Isles outlast T-Birds in 7-5 track meet

SPRINGFIELD — The Springfield Thunderbirds (13-13-2-1) could not escape a furious push by the Bridgeport Islanders (7-19-2-2) in a high-flying 7-5 contest on Saturday night inside the MassMutual Center.

The Islanders tried to spoil the T-Birds debut for rookie netminder Will Cranley when Liam Foudy opened the scoring on a rebound to the goaltender's right at 7:36.

Springfield would be tested after the Islanders went to a power play at the 13:04 mark, but captain Matthew Peca took matters into his own hands to change the tide. After skating out of his zone with possession, he challenged a forward wide on the left side before surprising Henrik Tikkanen with a short-side snapper to tie the score, 1-1, on Springfield's second shorthanded tally of the season. Peca's tally was his team-leading 12th of the campaign and second in as many nights.

Peca was in the middle of things again just 5:04 later, weaving into the offensive end to create a 2-on-1 outnumbered attack. This time, Peca played the role of playmaker, laying a perfect pass to the blade of Matt Luff in the right circle. With no salvaged movement, Luff one-timed it past a sliding Tikkanen, giving Springfield the 2-1 lead with just 1:26 left in the frame. Peca's assist was his 100th as a member of the T-Birds, making him the first player in club history to hit the 100-assist plateau.

The Islanders gave a glimpse of what was to follow in the middle period when Tyce Thompson one-timed a slapper off the post and off Cranley to tie the game, 2-2, at 3:15 of the second period, as the T-Birds were scrambling to get back into position.

The T-Birds' special teams had the next notable moment just 2:09 later, as Marcus Sylvegard beautifully spotted Luff on a pass

from the left corner to the top of the crease, allowing the veteran winger a tap-in for his second of the night to restore the Springfield lead, 3-2, at 5:24.

After a rare stretch of scoreless hockey on this evening, the Islanders found their way to a tie score again when Matt Maggio surprised Cranley with a quick wrist from the left circle off a setup from Grant Hutton, evening the game, 3-3, at 14:20.

Before the T-Birds could escape the onslaught, the Islanders got their second lead of the night at 19:06, when a poor Springfield line change set up a 3-on-2 for Bridgeport. Gemel Smith neatly left a puck for Foudy near the crease, and the veteran winger had an open net for his second of the night and a 4-3 Islanders lead after 40 minutes.

Midway through what had been a quiet third period, the T-Birds power play connected for a second time as Sylvegard deflected an attempt from Aleksanteri Kaskimaki over Tikkanen's shoulder, and the game was tied again, 4-4, at 10:04 of the third.

Despite their scrappiness to get back even, the T-Birds could not salvage a point on this night, and Maggio capped his four-point night with a corner-picking wrist at 16:20, which gave Bridgeport a 5-4 lead. Cole Bardreau added an empty-net tally at 18:45 to push the lead to 6-4.

That Bardreau tally proved pivotal when Hunter Skinner found the net from the right side with 25 seconds to play, trimming the margin back to 6-5. Ultimately, however, the T-Birds ran out of time, and with the clock about to expire, Marc Gatcomb flung a clearing effort into the empty cage to round out the scoring. Cranley finished his T-Birds debut with 35 saves, while Tikkanen escaped with his first win in six tries with 31 stops.

## Coaching classes available

Coaches hired after Aug. 1, 1998 are required to take a coaching course to be eligible to coach high school sports in Massachusetts.

According to the Pioneer Valley Interscholastic Athletic Association, all coaches hired prior to Aug. 1, 1998 are exempt from taking the Fundamentals of Coaching Course. Coaches hired after that and before July 1, 2005 must have completed the NFHS Fundamentals of Coaching Course with the exception of Certified MA teachers.

All coaches (stipend or volunteer) first serving as an interscholastic coach after July 1, 2005 must complete the NFHS Fundamentals of Coaching Course, and an approved Sports First Aid course.

The NFHS Fundamentals of Coaching Course requirement must be met through attending an MIAA sponsored Fundamentals of Coaching Class with MIAA Certified Instructors. Must be completed and passed prior to coaching a second year.

The NFHS Sports First Aid may be met by completing on-line courses with the NFHS www.nfhslearn.com. Must be passed prior to coaching a third year.

Additional requirements for all coaches:

Massachusetts requires coaches to be certified in CPR per Section 1, Section 47A of chapter 71 of the General Laws. Additionally, AED training is required and will most likely be done in conjunction with the existing mandated CPR training.

All MIAA member school coaches (stipend or volunteer) are required to take annually the on-line National Federation Concussion Course, or other MA Department of Public Health recognized education program, prior to the start of their season. Rugby Coaches must see Rule 76.2 for additional coaches' education information.

Any questions, please call Donna Harrington at 508-541-9804 or email dharrington@miaa.net.

Fundamentals of coaching classes are being offered on Wednesday, Jan. 29, 2025 from 4 to 8 p.m. and Saturday, Feb. 8, 2025 from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Classes are open until capacity is reached and then a waiting list is established. There are online components to the course once the classroom portion is completed

## Railers fall to Thunder in first half home finale

WORCESTER – The Railers lost 7-3 loss to the Adirondack Thunder on Sunday afternoon to close out the first half of the 2024-25 home schedule.

Worcester went into the second period with the scored tied, 1-1. The Railers then allowed four goals in a little less than seven minutes starting at 3:53 and their afternoon was over.

Coach Nick Tuzzolino refused to place the blame for the defeat on Bullion's shoulders when asked if it was his fault.

"I would never say that in that light," Tuzzolino said. "We've got to be good in front of him and could have been better. Could have blocked a couple of those shots. I'm sure he has his own thoughts on those goals but we're a team."

Worcester got two goals from Jordan Kaplan and one from Griffin Loughlan. Anthony Repaci assisted on all three goals. Repaci's historic season continues unabated. He extended his points streak to seven straight games. He is 3-10-13 during the streak.

The game was his 193rd for Worcester, passing Barry Almeida as the all-time franchise leader in that category. The assists give him 90 in a Worcester uniform, tied with Almeida on that list. They are tied for fourth among all Worcester pro players with Tom Cavanagh of the Sharks next at 92.

The Railers were 2 for 5 on the power play and are among the league leaders in that category. They have at least one power play goal in seven straight games. That ties a team record set in February of 2022.

"That's probably the most frustrating thing," Tuzzolino said. "It's all those little pieces. We just have to find the right piece."

Loughran gave Worcester an early lead at just 2:36 of the first period. Repaci found his linemate all alone at the bottom of the left circle and Loughran made no mistake burying a 15-footer.

It was 1-1 after 20 minutes, then the Railers hit an iceberg.

"I think we got confidence early," Tuzzolino said, "then some of those goals they scored killed our confidence, and confidence is the easiest thing to lose and the hardest to get back."

Ryan Francis was 2-3-5 to pace the Adirondack offense. Josh Filmon, Ryan Wheeler, Alex Young, Grant Loven and Dylan Wendt had the other Thunder goals.



### RAIL from page 5

This was countered by Blake Lamothe, the owner of Steaming Tender, who argued at the meeting that another proposal could fit in the space provided by the restaurant and would be a better use of the town's assets.

"News stations are categorizing it a Category Four with Amtrak, which means they want to build these big long platforms," Lamothe said. "We could have gone under Category Two or Three, which would allow us to use the existing structure for the station stop."

Another concern Lamothe voiced was for the central corridor passage coalition. He said that combining a North/South line with the East/West station would allow passenger service up to Montreal, and would trigger growth and overnight stays in the center of town.

"By managing assets, what you can do is put a couple million dollars into an existing station

and develop a North/South line along with the East/West line and take the money to put into town to upgrade parking lots, infrastructure, sidewalks, and the stuff we need to get good, healthy growth downtown again," Lamothe said.

"The amount of people in town who are going to take the train are minimal," Lamothe said. "So you've got to create economic growth here."

Koziol agreed with Lamothe that a station far from the town center would not be ideal for economic growth, and mentioned it as a focus for the project.

"The general sentiment is that having the meeting station as close to downtown is desirable, we've heard that repeated several times through multiple mediums," Koziol said.

This project is currently ongoing, with the first route currently in the works. Koziol said that the team is going to use the feedback its received to hone in on a site that

is both feasible to MassDOT and supported by the community, at which point the project team will be able to work on a conceptual design for the station.

"Along the way, there will be supportive planning activities to plan for things like various mobility options – like a bus service that can serve the station to bring additional passengers," Koziol said. "We'll be looking at environmental constraints and preparing ourselves to go after federal funds. We're really not getting involved in those quite yet, but setting the stage in background data analysis."

An informal meeting with the public concerning the station is scheduled for Monday, Jan. 27, from 6-8 p.m. You can continue to send your feedback to MassDOT by sending an email to Andrew.M.Koziol@dot.state.ma.us.

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# 2024 Year in Review

## HARDWICK from page 8

The volunteers "put in a huge amount of effort to make the bridge safe," Henshaw said.

Volunteers and others also helped to spread stone dust along a newly cleared section of Mass Central Rail Trail in Wheelwright, giving way to a stunning view of the Ware River and the Wheelwright dam.

## Ware River Park mural

With over 100 miles of a historic rail corridor being utilized for the Mass Central Rail Trail, Holden artist Margaret McCandless started a mural on one of the newer segments of the trail, which starts in Gilbertville near New Furnace Landing, and spans to a scenic lookout at Ware River Park on Lower Road.

McCandless has begun the process of transforming a fence at the Gilbertville trailhead, using this blank canvas as an opportunity to celebrate the town, its history, and its natural beauty. The fence was installed through the use of a Department of Conservation and Recreation grant received by the town.

"The decades have shown that conservation land strengthens a town's economy," McCandless said. "My nature and history murals are a way I can help children grow up



Worcester County District Attorney Joseph D. Early Jr. recognized eight people with the District Attorney's Team Excellence and Merit Award on Sept. 23 in New Braintree. Shown from left are Police Officer Patrick Almstrom, Firefighter Louie Gaumont, Deputy Chief Nicholas Gaumont, Police Chief James Aytotte, Diane Kmiec, Mark Kmiec, Dispatcher Corrine Snow, Early, Chief Paramedic Daniel McCall, Dispatcher Charles McCoy, state Rep. Donnie Berthiaume and state Sen. Peter Durant.

appreciating preservation."

Prior to starting the Gilbertville mural, McCandless worked with the East Quabbin Land Trust to create a mural on the Church Street section of trail in Ware. She has also painted murals on two tunnels along the trail in Rutland, one at the comfort station at Tully Lake Campground and another at the Tidepool Bookshop (which is owned by former Hardwick residents Jo and Huck Truesdell).

This mural looks at Hardwick's history through the lens of the four seasons, starting with spring and moving to winter as you travel along the trail.

In spring, an arrowhead-shaped painting portrays life before European settlers arrived on Nipmuc land. Shifting into summer, the painting now morphs into a shape of a cow and highlights the town's farming period of the 1830s.

Fall brings the rise of industry, shaped after the iconic Gilbert Manufacturing Company's brick mill that still stands today.

This painting will feature other aspects of the landscape that still make up the fabric of the village, including the Stone Church Cultural Center and the Ware-Hardwick Covered Bridge. It will also have trains, giving a nod to the once vibrant transportation which laid the pathway for the Mass Central Rail Trail.

The winter season looks at the town as it is today, drawing its inspiration from the recently restored gazebo at New Furnace Landing.

McCandless said the mural will be filled with depictions of native wildlife and plants, helping people of all ages learn more about their community.

Adding art to the Mass Central

Rail Trail "encourages people to keep looking forward," as they explore, McCandless said.

"It also keeps children visually interested," she said. "It's easier for parents...having a child say, 'let's walk as far as the salamander.'"

The Gilbertville section of trail, including Ware River Park and the newly restored gazebo at New Furnace Landing, were part of multiyear project led by members of the town's Conservation Commission, the East Quabbin Land Trust, and many volunteers. The project also included two launch points for paddlers along the river's Blue Trail.

Conservation Commission member Rebecca Bottomley joined McCandless in working on the mural last Thursday.

"You just look at this and it you're going to smile," Bottomley said of the mural.

As a resident walked by the mural on his way to work, both McCandless and Bottomley invited him to pick up a paintbrush, and make his own mark on the project, which he gladly did.

McCandless and Bottomley invite people to come see the progress of the mural and have the opportunity to be part of it. McCandless said she will be working on the mural most days, weather permitting, until it is completed.

Access to the Mass Central Rail Trail is located on Route 32 in Gilbertville, across from the Hardwick House of Pizza and parking is available near the gazebo at New Furnace Landing.

This program is funded in part by a grant from the Hardwick-New Braintree Cultural Council, a local agency which is supported by the Mass Cultural Council, a state agency.

## New firetruck

A total of 89 voters cast votes at the town's special town meeting held at Hardwick Elementary School.

Moderator Ryan J. Witkos called the meeting to order and voters spent just under an hour discussing the two articles on the warrant, both of which passed.

A moment of silence was held to honor the recent passing of Hardwick historian Emily Bancroft, Chair of the Historical Commission and past president of the Hardwick Historical Society.

Article 1 asked voters to raise and appropriate, transfer from available funds, or borrow a sum of money to fund the purchase and equipping a new fire pumper truck for the use of the Fire Department, including the payment of all costs incidental and related thereto provided that this appropriation shall be contingent on the passage of a Proposition 2½ debt exclusion ballot question; or to take any other action relative thereto.

The article, which required a two-thirds majority, passed by a vote of 71-7 to borrow the sum of \$860,000 to pay for the costs of purchasing and equipping a new fire pumper truck, including the payment of all costs incidental and related thereto.

No amounts shall be borrowed or expended pursuant to this vote unless the town shall have voted to exempt the repayment of any borrowing authorized by this vote from the property tax levy imitations of Proposition 2½.

A special election to vote on the debt exclusion for the purchase of a new firetruck will be held on Saturday, Jan. 18, with polling hours from noon-6 p.m. at Hardwick Elementary School, 76 School House Drive, Gilbertville.



The Department Conservation and Recreation held a ribbon cutting ceremony at the newly rehabilitated access road at Quabbin Reservoir's Gate 43.



This Ford Crown Victoria sends up a plume of smoke during the 4th annual First Alarm fundraiser to benefit the Hardwick Fire Association held in October.



Artist Margaret McCandless describes the focus of the mural being painted along a fence on the Gilbertville section of the Mass Central Rail Trail.

## HOCKEY from page 9

The only high school hockey game scheduled to be played at the MassMutual Center this winter was organized by Joe Manning, who works for the Springfield Thunderbirds.

Manning graduated from Minnechaug Regional in 2020 and was a four-year member of the Falcons hockey team, which is coached by Kyle Bousquet. One of Manning's youth hockey coaches was Amherst hockey coach Michael Rousseau, who's also a longtime family friend.

"This is a full circle moment for me. I played hockey for both coach Bousquet and coach Rousseau when I was younger," Manning said. "This was the first time that we've held a high school hockey game at the MassMutual Center in a while. I never had the opportunity to play a game here during my high school career. I did have a lot of help setting this game up. We just wanted to create a cool experience for these kids."

Manning gave a lot of credit to both head coaches, along with Amherst Athletic Director Victoria Dawson and Minnechaug AD Steve Burndett for helping him set up the memorable experience for the players.

The fans who attended the high school hockey game could also stay for the Springfield Thunderbirds game that night against the Hartford Wolfpack.

Rousseau is very glad that his team was invited to play in a hockey game at the MassMutual Center.

"The first reason why I accepted the invitation to play in today's game was the hard work that Joe Manning did putting it together. He's just an outstanding young man," Rousseau said. "The second reason is these kids will probably never get another opportunity to play a varsity hockey game here.

It was an unbelievable experience for the players on both teams."

Following the match, the players from both teams took a picture together.

The last time Amherst played a game at the MassMutual Center was in the 2016 Division 3A state finals, which was a loss to Nashoba Regional.

Rousseau and his players walked out of the MassMutual Center feeling a lot better about things this time.

"We finally got the monkey off of our backs," Rousseau said. "We played with a lot of heart against a very good Berry Division team. We believed in our system and were able to win a hockey game."

While Amherst entered 2025 with a 1-2-1 overall, the Falcons overall record fell to 2-3. They lost to Longmeadow less than twenty four hours earlier.

The Falcons, who outshot the Hurricanes, 31-15, took a 1-0 lead at the 3:34 mark of the opening period when senior Brayden O'Sullivan pushed a shot into the net past Amherst senior goalie Spencer McDonald. Sophomore Nick Garib assisted on the Falcons' first goal of the contest.

With 39.2 seconds left in the opening period, Amherst tied the score with a Desbien power-play goal. Senior Eric Chen was credited with the assist.

Desbien's second goal came on a breakaway shot three minutes into the second period. The unassisted goal gave Amherst the lead for the first time.

"I had only scored one goal before today's game," Desbien said. "It was cool scoring my team's first two goals, especially in this building."

A little more than two minutes later, Mooney, who's a student at Pathfinder Tech, netted an unassisted power-play goal which gave his team a 3-1 advantage.

Mooney can play hockey for Amherst as part of a co-op. He also made the switch from being a defenseman a year ago to being a forward.

"Ethan didn't play a lot last year," Rousseau said. "He improved his skills a lot during the offseason, and I decided to give him a shot up front. He has the skills to play both positions. I also named him as an assistant captain and he's one of our leaders this year. The other three Pathfinder players have had some shifts this season, but they're still learning how to play the game at this level."

The other Pathfinder Tech players listed on the Hurricanes varsity hockey roster are freshmen Noah Latulippe, Landon Lukasik, and Nolan MacTavish.

With a little more than six minutes remaining in the second period, Minnechaug freshman starting goalie Matt Lafley was replaced between the pipes by his classmate Chase Folli.

Bousquet said before the start of the game that he was planning to use both of his goalies.

The Falcons sliced the deficit in half following a goal from sophomore Liam Faneuff with 3:17 remaining in the second period, which was assisted by junior Enzo Hrycay.

Amherst also made a goalie change with 8:13 remaining in the third period, as junior Jason Kim replaced McDonald.

During the Falcons first power-play chance of the match, one of Faneuff's shot attempts was saved by Kim. He also fired another shot that deflected off the crossbar.

The Hurricanes managed to kill another penalty late in the game before celebrating their first victory of the regular season.

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# public safety

## Ware Police Log

During the week of Dec. 22-30, the Ware Police Department responded to 15 miscellaneous calls, seven administrative calls, 12 traffic violations, 17 emergency 911 calls, two harassments, seven motor vehicle accidents, one theft/larceny, one trespass, one fraud, two breaking and enterings, two fire calls, one safety hazard, one animal call and 15 motor vehicle stops in the town of Ware.

### Monday, Dec. 23

3:21 a.m. Bylaw Violation, Otis Avenue, Parking Ticket Issued  
9:26 a.m. Fraud/Deception, North Street, Advised  
12:31 p.m. Safety Hazard, Palmer Road, Services Rendered  
2:55 p.m. Abandoned 911 Call, Palmer Road, Dispatch Handled  
5:28 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, Main Street, Criminal Complaint Requested

### Tuesday, Dec. 24

6:34 a.m. Traffic Incident/Crash, Church Street, Investigated  
8:58 a.m. Traffic Incident/Crash, Bacon Road, Service Rendered  
9:12 a.m. Traffic Incident/Crash, Palmer Road, Assist Given  
9:21 a.m. Traffic Incident/Crash, Malboeuf Road, Services Rendered  
9:34 a.m. Traffic Violation, Highland Village, Report Made  
1:53 p.m. Abandoned 911 Call, North Street, Investigated  
5:17 p.m. Traffic Violation,

West Street, Arrest Made  
Arrest: Michelle L. Nydam-Thompson, 57, West Brookfield  
OUI-Liquor or .08%; Negligent Operation of Motor Vehicle  
8:04 p.m. Abandoned 911 Call, Doane Road, Investigated  
9:56 p.m. Harassment/Stalk/Threat, School Street, Advised

### Wednesday, Dec. 25

12:51 a.m. Traffic Incident/Crash, Greenwich Plains Road, Report Made  
2:53 a.m. Fire Investigation, Clifford Avenue, Investigated  
9:54 a.m. Abandoned 911 Call, River Road, Investigated  
10:56 a.m. Abandoned 911 Call, Ware, Dispatch Handled

### Thursday, Dec. 26

8:33 a.m. Traffic Violation, Bondsville Road, Assist Given  
9:31 a.m. Breaking and Entering, Old Belchertown Road, Advised  
2:54 p.m. Assist Other Agency, North Street, Services Rendered  
3:01 p.m. Breaking and Entering, Pleasant Street, Report Made  
5:17 p.m. Trespass/Unwanted, North Street, Services Rendered  
11:23 p.m. Traffic Violation, East Street, Arrest Made  
Arrest: Justin J. Beland, 50, Alexandria, Virginia  
OUI-Liquor or .08%; Negligent Operations of Motor Vehicle; Alcohol in Motor Vehicle, Possess Open Container of

### Friday, Dec. 27

3:58 a.m. Bylaw Violation, Parker Street, Citation/Warning Issued  
5:21 p.m. Theft/Larceny, North Street, Services Rendered

### Saturday, Dec. 28

1:57 a.m. Abandoned 911 Call, Park Street, Services Rendered  
3:37 a.m. Bylaw Violation, East Street, Citation/Warning Issued  
3:54 a.m. Bylaw Violation, Homecrest Avenue, Citation/Warning Issued  
9:22 a.m. Assist Other Agency, North Street, Services Rendered  
1:04 p.m. Traffic Incident/Crash, North Street, Services Rendered  
6:25 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, Maple Street, Citation/Warning Issued  
7:34 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, Belchertown Road, Citation/Warning Issued  
7:57 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, Belchertown Road, Report Made

### Sunday, Dec. 29

3:28 a.m. Bylaw Violation, Church Street, City Ordinance Violation  
7:16 a.m. Structure Fire, Prospect Street, Extinguished  
11:42 a.m. Assist Other Agency, Hardwick, Services Rendered  
5:46 p.m. Traffic Incident/Crash, West Street, Report Made  
10:58 p.m. Harassment/Stalk/Threat, Aspen Street, Advised

## Warren Police Log

During the week of Dec. 15-21, the Warren Police Department responded to 141 building/property checks, 19 community policings, 14 emergency 911 calls, three motor vehicle accidents, one safety concern, three fire calls, one vandalism, one larceny/theft, two animal calls and 18 motor vehicle stops in the town of Warren.

### Sunday, Dec. 15

6:54 a.m. Vandalism, Main Street, Report Filed  
1:34 p.m. Fire/Explosive Incidents, Coy Hill Road, Investigated  
7:54 p.m. Disturbance/Disorderly, Quaboag Street, Report Filed

### Monday, Dec. 16

8:48 a.m. Larceny or Theft, Milton O. Fountain Way, Report Filed

### Tuesday, Dec. 17

7:49 a.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, Southbridge Road, Written Warning  
8:14 a.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, Main Street, Written Warning  
8:21 a.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, Boston Post Road, Written Warning  
8:28 a.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, Main Street, Written Warning

8:47 a.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, Main Street, Citation Issued

### Wednesday, Dec. 18

3:21 a.m. Alarm Activation, South Street, Investigated  
9:20 a.m. Breathing Difficulty, Yankee Drummer Driver, Transported to Hospital  
4:31 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, Bridge Street, Written Warning  
5:23 p.m. Motor Vehicle Collision, Main Street, Transported to Hospital

### Thursday, Dec. 19

12:10 a.m. Breathing Difficulty, Maple Street, Transported to Hospital  
7:07 a.m. Fire/Mutual Aid, Route 67, Mutual Aid Transport  
7:22 a.m. Motor Vehicle Collision, Brimfield Road, Ambulance Signed Refusal

### Friday, Dec. 20

6:10 a.m. Structure Fire, Cronin Road, Fire Extinguished  
8:15 a.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, Brimfield Road, Written Warning  
9:25 a.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, Main Street, Criminal Complaint  
9:29 a.m. Breathing Difficulty, Brimfield Road, Mutual Aid Transport  
1:48 p.m. Motor Vehicle Collision, Main Street, Report

*Editor's Note: People in this country are presumed to be innocent until found guilty in a court of law. Police provide us with the information you read on this page as public record information. If you or any suspect listed here is found not guilty or has charges dropped or reduced, we will gladly print that information as a follow-up upon being presented with documented proof of the court's final disposition.*

Filed  
2:07 p.m. Welfare Check, Winthrop Terrace, Transported to Hospital  
6:19 p.m. 911 Hang-up/Misdial/Abandoned, Bemis Road, Information Taken

### Saturday, Dec. 21

9:55 a.m. Safety Concern, Boston Post Road, Negative Contact  
7:54 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, Main Street, Written Warning  
9:40 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, Main Street, Written Warning

### Sunday, Dec. 22

6:10 a.m. Structure Fire, Cronin Road, Fire Extinguished  
8:15 a.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, Brimfield Road, Written Warning  
9:25 a.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, Main Street, Criminal Complaint  
9:29 a.m. Breathing Difficulty, Brimfield Road, Mutual Aid Transport  
1:48 p.m. Motor Vehicle Collision, Main Street, Report

## Hardwick Police Log

During the week of Dec. 16-23, the Hardwick/New Braintree Police Department responded to 52 building/property checks, 28 directed/area patrols, five radar assignments, four traffic controls, 11 emergency 911 calls, three citizen assists, two assist other agencies, four safety hazards, four complaints, one motor vehicle accident, three motor vehicle investigations, one threat, one harassment, one property damage and nine motor vehicle stops in the town of Hardwick.

### Monday, Dec. 16

10 a.m. Assist Other Agency, High Road, Officer Handled  
11:33 a.m. Assist Citizen, Bridge Street, Taken/Referred to Other Agency  
2:44 p.m. Motor Vehicle Investigation, School House Drive, Investigated  
8:52 p.m. 911 Hang-up/Abandoned, Patril Hollow Road, Negative Contact

### Tuesday, Dec. 17

9:19 a.m. Safety Hazard, Red Bridge Road, Officer Handled  
2:41 p.m. Assist Citizen, Petersham Road, Services Rendered  
8:30 p.m. 911 Medical Emergency, Turkey Street, Transported to Hospital  
9:56 p.m. 911 Medical Emergency, Church Lane,

Transported to Hospital

### Wednesday, Dec. 18

12:45 a.m. Motor Vehicle Investigation, Lower Road, Officer Handled  
5:49 a.m. 911 Medical Emergency, Fiske Road, Services Rendered  
12:21 p.m. Medical Emergency, Church Lane, Transported to Hospital  
3:08 p.m. Property Damage, Barre Road, Unknown Outcome  
4:40 p.m. Serve Warrant, Lyman Road, Arrest(s) Made

### Thursday, Dec. 19

7:20 a.m. Safety Hazard, Lower Road, Taken/Referred to Other Agency  
8:20 a.m. Assist Citizen, Birch Street, Taken/Referred to Other Agency  
11:39 a.m. 911 Motor Vehicle Accident, Lower Road, Transported to Hospital  
12:29 p.m. Assist Other Agency, Sullivan Avenue, Officer Handled  
4:04 p.m. Complaint/Motor Vehicle Operations, Lower Road, Negative Contact  
7:08 p.m. 911 Complaint/Motor Vehicle Operations, Hardwick Road, Services Rendered  
11:17 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, Main Street, Citation Issued  
11:34 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, Main Street, Citation Issued  
11:46 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop,

Main Street, Citation Issued

### Friday, Dec. 20

6:09 a.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, Lower Road, Written Warning  
6:44 a.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, Lower Road, Citation Issued  
2:44 p.m. Harassment, Greenwich Road, Officer Handled  
3:18 p.m. 911 Safety Hazard, Taylor Hill Road, Services Rendered  
5:21 p.m. 911 Disturbance, Parker Court, Investigated  
5:42 p.m. 911 Suspicious Activity, Upper Church Street, Services Rendered  
5:58 p.m. Complaint/Motor Vehicle Operations, Lower Road, Negative Contact

### Saturday, Dec. 21

3:18 p.m. 911 Medical Emergency, Church Lane, Services Rendered  
6:11 a.m. Safety Hazard, Townwide, Taken/Referred to Other Agency  
8:34 a.m. Threat, Hardwick Road, Officer Handled  
7:40 p.m. Complaint, Unknown Location, Officer Handled

### Monday, Dec. 23

7:32 a.m. Motor Vehicle Investigation, Petersham Road, Officer Handled

# Sweeping economic development bill passes house and senate

BOSTON – State Sen. Adam Gomez (D-Springfield), State Sen. Jake Oliveira (D-Ludlow) and the Senate unanimously passed a comprehensive economic development bill that makes bold investments in life sciences, climate tech, and small businesses, building on Massachusetts' national leadership and creating an environment where businesses and workers thrive.

The \$3.96 billion in bonds authorized in An Act Relative to strengthening Massachusetts' economic leadership will stimulate new and proven industries, support workforce development and talent retention, and modernize economic growth strategies. This includes nearly \$10 million in bonding for projects in Springfield and \$1.5 million in Chicopee, as well as nearly \$40,000,000 for a new quantum innovation hub in the Pioneer Valley if authorized, working on topics including information sciences, therapeutic biomanufacturing, and creating alternative proteins.

"This bond bill and the funding path laid out for the coming years reflects our state's commitment to reinvesting in items that will benefit people and businesses in a way that is sustainable and on the forefront of science, technology, and health," said Gomez. "I am proud to see the goals to create new innovation hubs, including one in the Pioneer Valley, which promise to bring high-paying jobs to our region, and I am grateful for the ways that our body prioritized regional equity in our approach today. I look forward to fighting for this bond funding to be released, and seeing these ideas come to fruition."

"Today, we take a significant step forward in ensuring that the benefits of economic growth reach every corner of our Commonwealth, especially Western Massachusetts. This economic development package reflects our commitment to regional equity, fostering job creation, supporting local businesses, and investing in the strengths of our unique communities," said Oliveira. "I'm proud to have worked with my colleagues in the Western Mass delegation and the Legislature to prioritize innovation, workforce development, and sustainable practices. Together, we are laying the groundwork for a more inclusive and balanced economy that uplifts all regions and ensures prosperity for generations to come."

### Highlights from the bill include:

#### Educator diversity

Allows the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to develop an alternative certification process for teachers who may face challenges passing the educator certification exam but can otherwise demonstrate their competence as teachers. The change will help Massachusetts diversify the K-12 educator workforce.

#### Climatetech investments

Provides \$400 million in capital resources to the (Massachusetts Clean Energy Center to utilize over the next ten years, with \$200 million authorized to support innovation and deployment of climatetech technologies and \$200 million to support the offshore wind industry.

It also establishes a new tax credit to invest in climatetech companies.

A new program housed at MassCEC will develop and expand employment opportunities in climatetech and promote climatetech-related economic development by supporting and stimulating research, development, innovation, manufacturing, deployment and commercialization in the climatetech sector. The credit will be subject to a \$30 million annual cap.

#### Life sciences

Authorizes \$500 million over ten years for the Life Sciences Breakthrough Fund to reauthorize the Commonwealth's life sciences

initiative.

Known as Life Sciences 3.0, the reauthorization adds health equity, biosecurity, digital health, and artificial intelligence to the mission of the Life Sciences Center. The bill increases the annual tax credit authorization for the life sciences industry from \$30 million to \$40 million.

#### Support for small businesses

Restructures two quasi-state agencies that are designed to be the gateway for access to state resources, the Massachusetts Growth Capital Corporation and Massachusetts Development Finance Agency.

The legislation also authorizes a five-year pilot program for the Commonwealth to assist small businesses in acquiring surety bonds.

Large capital projects, whether public or private, often require retention of a surety bond by the contractor as financial security. Historically, economically and socially disadvantaged businesses often cannot acquire these bonds because of a lack of credit history or collateral.

This program creates a self-sustaining state assistance program to open doors for more of these businesses.

#### Live theater tax credit

Launches a new tax credit of up to \$7 million annually to support local live theater productions. The credit will help Massachusetts artists working towards Broadway or off-Broadway launch a national tour.

#### Craft beer at farmers markets

Updates the law to allow for locally produced craft beer to be sold at farmers markets, like wine and cider currently.

#### Ticketing transparency

Requires ticket sellers to clearly disclose the actual ticket price when listing tickets online and bans automated ticket purchasing software, otherwise known as bots. Bots drive up prices in the secondary market by creating artificial scarcity when fans try to purchase tickets from the artist or venue.

#### Everett soccer stadium

Allows for the construction of a professional soccer stadium and waterfront park on a parcel of land in Everett by removing the parcel's classification as a designated port area. The change is expected to have positive environmental and economic impacts in surrounding communities as well as improve public transit connectivity.

Public funding for the construction of the stadium is not allowed, and funding for public infrastructure improvements associated with the stadium would require matching private funds. The language also requires community mitigation agreements with the cities of Everett and Boston.

Strengthening local and regional public health systems. Overhauls the state's fragmented public health system to ensure strong public health protections for all residents regardless of race, income, or zip code.

#### Pathway for foreign-trained physicians

Creates a pathway in Massachusetts for physicians previously authorized to practice medicine outside the United States to practice in an underserved region of the Commonwealth.

#### Nurse licensure compact

Includes a provision to admit Massachusetts in the national nurse licensure compact, which will help alleviate the critical workforce challenges facing the health care sector.

#### Civil service reforms

Modernizes Massachusetts civil service laws to give communities more options in filling vacancies while giving qualified job seekers more opportunities to find a match.

#### Data centers tax credit

Creates a new tax credit to attract investment in qualified data centers.

#### Childcare as campaign expense

Removes current limitations on political candidates using campaign funds for childcare services that occur because of campaign activities.

#### FAFSA

Requires each school district to notify students prior to graduating from high school of the availability of Free Application for Federal Student Aid and to provide students with information on financial aid options.

#### Liquor license equity

Removes archaic requirement that a restaurant liquor license holder be a United States citizen, thereby creating a pathway for other qualified immigrants.

#### Project labor agreements

Authorizes public agencies and municipalities to enter into project labor agreements for public works contracts when such an agreement is in the best interest of the public agency or municipality.

#### Sustainability for farmers

Allows farmers to diversify how they use their farms, including using land for agritourism and selling goods made from produce they have grown themselves.

#### Regional equity

The legislation reflects the different needs of different communities and ensures none of the Commonwealth's 351 cities and towns are left behind.

This will partly be accomplished through statewide targeted infrastructure improvements, with the bill authorizing \$400 million for MassWorks public infrastructure projects that spur economic development and help support job creation, \$100 million for the Rural Development Fund to provide financial assistance for infrastructure and community planning efforts in rural communities, \$100 million for local economic development grants for economic development in cities and towns, \$90 million to support the redevelopment of underutilized, blighted, or abandoned buildings, and \$10 million for the Broadband Incentive Fund for the capital maintenance of the MassBroadband 123 middle mile network.

In addition to infrastructure, the legislation recognizes the importance of local cultural and economic sites, providing \$150 million for capital grants for public libraries, \$50 million for the Cultural Facilities Fund, \$40 million for Destination Development grants to support capital improvements of tourism assets, \$15 million for a capital grant program to support the Commonwealth's agriculture, commercial fishing, and cranberry growing industries, and \$8 million for historical preservation grants through the Massachusetts Historical Commission.

#### Capital authorizations

The legislation includes a total of \$3.96 billion in capital authorizations for leading Massachusetts industries like life sciences and climate tech.

#### Additional authorizations include:

- \$400 million for the MassWorks Infrastructure Program to support public infrastructure projects and create jobs
- \$150 million for library construction projects
- \$103 million for artificial intelligence in systems across the state
- \$100 million for infrastructure improvements in rural communities
- \$21 million for resilience in agriculture and fishing
- \$40 million for food science innovations, including \$10 million to support the state's nascent alternative protein industry



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## Charlotte M. Borlikoski, 100

WARE/WEST BROOKFIELD – Charlotte M. Borlikoski, 100, of Ware, and formerly a long-time resident of West Brookfield, died on Dec. 24, 2024, in her apartment at Cedarbrook Village in Ware.



She wrote the following obituary in her own words. "She was the wife of Joseph Borlikoski, who died March 31, 2018. They were married for 50 years. She leaves her stepdaughter Lynne Dame and her stepson Joseph Borlikoski, Jr. and his companion, Kathy Pratt; five grandchildren, Joseph and Barbara Young, Dianna and Dan Lussier, Kristy and Christopher Cornelius and Colby Borlikoski, as well as seven great-grandchildren, Alyssa, Bryann, Courtney, Samantha, Mason, Jonathan, and Conner, who brought so much joy and love to gram and grampa. She also leaves her nieces, Charlotte

Boos, Michele Massé, and Christine Graham, and her nephews, Edward Massé and George Molinaro.

Charlotte enjoyed spending time with her family whom she loved dearly. She was born in Ware on Oct. 4, 1924, daughter of the late Francis and Mary Jezyk, and lived in West Brookfield for 64 years. She was predeceased by her sisters, Irene Gryszowka of Ware, Jenie Molinaro of University Place, Washington, and Phyllis Massé of Ware.

Charlotte was employed at the Ware River News (Turley Publications) for 49 years. She began her newspaper career as a typesetter. Later, she managed the graphic arts department until she retired in 1990.

She was an active person. She enjoyed walking, fishing at the Quabbin Reservoir with her hus-

band, snowmobiling, bowling, playing cards, tending to her flower gardens, and country line dancing.

She was a member of Sacred Heart Church in West Brookfield where she served as a communicant."

A Funeral Service for Charlotte will be held on Saturday, Jan. 11, 2025, at 11 a.m. in the Varnum Funeral Home, 43 East Main St. in West Brookfield. A calling hour will be held from 10-11 a.m. in the funeral home prior to the service. Burial will be in Pine Grove Cemetery in West Brookfield in the spring.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Parish, P.O. Box 563, West Brookfield, MA 01585 or Saint Jude Children's Research Hospital, P.O. Box 1000, Dept. 142, Memphis, TN 38148 or at [www.stjude.org](http://www.stjude.org)

An online tribute book is available at [varnumfuneralhome.com](http://varnumfuneralhome.com).

## Edward Perez, 44

WARE – Edward Perez, age 44, passed away suddenly on Tuesday, Dec. 17, 2024.



moved to Ware.

He graduated from Ware High School and attended Springfield Technical Community College in Springfield for two years. He was employed as a mail handler for the United States Post Office.

Ed loved fishing, and collected sneakers and baseball hats, he had a very big heart, and he would always be there to help everyone.

He leaves behind his heartbroken family, his father, Miguel Perez of Los Piedras, Puerto Rico, his mom, Wendy M. (Gasiorek) Borey and her

## Death notices

**Borlikoski, Charlotte M.**  
Died Dec. 24, 2024  
Services Jan. 11, 2025

**Giard, Arthur L.**  
Died Dec. 19, 2024  
Services Dec. 27, 2024

**Perez, Edward**  
Died Dec. 17, 2024  
Services Jan. 2, 2025

husband Peter of Ludlow, his brother, Michael Perez and his wife Karyn of Monson. Ed also leaves Desmond and Penelope, several aunts, uncles, cousins and friends.

A Private Calling Hour for Ed's close family and friends will take place on Thursday, Jan. 2, 2025, from 9:30-11 a.m. in Cebula Funeral Home, 66 South St., Ware. A Prayer Service will begin at 11 a.m. in the funeral home and conclude with Prayers of Committal in St. Aloysius Cemetery in Gilbertville.

For more information and an online guest book, please visit: [www.cebula-funeralhome.com](http://www.cebula-funeralhome.com).

## Ware River News 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 and may include a photograph.

**Death Notices & Paid Obituaries** should be submitted through a funeral home to: [obits@turley.com](mailto:obits@turley.com).

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

## Arthur L. Giard, 82



PALMER – Arthur L. Giard, 82, of Palmer, died on Thursday, Dec. 19, 2024, in Baystate Medical Center. His obituary is written in his own words.



"I was born on Aug. 2, 1942, of Herve J. Giard, Sr. and Blanche M. (LaCroix) Giard. I attended Mount Carmel Parochial School, Springfield Trade School, and Ware High Schools. I served as an altar boy and member of Troop 281 Boy Scouts.

I enlisted in the Marine Corps for four years. First as an M.P. with Headquarters, 3rd Marine Division on Okinawa, Japan and the Philippines and as an infantry corporal with the 6th Marines, 2nd Marine Division in North Carolina, the Caribbean, and the Mediterranean Seas.

I enlisted in the U.S. Army for three years serving with 3 Squadron, 12th Cavalry, 3rd Armored Division in Europe as a SSGT. section leader in armored reconnaissance.

In 1967, I re-enlisted in the Marine Corps and served in Vietnam as an infantry sergeant with the 3rd Bn. 9th Marines, 3rd

division. Near the village of Cam Lo, just south of the demilitarized zone, I was seriously wounded by gunfire and eventually evacuated to Chelsea, Massachusetts Naval Hospital. After over a year of rehabilitation, I medically retired from the Marine Corps.

In 1970, I began a new chapter in my life I gained employment with the U.S. Post Office. I worked as a clerk-carrier and acting supervisor at the Palmer Post Office and did a tour as Officer in Charge at the Brimfield Post Office. I retired after nearly 33 years with the postal service and nine years of military service.

I was a member of the American Legion Post 123, Marine Corps League, and the Disabled American Veterans.

Besides my parents, I was predeceased by my brothers, Robert (1929-2007), Herve, Jr. (1931-2003), Bernard (1934-1997), and Roland (1948-2004). Also, my sister Annette (1937-2008) and with whom I shared the same birthday five years apart. I am survived by my brother, Ernest "Coco" Giard

who was born in 1939.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to St. Jude Children's Hospital, [P.O. Box 111, Dept. 142, Memphis, TN 38148, or online at [www.stjude.org](http://www.stjude.org)], the Shriner's Hospital for Children, [516 Carew St., Springfield, MA 01104 or online at [www.shrinerschildrens.org](http://www.shrinerschildrens.org)], or Tunnel to Towers, [online at [www.t2t.org](http://www.t2t.org)], and to all my fellow veterans. Semper Fi because lest we forget.

Last but not most important, I leave my wife Sandra Lavallee Giard and my daughter Susan Marie Russian (Michael) of Naples, Maine. One is my honey and the other my sweet pea. The two of you were the rock I leaned on. I will love you both always and always. Love always honey / dad."

A Funeral Service with Military Honors for Arthur was held on Friday, Dec. 27, 2024, at 11:30 a.m. in Charbonneau Funeral Home, 30 Pleasant St., in Ware. Calling hours will be held from 9:30-11:30 a.m. prior to the service. Burial will be held privately in the Massachusetts Veterans' Memorial Cemetery in Agawam.

An online tribute book is available at [charbonneauhf.com](http://charbonneauhf.com).

## Free COVID/flu vaccine clinic is Jan. 21

WARE – A free COVID and flu vaccine clinic will be held at Ware Housing Authority, 20 Valley View, on Monday, Jan. 21 from 11 a.m.-2 p.m.

Patients aged 12 and older will receive a \$75 gift card after vaccination. Only 100 gift cards are available per clinic.

Vaccines are available for people ages 6 months and up. People are asked to bring their ID and insurance card, but it is not required to receive the free vaccines.

The clinic will be held indoors. There are accessible doors and drop off/pick up location for persons with disabilities.

## BBB offers tips for holiday returns, exchanges

Holiday returns aren't easy, and we don't mean the part where you explain to your mother why you returned the sweater she gave you.

Stores are not legally required to accept exchanges or give refunds unless the merchandise was defective or misrepresented. While most retailers do offer refund and exchange programs, policies vary greatly from one store to another.

Be sure to double-check policies this holiday season, even if you are familiar with the brand, as stores can change their policies whenever they want.

The Better Business Bureau offers advice to make your holiday returns run more smoothly:

**Research retailers beforehand**  
Look up the business on BBB.org to check its rating, reviews,

and complaints before purchasing, especially if you are unfamiliar with the retailer. This can help avoid issues with returns later.

**Get to know store policies**  
Before you make a purchase, find out if the store has a return policy and, if so, how it works. Understand that many retailers change their policies for the holiday season. If the store allows returns or exchanges, find out if you need to pay a restocking fee.

Ask the seller if they offer cash refunds, exchanges, or only store credit. Store policies are usually posted at the check-out counter or printed on the back of receipts.

**Understand online store return policies**  
If you are shopping online, search for the seller's return policy and read it through before

clicking "buy." Find out if they accept returns or exchanges and who pays for the shipping when an item is returned.

In some cases, you can save on shipping fees by returning an online purchase to the local brick-and-mortar store.

**Get the details on a product's warranty**  
Most electronics and home appliances come with warranties that are to be fulfilled by the manufacturer, not the retailer.

Find out how the store handles returns and repairs if an item stops working or needs replacement parts. Will the retailer ship the item to the manufacturer for you? Or will you need to deal with the manufacturer directly?

Knowing the answers will leave you well-prepared for any future issues.

## health

# Prioritize your lung health in the new year

BOSTON – With the New Year here, it's a great time to set some lung health-focused goals.

With each of the 23,000 breaths your lungs take daily, they perform essential work to support overall health.

Whether you're managing asthma, quitting smoking, or simply looking to keep your lungs strong, here are some tips from the American Lung Association in Massachusetts to start the year right.



### Get regular check-ups

Regular check-ups help prevent diseases, even when you are feeling well. This is especially true for lung disease, which sometimes goes undetected until it's serious.

During a check-up, your healthcare provider will listen to your breathing and you should share any concerns you may have.

### Quit smoking

The American Lung Association encourages people who smoke, vape or use tobacco to resolve to begin their quit journey in 2025 and provides tips and resources at [Lung.org/quit-smoking](http://Lung.org/quit-smoking) or call the Lung Helpline at 1-800-LUNGUSA (1-800-586-4872). Tobacco remains the number one cause of preventable death in the U.S., and here in Massachusetts.

E-cigarettes are not a safe or effective way to quit. Many health insurance plans cover quit aids and counseling, and if you are uninsured or need a plan that works better for you, open enrollment through the

Affordable Care Act marketplaces is available until Jan. 15, 2025, in most states.

More information is available at [Lung.org/openenrollment](http://Lung.org/openenrollment).

### Take the quiz

In the U.S., 14 million people are at high risk for lung cancer and are eligible for lifesaving lung cancer screening. Here in Massachusetts, only 24.2% of residents at high risk for lung cancer are screened for the disease each year.

If you smoked, the low-dose CT lung cancer screening test could save your life. Lung cancer, the leading cause of cancer deaths, is more treatable when caught early-survival rates increase by more than four times.

If you're aged 50-80 and smoke or have quit within the past 15 years, you may be eligible for screening. Take the two-minute quiz at [SavedByTheScan.org](http://SavedByTheScan.org).

### Stay up-to-date on immunizations

Get your COVID-19 and flu shots (and RSV and pneumococcal pneumonia, if eligible). The best way to stay healthy and protect others is to be up-to-date on your recommended immunizations and make sure all of your loved ones - from those aged 6 months to 100+ years - are also current on theirs.

### Limit exposure to air pollutants

If possible, avoid environments with high levels of air pollution, chemical fumes, secondhand smoke and other lung irritants. It's also essential to test your home for radon, a leading cause of lung cancer, and take action if levels are elevated.

If you have asthma or other lung health concerns, regularly monitor daily air quality forecasts to take precautions against outdoor air pollution. You can check conditions in your area at [Airmow.gov](http://Airmow.gov).

### Exercise those lungs

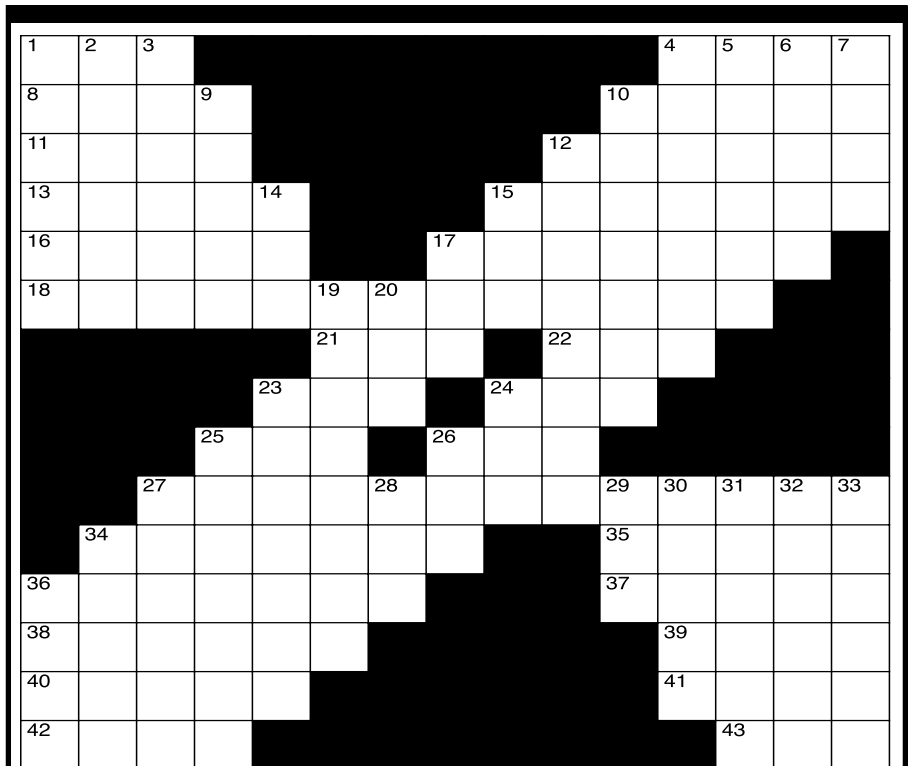
The American Lung Association hosts several community events throughout the year with fitness in mind, including a Fight For Air Climb and a LUNG FORCE Walk in Boston. Whether you are a fitness buff, or just getting started - consider registering for one of our events today and start training to create health habits for your lungs in 2025.

Learn more about how to protect your lung health in 2025 at [Lung.org](http://Lung.org) or call 1-800-LUNGUSA.

### About the American Lung Association

The American Lung Association is the leading organization working to save lives by improving lung health and preventing lung disease through education, advocacy and research. The work of the American Lung Association is focused on four strategic imperatives: to defeat lung cancer; to champion clean air for all; to improve the quality of life for those with lung disease and their families; and to create a tobacco-free future.

For more information about the American Lung Association, which has a 4-star rating from Charity Navigator and is a Platinum-Level GuideStar Member, call 1-800-LUNGUSA (1-800-586-4872) or visit: [Lung.org](http://Lung.org). To support the work of the American Lung Association, find a local event at [Lung.org/events](http://Lung.org/events).



### CLUES ACROSS

1. Americans' "uncle"
4. Chair
8. Ancient kingdom
10. Egyptian city
11. Alaskan glacier
12. One from Somalia
13. Ancient alphabets
15. Relating to vocabulary
16. Small mongrels
17. Natural settings
18. Weekend entertainments
21. Line from which light seemingly streams
22. Your own

23. Swiss river
24. Satisfaction
25. A person's brother or sister
26. Folk singer DiFranco
27. The Blonde Bombshell
34. Kids' school project
35. Bluish greens
36. Classifying
37. Cube-shaped
38. Choo-choos
39. Indian religious god of dissolution
40. French department
41. Leak into gradually
42. Foundation

43. Midway between south and southeast
- CLUES DOWN**
1. Counterbalancing debt
  2. In slow tempo
  3. Glamorous city
  4. Japanese lute
  5. Makes law book
  6. Informative
  7. Animal's body part
  9. American playwright
  10. Blood poisoning
  12. Angels
  14. Sino-Soviet block (abbr.)
  15. Written account

17. Unwelcome pest
19. Saddle horses
20. Type of gibbon
23. Delta is one
24. NE Massachusetts cape
25. Soup cracker
26. Yes vote
27. Muddy ground
28. Physics apparatus (abbr.)
29. Type of drug
30. German city
31. Animal disease
32. Martini ingredients
33. Get away
34. Spanish municipality
36. Thrust a knife into

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The Town of Blandford is seeking a qualified individual for the position of Highway Superintendent. Salary range starting at \$75,000-\$80,000+ negotiable based on experience/skills. Please visit our website [TownOfBlandford.com](http://TownOfBlandford.com) or email [Administrator@TownofBlandford.com](mailto:Administrator@TownofBlandford.com) for more information.

## HELP WANTED

The **Town of Oakham** is seeking an experienced municipal **Treasurer/Collector.** 15 hours a week, negotiable pay based on experience. Please send resumes to [admin@oakham-ma.gov](mailto:admin@oakham-ma.gov).

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**ALL REAL ESTATE** advertised herein is subject to the Federal Fair Housing Act, which makes it illegal to advertise "any preference, limitation, or discrimination because of race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status, or national origin, or intention to make any such preference, limitation, or discrimination." We will not knowingly accept any advertising for real estate which is in violation of the law. All persons are hereby informed that all dwellings advertised are available on an equal opportunity basis.

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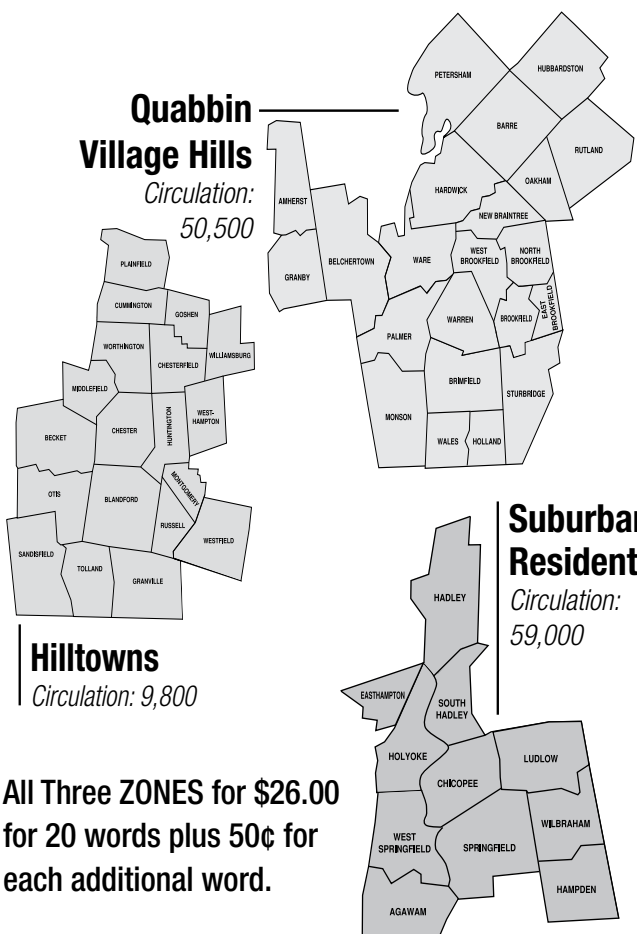
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or call: 413-283-8393

DEADLINES: **MONDAY AT NOON**

CATEGORY:			
1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20
21	Base Price \$26.50	22	Base Price \$27.00
23	Base Price \$27.50	24	Base Price \$28.00
25	Base Price \$28.50	26	Base Price \$29.00
27	Base Price \$29.50	28	Base Price \$30.00
29	Base Price \$30.50	30	Base Price \$31.00
31	Base Price \$31.50	32	Base Price \$32.00
33	Base Price \$32.50	34	Base Price \$33.00
35	Base Price \$33.50	36	Base Price \$34.00
37	Base Price \$34.50	38	Base Price \$35.00
39	Base Price \$35.50	40	Base Price \$36.00

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Town: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Number of Weeks: \_\_\_\_\_ X per week rate = \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
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# Job Connection

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## The Town of West Brookfield Highway Department is seeking PART-TIME PLOW DRIVERS

This is an on-call position. Duties require a background in light and heavy equipment operation. High School Diploma or G.E.D. is required or experience may be substituted. Snow plowing experience is preferred but not required. Must have a valid, clean MA Driver's License and a DOT physical card. Starting pay is \$20.82/hour or \$23.85/hour with a Class B License with air brakes. This position is not eligible for benefits. Alcohol, controlled substance and criminal background testing is mandatory.

Applications are available on the Town Website: [www.wbrookfield.com](http://www.wbrookfield.com)

Application deadline: Friday, January 10, 2025 at 3:00 p.m.

Please contact: Jim Daley (508) 867-1417 or via email [jdaley@wbrookfield.com](mailto:jdaley@wbrookfield.com)

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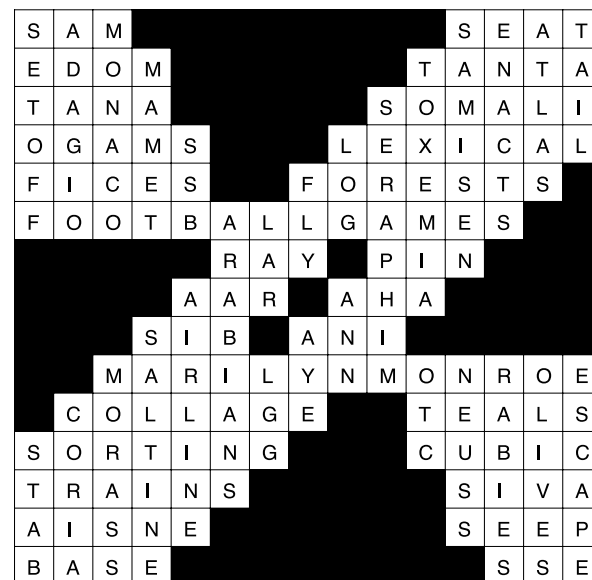
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Members of AMVETS Post 74 and Sons of AMVETS Post 74 enjoyed the party.



State Commander Ed Wyzik is presented with a jacket in appreciation for his service.



AMVETS State Commander Ed Wyzik presented his state officers.

## AMVETS enjoys State Commander's Christmas party

PALMER – The AMVETS Post 74 in Three Rivers hosted the State Commander's Christmas party last week.

"The AMVETS work hard all year long to provide support for their members and all veterans. It's a nice break to have them come and enjoy themselves, bring their spouses and have a meal," said AMVETS State

Commander Ed Wyzik. "Just sit around, laugh and be appreciated."

AMVETS Post 74 of Three Rivers hosted the event.

"We worked hard to put on a great event. To have the state commander and the event here was a great thing," Sons of AMVETS Post 74 Commander Tony Silva said.

The party was attended by representatives of AMVETS posts throughout the Commonwealth as well as Sons of AMVETS posts and Ladies Auxiliaries.

"These veterans represent the best of what the AMVETS offer. They are all family. And this is what a family does but come together," said Wyzik.



Guests are shown at the State Commander's Christmas party.



State Ladies Auxiliary President Mandy Grotta-Dias and local officers wished everyone happy holidays.



Sons of AMVETS State Commander Floyd Francis, AMVETS State Commander Ed Wyzik and State Ladies President Mandy Grotta-Dias are shown at the State Commander's Christmas party.



Guests enjoyed the AMVETS State Commander Christmas party

## public notices

### NOTICE OF MORTGAGEE'S SALE OF REAL ESTATE

Premises: 16 Cottage Street, Ware, Massachusetts

By virtue and in execution of the Power of Sale contained in a certain mortgage given by Charles T. Thresher and Rosemary R. Thresher to Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc. ("MERS"), as mortgagee, as nominee for FirstBank its successors and assigns and now held by Carrington Mortgage Services LLC, said mortgage dated August 18, 2017, and recorded in the Hampshire County Registry of Deeds in Book 12726, Page 130, as affected by an Assignment of Mortgage dated June 21, 2024, and recorded in the Hampshire County Registry of Deeds in Book 15166, Page 40, of which mortgage the undersigned is the present holder, for breach of the conditions in said mortgage and for the purpose of foreclosing the same will be sold at Public Auction on **January 30, 2025 at 10:00 AM** Local Time upon the premises, all and singular the premises described in said mortgage, to wit:

The land in Ware, Hampshire County, Massachusetts, bounded and described as follows: Situated on the corner of Spring and Cottage Streets, and bounded as follows;

On the North by Cottage Street;

On the East by land formerly of Herbert P. Cummings;

On the South by land formerly of Snow;

On the West by Spring Street, and more particularly described as follows;

S. 36 1/4° West along the easterly line of Spring Street, one hundred eighteen (118) feet, more or less;

THENCE S. 54 3/4° E. seventy-four (74) feet, more or less, to land formerly of H.P. Cummings, now of one Jordan;

THENCE N. 36 1/4° E. along said Jordan land, one hundred seventeen (117) feet, more or less, to the southerly side of Cottage Street; and

THENCE N. 54 1/2° W. along the southerly side of said Cottage Street, seventy-four (74) feet, more or less, to the point of beginning.

The above description is derived from the description in a deed from Grace

D. Sibley to Emma A. Davis dated January 18, 1921, recorded with Hampshire County Deeds, Book 767, Page 49, and does not create any new boundaries.

Being the same premises conveyed to Theresa M. Sykes and Jerrie L. Payson by deed of David P. Flanagan and Maria E. Flanagan, dated May 28, 1985, and recorded with the Hampshire County Registry of Deeds at Book 2570, Page 69.

Tax ID: Map 60 Block 0 Lot 115

The description of the property contained in the mortgage shall control in the event of a typographical error in this publication.

For Mortgagor's Title see deed dated August 18, 2017, and recorded in the Hampshire County Registry of Deeds in Book 12726, Page 127.

**TERMS OF SALE:** Said premises will be sold and conveyed subject to all liens, encumbrances, unpaid taxes, tax titles, municipal liens and assessments, if any, which take precedence over the said mortgage above described.

TEN THOUSAND (\$10,000.00) Dollars of the purchase price must be paid by a certified check, bank treasurer's or cashier's check at the time and place of the sale by the purchaser.

The balance of the purchase price shall be paid by a certified check, bank treasurer's or cashier's check within forty-five (45) days after the date of sale.

**Other terms to be announced at the sale.**

Marinosci Law Group, P.C. 275 West Natick Road, Suite 500 Warwick, RI 02886

Attorney for Carrington Mortgage Services LLC

Present Holder of the Mortgage

Telephone: (401) 234-9200

MLG File No.: 24-04741

01/02, 01/09, 01/16/2025

**NOTICE OF AUCTION**

The contents of the following storage unit:

Melissa Rice Bldg. 3 Unit 17

will be sold for non-payment at Country Corners Storage, 50 Greenwich Road, Ware MA on **Saturday, January 11, 2025 at 10:00 am** Tel 413-967-6095

01/02, 01/09/2025

### NOTICE OF MORTGAGEE'S SALE OF REAL ESTATE

By virtue and in execution of the Power of Sale contained in a certain Mortgage Deed, Security Agreement and Assignment of Leases and Rents, given by Alycar Investments, LLC, to Bluedog Capital Partners, LLC, dated May 31, 2024, and recorded on June 3, 2024 at the Hampshire County Registry of Deeds in Book 15147 Page 174 (the "Mortgage") of which Mortgage Bluedog Capital Partners, LLC is the present holder, for breach of conditions of said Mortgage and for the purpose of foreclosing, the same will be sold at Public Auction at **1:00 p.m. on January 9, 2025**, on the mortgaged premises located at 22 Church Street, Ware, Massachusetts 01082, a portion of the premises described in the Mortgage,

**TOWIT:**

**22 CHURCH STREET, WARE, MA**

A certain tract of land, together with the buildings thereon, situate at the corner of Church and Pleasant Street in Ware, Hampshire County, Massachusetts, more particularly bounded and described as follows: Beginning at the intersection of the westerly side of Church Street with the northerly side of Pleasant Street; thence N. 47°8' W. 86.18 feet along the northerly side of said Pleasant Street to an iron pipe driven in the ground; thence N. 45°40' E. 59.72 feet along land now or formerly of the Ware Savings Bank to an iron pin driven in the ground and at the south-west corner of land now or formerly of one Grise; thence

S. 44°39' E. 84.29 feet along the southerly line of land of said Grise to the westerly line of Church Street as laid out by the County Commissioners in June, 1882; thence S. 3°51' W. along the westerly side of said Church Street, 56 feet to the place of beginning.

Containing more or less and subject to the rights of the public in the sidewalk abutting said premises on the east.

For reference, see deed recorded in the Hampshire County Registry of Deeds herewith.

The premises will be sold subject to any and all unpaid taxes and other municipal assessments and liens, and subject to prior liens or other enforceable encumbrances of recorded entitled to precedence over the Mortgage, and subject to and with the benefit of all easements, restrictions, reservations and conditions of record and subject to all tenancies and/or rights of parties in possession.

**TERMS OF SALE:**

A deposit of Fifteen Thousand (\$15,000.00) Dollars by certified or bank check will be required to be paid by the purchaser at the time and place of sale. The high bidder will be required to sign a Memorandum of Sale upon acceptance of bid. The balance is to be paid by certified or bank check at Saulino & Silvia, P.C., 550 Locust Street, Fall River, Massachusetts 02720, within thirty (30) days from the date of sale. Deed will be provided to purchaser for recording upon receipt in full of the purchase

price. The description of the premises contained in said Mortgage shall control in the event of an error in this publication.

Other terms, if any, to be announced at the sale.

**BLUEDOG CAPITAL PARTNERS, LLC,** Present holder of said Mortgage Deed, Security Agreement and Assignment of Leases and Rents,

By its Attorneys, SAULINO & SILVIA, P.C. PETER A. SAULINO, ESQUIRE Saulino & Silvia, P.C. 550 Locust Street Fall River, MA 02720 PH: (508) 675 - 7770

12/19, 12/26/2024, 01/02/2025

**Notice of Public Hearing Ware Planning Board LEGAL NOTICE**

This is a revised Notice of Public Hearing. Pursuant to MGL Ch. 40A, Sec. 5, the Ware Planning Board will hold a public hearing on **Thursday, January 16th, 2025 during their normally scheduled meeting starting at 7:00pm** in the Town Hall meeting room, 126 Main Street, Ware MA. The purpose of this hearing is to consider amendments to the Zoning Map of the Town of Ware, to change parcels 57-0-167 (Lot 167), 57-0-166 (Lot 166), 57-0-168 (Lot 168), 57-0-169 (Lot 169), 57-0-206 (Lot 206) from Highway Commercial zoning to Commercial Industrial zoning, and parcel 57-0-205 (Lot 205), from Suburban Residential zoning to Commercial Industrial zoning.

Pursuant to Chapter 22 of

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 June 28.....**Boston Harbor Lunch Cruise**..... \$175  
 Sept 12-26....**Portugal & The Azores** ..... \$6549

**Share the Adventure with us soon!**  
 For further information call Randall at (413) 436-5357 or email [adventuretours@att.net](mailto:adventuretours@att.net) or go to [www.adventuretoursofwarren.com](http://www.adventuretoursofwarren.com)

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