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AGAWAM

ADVERTISER NEWS

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A look back at 2025

AGAWAM – It was a productive year in 2025 for the Town of Agawam. Most notably, the high school project is underway.

But Agawam saw a number of other projects take place, including more work to Still Brook Park, a new Veterans Green at School

Street Park, and the opening of the new Agawam Police Department.

Here is a look back at some of the many stories shown in the Agawam Advertiser News during the past year.

Trio of councilors departs, two pledge to run again

By Gregory A. Scibelli
 gscibelli@turley.com

AGAWAM – It has become a longtime tradition to honor outgoing city councilors at the final meeting before newly elected council takes its seats for the new term.

On Dec. 15, Council President Rosemary Sandlin presented three outgoing members with engraved clocks, thanked them for their service, and wished them well. Several other councilors echoed similar comments during the evening.

Councilors Gerald Smith, Peter Smus, and Maria Valego were all defeated in the Nov. 4 election. They will yield their seats to a returning Cecilia Calabrese, and newcomers Peter McNair and Christine Rickmon.

Sandlin recognized Smith, who was the eldest member of the council during the past term.

“Councilor Smith was my timekeeper and he’s been a rock,” Sandlin said. “He’s been a valuable asset to the town and will be missed.”

Smith was a longtime educator in Agawam, has owned and operated the Agawam Auto School for decades, and was also the longtime varsity baseball coach at Agawam High School. The varsity field behind the school building has been named for Smith.

Smith said he very much enjoyed the work he did in three terms on the council and believed he worked well with his fellow councilors, including those who were

on the council in his first two terms.

He said he was proud of the new police department, and is excited to see the new high school building come to fruition, where he has been promised the opportunity to teach one class in the new building.

Both Smus and Valego were elected to their first terms on the council in the last election in 2023. Smus was recognized by Sandlin as a very hard worker in his term on the council, making all meetings and subcommittee meetings.

She thanked him for the many hours he spent dedicated to serving the community.

Smus said he enjoyed his term and appreciated the people who supported him. He said he hoped to return to the council in the future.

Sandlin said she was pleased to have Valego as a newcomer and to have another woman on the council.

Valego said she learned a lot in her two years working with the council and was amazed to see how things come together.

“It was amazing to see how things came together and how we benefit our city,” Valego said. Valego plans to run for another term on the council in two years.

The new council will convene Monday, Jan. 5, though the meeting will be organizational. The meeting will consist of assigning seats and then electing a council president and vice president for the upcoming term.

2025 JANUARY



Students at AHS receive congressional award

By Quinn Suomala
 Staff Writer

AGAWAM – Two students at Agawam High School were honored with a congressional award for their work in developing an app.

Seniors Aiden Jordan and Matilda Larochelle worked on creating an app, JournalNGo for the congressional app challenge.

They worked on this app for several months and, with the help of fellow student Justin Barbaneagra, were able to submit it to the competition.

Jordan and Larochelle were inspired to create JournalNGo as they wanted to encourage people to practice writing.

“We started by asking what app we use the most



Agawam High School students Justin Barbaneagra, Aiden Jordan and Matilda Larochelle were honored with a congressional award for the app they developed. TURLEY PHOTOS BY QUINN SUOMALA

REVIEW | page 2

Presentation kicks off 250th

By Gregory A. Scibelli
 gscibelli@turley.com

AGAWAM – The Agawam Historical Association is looking to celebrate the 250th birthday of America and will start off with the Winter Meeting set to take place on Jan. 15 at 6:30 p.m. at the Captain Charles Leonard House at 663 Main St.

According to a press release submitted by the association, a series of events is planned to commemorate the big anniversary as the history of the country, especially from Agawam’s perspective is remembered in 2026.

Up first on Jan. 15, Springfield Armory National Historic Site Curator Alex MacKenzie will present “The Most Proper Spot in America: The Continental Arsenal at Springfield,” revealing its hidden stories and the contributions of our region to American independence.

Following the creation of the Continental Army in 1775, General George Washington

and his lieutenants organized a system of supply and logistics to support the fledgling American military as it fought for independence. Brigadier General Henry Knox, Chief of Artillery, personally sited a military supply depot at Springfield, Massachusetts early in 1777. Hundreds of enlisted tradesmen poured into town to begin building, repairing, maintaining, and shipping all sorts of military supplies, and Springfield was quickly bustling with activity throughout the American Revolution.

Alex MacKenzie is a museum professional, author, and historian specializing in U.S. military history, with a focus on small arms development, logistics, and supply. He has authored numerous articles and publications on the technical and industrial history of small arms centered on the Springfield Armory (1777–1968) and is a leading authority on the management and care of historic firearms and ammunition in

museum collections. He has developed museum policy for the National Park Service, contributed to publications on collections care, and regularly consults with museums nationwide. He serves as Curator of Collections at Springfield Armory National Historic Site and resides in Belchertown with his wife and two daughters.

This event is free and open to the public.

The private, non-profit, all-volunteer Agawam Historical Association preserves and presents Agawam and Feeding Hills history, and provides educational opportunities at its quarterly meetings. The association archives and displays artifacts pertaining to the Town of Agawam and its Fire Department in the Marilyn P. Curry History Room and Chief Russell “Rusty” Jenks Apparatus Room, both located in the Agawam Historical & Fire House Museum, housed in the former Elm Street Fire Station at 35 Elm Street in Agawam Center.



Lighting up the holidays

The true essence of Christmas on the front lawn of Agawam Congregational Church at 745 Main Street in the Historic District of Town.

SUBMITTED PHOTO



REAL

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Local Life

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2025 JANUARY



Lego League makes it to states

By Quinn Suomala
Staff Writer

AGAWAM – The Agawam Lego League, also called the Gear Heads, made it to the state competition this year after many months of hard work.

The Lego league is for children in grades four through eight and for the competition the team members are asked to build a robot that navigates set challenges and to come up

with a solution for a current problem in the world.

The team this year is made up of Jake Terramagra, Liam Gleason, Fatih Cogal and Calvin Johnson.

This year, the Lego league was challenged to focus on a problem related to deep sea exploration. The Gear Heads decided to focus on deep sea mining and how it can be made safer and less disturbing for the ecosystem and sealife.

“There are these manganese nodules...and they’re all over the ocean floor, but in some parts of the ocean it is more concentrated than others, like the abyssal zone,” Assistant Coach Crystal Garner said. “The team came up with the solution to mine these modules and to have the least effect that they could come up with on the ecosystem and the animals.”

The team worked hard to develop this idea and

have it all come together. They went to the library to research the abyssal zone and to gain a better understanding of mining and the ecosystem.

With all of this research they put together their proposal to present to the judges at their different competitions.

They proposed a robot that would go to the floor of the abyssal zone and suck up the nodules like a vacuum.

Agawam school committee addresses graduation

By Quinn Suomala
Staff Writer

AGAWAM – The Agawam school committee discussed the relocation of the class of 2025’s graduation due to the high school project.

The graduation had to be relocated due to the ongoing high school project, which will need to begin construction prior to the graduation date.

As a result, the stadium where the high school has

been hosting graduation will be unavailable this year, so the Superintendent Sheila Hoffman researched alternative locations along with high school principal Jim Blain.

“Alternative sites were researched, we had two venues presented to parents and their families for input,” Hoffman said. “One was School Street Park here in Agawam and the other was Symphony Hall in Springfield.”

Following this research,

Hoffman and Blain ultimately decided to have graduation at Symphony Hall. This was due to a variety of factors.

“My recommendation for this year is based on the following factors,” Hoffman said. “Having an indoor venue takes away the variable of weather. Grass at School Street Park has more concern with rain than the turf field in the stadium.”

On top of this factor, Hoffman also sent out surveys to

high school seniors and their families.

“Parents were pretty much 50/50 for School Street and Symphony Hall and 68% of students surveyed picked Symphony Hall over School Street Park,” Hoffman said.

Given this data, and the fact that the district wants the ceremony to ultimately be for the students and families of the class of 2025, Hoffman and Blain decided that Symphony Hall was the best option.

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REVIEW | from page 1

and we found that it was the notes app,” Larochelle said. “We felt there was a lack of incentive to continue using the notes app so we wanted to integrate a point system.”

As people use the app they are able to create a private account and log their journals. They can also create as many journals as they want.

“Households that only have access to one device will be able to use it with multiple people,” Jordan said. “That way people will have their privacy.”

Everytime a person logs into an app they get points that they can use to buy stickers in the app’s shop. However, if a person doesn’t log on for multiple days they will lose points.

Larochelle and Jordan hope that people will be able to use this app for a variety of reasons, whether it is for making to-do lists or using it as an official journal.

The journal entries themselves will be sorted by date, most recent to oldest.

“They will be able to see how their writing skills are progressing over time,” Jordan said. “People using it for therapeutic reasons will be able to see if it is getting



Agawam High School Jim Blain congratulated his students on winning the Congressional App Award.

better, worse or even identify what is going on or causing them stress.”

Throughout the process of creating the app, Larochelle and Jordan all worked

together to brainstorm the app and different functions of it.

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2025 FEBRUARY



Future artists learn paper mosaic

By Quinn Suomala
Staff Writer

AGAWAM – The library hosted a paper mosaic program for kids in fifth and sixth grade to enjoy.

Youth Associate Isabelle Malvezzi organized and ran the program. She wanted to give the kids a fun and relaxing craft that they could get creative with.

“It was something that looked like it would be super fun and very relaxing,” Malvezzi said.

She hoped that this program would give kids a chance to relax and have some fun without any expectations.

“As you get into that middle and high school things become a lot about learning to meet deadlines and learning to do things in a specific way to please people... but with a craft like this it is purely about expression, cre-

ativity and how you want it to look,” Malvezzi said.

To prepare for the craft, Malvezzi printed out some different templates for participants to use as a base for their mosaic.

The templates included different flowers, plants and some basic scenery that Malvezzi thought would be fun and simple to decorate.

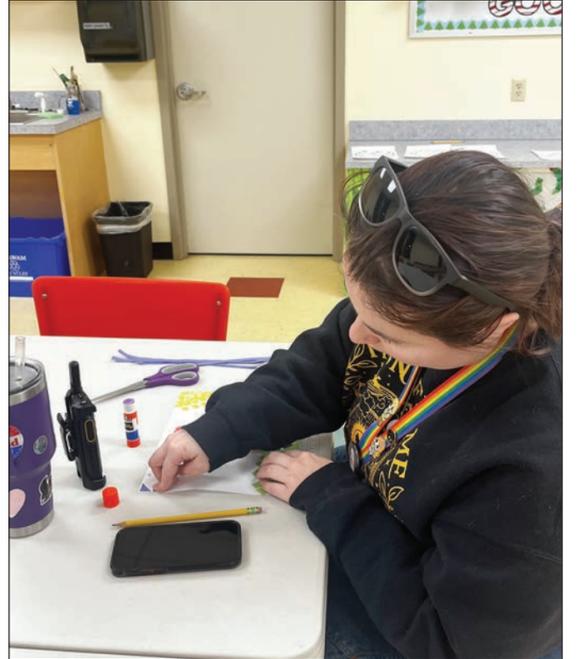
“I tried to take inspiration from what you see in real mosaic work, like with tiles, so I know vegetation and fruits are super popular alongside landscapes and animals,” Malvezzi said.

Once the participants had picked out their different templates, Malvezzi also encouraged them to go beyond what the template offered.

“I gave the templates so people could have a base to start from and I wanted to see how they would add to them,” Malvezzi said.



Jesse Poirier traced out the different designs he wanted to add to his paper mosaic.



Youth Associate Isabelle Malvezzi added some additional creative touches to her paper mosaic.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY QUINN SUOMALA

Dean Fleagle completes Eagle Scout project

By Quinn Suomala
Staff Writer

AGAWAM – Scout Dean Fleagle has completed his Eagle Scout project where he worked to raise funds to support the Dakin Humane Society.

Fleagle worked over the course of several months to raise money for the Dakin Humane Society.

He ran several supply drives at Smithland Pet and Garden Center where people were invited to donate supplies Dakin needed or make donations.

During these supply drives Fleagle also ran a bake sale to help raise additional funds.

“We sold brownies, pumpkin bread, cookies and tried to raise as much money and get as many supplies as we could,” Fleagle said.

Through these drives he was able to get over \$700 worth of supplies to Dacon and used remaining funds to buy fleece that he used to make blankets.

Fleagle and his team of volunteers were able to make over 150 blankets with the fleece Fleagle purchased that they then sent to Dakin Humane Society for them to give to their animals.

“We had some scouts sit in the basement, take the fleece, cut it up and tie it into over 150 blankets in total that were donated,” Fleagle said.

It took a lot of hard work, and Fleagle was proud to have been able to gather as many supplies and donations as he did.

“It was important to me to get this done and I was so happy I was able to do it to such a high level by giving so many blankets and supplies,” Fleagle said.

He also sends out his gratitude to the people and organizations that offered their support as he worked on this project.

“I am thankful to Agawam as a community for being so supportive and generous with their donations,” Fleagle said. “Along with them, the Knights of Columbus significantly contributed to our project as they donated \$300.

Fleagle was inspired to begin this project when he heard about how after COVID many people were returning the “COVID pets” they had. He had always cared deeply for animals and wanted to try to support shelters during this time.



Scout Dean Fleagle is proud to have completed his Eagle Scout project where he raised funds to support the Dakin Humane Society.

SUBMITTED PHOTO

Julia Nicosia is crowned the 2025 Agawam Colleen

By Quinn Suomala
Staff Writer

AGAWAM – Julia Nicosia was crowned the 2025 Colleen for Agawam at the coronation ceremony on Feb. 8.

She was grateful for this honor and excited to represent her community as the Agawam Colleen.

“I’m very excited because I am 22, so this was my last show at it,” Nicosia said.

Nicosia was excited to be able to act as a role model in the community through her work as a Colleen.

“I love to work with kids, so being a role model has always been the biggest thing for me,” Nicosia said. “I think it is a big thing that they can say, ‘I see myself in that person, maybe I can do that when I am older.’”

Additionally, Abigail Drumm was honored to receive the Fowle award, which was given based on her essay on the importance of her Irish heritage and on

her connection with Damian McGinty.

“I tried my hardest to follow in his footsteps, which led me to where I am today,” Drumm said. “It is because of him that I have my two greatest joys: music and theater.”

President of the Parade Committee Abbie Fiore was proud of all of the Colleens. She was glad to see each of them displaying the key qualities of being a Colleen.

“A Colleen has dedication to their community, involvement to the Irish heritage is important...and their desire to do work in their community,” Fiore said.

She was glad to welcome the Colleens into the St. Patrick’s Community, which Fiore has been dedicated to for many years.

“The community is like a family,” Fiore said. “We all really have a strong desire to keep putting our Irish heritage out there and keep building up community in-

volvement in this.”

The Colleens are a respected tradition throughout Agawam and many other communities in Massachusetts.

They are a way for exemplary young women with Irish heritage to come forward and celebrate their accomplishments and their Irish ancestry.

The application process to be a Colleen begins in September, where each person interested fills out a resume and answers questions around their Irish heritage and their interest in being a Colleen.

Once those applications are sent in, impartial judges are called by the parade committee to decide who is the Colleen Court and the Colleen.

This year Agawam had four applicants for the Colleens, so all four girls are able to participate as part of the Colleen Court.



(Left to right) Teagan Fullam, Samantha Machos, Julia Nicosia and Abigail Drumm were excited to be Agawam’s new Colleen Court.

TURLEY PHOTO BY QUINN SUOMALA

2025 MARCH



Agawam's Parade Marshal Todd Arsalanian is driven down the parade route.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY WWW.SWEETDOGPHOTOS.COM

Teens compete in 'Minute to Win It'

By Quinn Suomala
Staff Writer

AGAWAM – Agawam Public Library recently held a Minute to Win It program for teens to compete in.

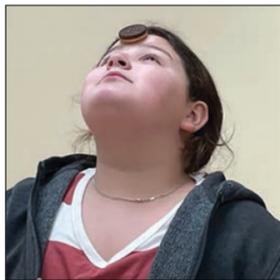
During this program each of the teens competed in a variety of challenges in order to earn the chance to pick out a prize.

The challenges included cookie face, backwards ABCs, cube stack, suck it up and keep it up.

During cookie face the teens were challenged to move a cookie from their forehead into their mouths. For backwards ABCs they had to see who could recite their ABCs backwards the most in one minute.

Cube stack challenged the kids to hold a popsicle stick in their mouth and stack cubes on top of the stick to see how many they could balance on there at once.

In the game "suck it up" they had one minute to use a straw to transfer pom poms from one bowl to another.



Riley Gendron concentrates hard on succeeding in the game cookie face.

Finally, for the game "keep it up" the teens had to try to keep a feather in the air for one minute simply by blowing on it.

Library Youth Associate Isabelle Malvezzi particularly enjoyed watching the teens challenge themselves with the "keep it up" game.

"That was one where they all had to do it at the same time and I enjoyed watching the different tactics they used to try to keep the feather in the air while also trying not to collide with each other, which they did very well," Malvezzi said.



Wyatt Elwell does his best to be the first to manipulate a cookie off of his forehead into his mouth.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY QUINN SUOMALA

As the teens all worked to keep the feather in the air they found an additional challenge of trying not to laugh at themselves and at each other.

"It is very silly trying to watch people try to blow on a feather to keep it up in the air," Malvezzi said. "It was funny to watch them do it while trying not to break down into laughter."

At the end of the evening, the teens got to pick out prizes from the library's supply of rubber ducks and finger puppets.

Cold day, warm smiles at St. Patrick's Day Parade

HOLYOKE – Last Sunday on a crisp morning, Agawam representatives made their way to the Holyoke St. Patrick's Day Parade, one of the richest traditions in the region. Agawam's contingent marched in the parade, which was held on a sun-splashed beautiful day in Holyoke. Agawam's contingent did not include the marching band for second straight year, but the cheerleaders, elected officials, and the Colleen and Court represented the town this year.



Citizenship Award winner Dawn DeMatteo is driven down the route by her husband, Dave.

Health department planning changes to tobacco regulations

By Quinn Suomala
Staff Writer

AGAWAM – The Board of Health in Agawam is considering changes to the tobacco regulations.

One part of these changes will be updating the definitions within the regulations so they are more aligned with state standards.

On top of this, there are

going to be some changes to the policies themselves.

"Some of the policy changes are increasing the proximity of tobacco stores to schools and establishing a retail density of tobacco stores," Health Agent Lauren Kennedy said. "The other policy change that attracted a lot of attention is the restriction of oral nicotine pouches to adult only retail

tobacco stores."

The goal of these changes is to improve the health and safety of everyone in the town.

"Any time we can move tobacco stores farther away from schools is a good thing," Kennedy said. "That way kids aren't having to walk by tobacco stores on their way home from school."

The policy changes specif-

ically around the oral nicotine pouches is to try to make it more difficult for under age people to access them.

"Therefore there is really no reason why a youth should be exposed to these products because they are not in stores where they are available," Kennedy said.

It can be hard to guarantee that all stores that sell these pouches are going to be

as diligent as needed in preventing underage youth from purchasing them.

"We do our best to gain compliance with the 21 and over underage sales by tobacco stores, there are still underage sales that do unfortunately occur," Kennedy said.

Another reason these nicotine pouches have been particularly targeted by

these regulation changes is that they can have really high amounts of nicotine in them.

The FDA recently said that the pouches could only be legally marketed in the U.S. if they had 6mg or less of nicotine.

Kennedy also made it clear that even with this ruling by the FDA, it does not mean that these products are safe to consume.



2025 APRIL

County sheriffs visit Agawam Senior Center

AGAWAM – Recently, Sheriff Nick Cocchi and members of his staff visited the Agawam Senior Center.

The sheriff along with his staff and Councilor Russo served lunch to the seniors. The sheriff had members of his TRIAD Division and

K-9 units with him. The sheriff explained all the services his department has to offer seniors.

SUBMITTED PHOTOS

Left: Sheriff Nick Cocchi makes contact with seniors in Agawam a couple of weeks ago during a visit.

Below: A member of the senior center asks questions of a Sheriff's Department staff member.



Fans will see new parking patterns, paths to stadium for sporting events

Gregory A. Scibelli
gscibelli@turley.com

AGAWAM – Traffic pattern changes are coming to Agawam High School once the high school project begins, with some of the bigger changes occurring within the sports arena.

Athletic Director Karen Gomez said fans are going to need to get used to a lot of walking if they are going to attend games at Harmon A. Smith Field inside the stadium that houses lacrosse, soccer, field hockey, track, and football.

"It's going to be like this for the next four years," Gomez said.

It is possible the traffic pattern will change as the work progresses, but to start with, the majority of traffic will go along the sidewalk on Mill St. from the large parking lot to the Mill St. entrance to the stadium.

Many fans have walked along a sidewalk that led from the large parking lot along the basketball and tennis courts straight to the stadium entrance.

A second entrance comes from the side off Mill St. where there is a small handicapped parking area. Many people have also utilized the parking lot in the church across the

street during many games, though it is not completely clear whether or not parking at the church will remain an option, Gomez said.

In the large parking lot on Mill St., much of it will be used for staging and equipment once construction begins on the high school project. Gomez said project construction is scheduled to be starting after spring vacation, which is supposed to take place from April 21 to 25.

Gomez said she has held meetings with all of the parent booster groups to inform them of the changes that are happening.

High school project gets underway

By Gregory A. Scibelli
gscibelli@turley.com

AGAWAM – Without any delays, the Agawam High School projects got underway as students left the campus for 10 days.

Bulldozers and other heavy equipment occupied the west side of the large parking lot and begun staging work last Friday. Construction crews were on the job, but students were off for the Good Friday holiday, and are off all week for spring vacation. Sports are still going, but the school is otherwise closed during the day.

As construction begins, there will be some minor

disruptions to student and staff's schedule.

Student pick-up and drop off will be rerouted throughout construction and they currently estimate that about 100 parking spaces on the property will be lost.

For sports, one practice field will be lost so both lacrosse teams will share the turf field for practices.

Additionally, home softball games have now been moved to Borgatti Park.

According to several presentations made by the mayor, who also chairs the school committee, the work will take about four years and there will be a lot of moving parts to the construction.

The total high school building should be 211,575 gsf and the Early Childhood Center is planned to be 21,150 gsf.

There will be a roadway going around the total property of the project, with access points on Mill and Cooper Street, similar to the current building.

Additionally, the project team has planned for there to be a significant amount of lighting distributed throughout the property.

"It will be a much better lit site than the existing high school is," Mayor Christopher Johnson said.

2025 APRIL



Agawam Day celebrated in Florida

AGAWAM – A tradition for many years, “Agawam Day” was held in Florida at Fort Desoto on March 6. It was the 44th team former and part-time residents of Agawam, many of them retirees, gathered down in Florida to celebrate a reunion as well as being from the community.

On the left: George and Marlene Censki arrive in style.



On the right: Several members of the Class of 1968 pose together: Debbie Dragon, Janis Phaneuf, Bill Pelley, Donna Fadgen, Connie Packard.



SUBMITTED PHOTOS

2025 MAY



Rosie Robotics reflects on World Championship experience

Amanda Munson
amunson@turley.com

AGAWAM – The Agawam School Committee had visitors from the “Rosie Robotics” team on April 29, led and coached by Co-founder Dan Henry, joined with 8 representatives and team members to speak about going to the World Championship in Houston, Texas. With the competition occurring over their spring vacation, Lead Marketer Kassie Sagan ex-

tended a thank you to the community, on behalf of “Rosie Robotics” for helping the team go to Houston and their generosity. “It meant the world to us.”

Rosie Robotics team members discussed their experience and the actual competition, beginning by explaining 3 versus 3 “robot style” which allowed the team to collaborate with a variety of different teams. Stating that it granted the opportunity to learn and ab-

sorb skills and information from teams from around the world, inspiring the team and aspiring to the organizations present like NASA.

This competition showed the team how robotics is used in different fields across the world and how the team members could be like them one day. “It was only possible due to the community’s generosity shown toward us,” said Tim, a junior at Agawam High School.

The Rosie Mascot, Robbie

went ahead to speak about his first year on the “Rosie Robotics” team, helping with machining and his first time experiences. “When I first came here, I didn’t have a lot of people I could connect with. Coming to a place where there’s a lot of people I could connect with, I found a lot of friends and it made me feel like I belonged. I found a place where I could be with people like me.”

Co-founder Dana Henry of “Rosie Robotics” ex-

plained the significance of the Agawam robotics team attending the world’s championship. “There were 3,690 teams in the first robotics competition, we were ranked 145th. At championships, it’s 600 teams: 8 divisions of 75 teams each. The top teams in the world are well-funded with 6-figure budgets every year. I am not asking for more from what we already have. The caliber of the rag-tag group from Agawam, the robot that we

put on the field, was as good as many of them there. We are not an elite team. Rosie made a name for herself; there was a bunch of people who congratulated Rosie for being there. We haven’t been to the World’s Championship since 2016, that was a long time ago and that was our 4th trip there over our 24 years of existence. By far, this is the best robot on field performance in our 24 years,” said Henry.

Construction begins at Agawam High School

AGAWAM – Construction work got underway at Agawam High School as part of the large parking lot along Mill St. was reconfigured for the work and the large practice fields primarily used for junior varsity soccer were prepared for new construction. As part of the project, the varsity softball field will be removed and eventually re-located to another part of the campus. There are alternate parking plans at

the school and construction workers had the first week without contending with students going in and out of the existing school building. Principal James Blain has been consistently briefing families on new traffic patterns for parking and sports events, as well as pick-up and drop-off for students. Construction will continue in phases for the next four years.



The parking lot at the high school is being altered as construction begins on the high school project.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI

Residents take aim at condition of athletic fields

By Gregory A. Scibelli
gscibelli@turley.com

AGAWAM – An Agawam resident is looking for the town to change its approach to care for fields throughout the community.

He appeared in front of the Agawam City Council on May 5 to complain about what he is calling the poor condition of the town’s baseball and other athletic fields.

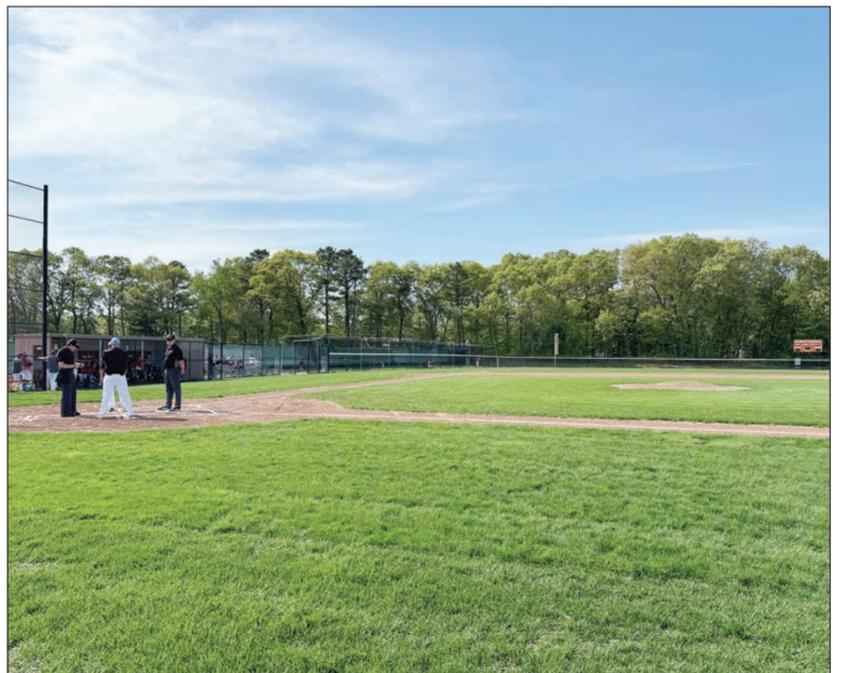
The complaint was led by resident Dom Pisano, a fourth-generation member of the community who stated he believed the athletic fields were being cosmetic repair and were a hazard.

Pisano said he was not looking to point fingers at anyone in town, and he was not disparaging anyone in the Department of Public Works.

“I know they work very good,” said Pisano. “They have been deteriorating for quite some time.”

He said he has met with several councilors on the issues.

Pisano said he had worked previously with the DPW to formulate a plan to work on one field at a time to counteract what he is describing as deteriorating conditions. He said that plan was supposed to take



The varsity baseball field at Agawam High School at Monday was ready for play after a week full of rainy conditions. But some residents are taking issue with the current condition of many of Agawam’s fields, bringing their comments to the Agawam City Council last week.

TURLEY PHOTO BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI

place a few years ago.

“Now I am being told there is a plan in place to start this fall,” Pisano said. “I’m not sure why it has not happened in the fall before this, or two years ago.”

Parks and Recreation Director Christopher Sparks

confirmed earlier this spring that Shea Park will be among parks closed this fall for overseeding. Shea Park does have some grass issues in the outfield at the park, though new dirt was brought in to the infield earlier this spring and a new

home plate was installed as well. There is a youth field opposite the 90-foot diamond at the park as well.

Pisano suggested a committee be formed in order to address the approach to maintaining fields and other landscaping in town.

2025 Year in REVIEW

JUNE

Town awards trash, recycling contract to new vendor

By Gregory A. Scibelli
gscibelli@turley.com

AGAWAM – Ever since single-stream recycling and trash removal was introduced for the town of Agawam about a decade ago, Republic Services has been the vendor Agawam residents have observed coming by their homes to collect each week.

Last week, the town announced it was ending its relationship with Republic and awarded the trash and recycling removal contract to USA Waste and Recycling.

According to Tracy DeMaio, Environmental Project Coordinator with the Agawam Department of Public Works, the town has signed a new contract with USA which will begin on Tuesday, July 1, which is also the start of the next fiscal year. It is not known how long the new contract is for.

Most residents will not see a noticeable change in their basic services. For every residence in the community, there are two barrel issued, a trash barrel and a single-stream recycling barrel. Single-stream recycling

allows anything that is a recyclable item to be placed in the bin. Most recycle bins in Agawam are orange and brown, matching the town's school colors.

The Town purchased those barrels when they started the program and will continue to own those barrels. They will continue to be utilized and residents will not need purchase new barrels.

Also not changing will be the days that residents will have their trash and recycling picked up.

DeMaio said trash and recycling will continue to be on the same regularly scheduled day. Prior to the end of June, residents should all receive a mailer home with a calendar which also reflects the recycling collection schedule. Recycling is collected every other week.

DeMaio said the format for barrels will remain the same and every parcel will only be allowed one trash and one recycling barrel.

Any trash that exceeds the town's 65-gallon trash cart capacity will be required to have an official town green overflow bag.



Children's Librarian Evan Delano and the teens got to work making Pride flags at the Pride party.

TURLEY PHOTO BY QUINN SUOMALA

Agawam Public Library holds Pride Party

By Quinn Suomala
Staff Writer

AGAWAM – The Agawam Public Library held a Pride party for teens to attend.

At this party teens were able to enjoy snacks, crafts, books with LGBTQIA+ representation and a game of Pride trivia bingo.

Children's Librarian Evan Delano came up with the Pride trivia bingo. The rules were that Delano would ask a Pride-related trivia question and participants had to find the answers on their bingo card.

If they got all the answers right and they lined up to make five in a row, then the person would win.

If an answer was wrong, they had to unmark the spot and try again.

Delano had fun coming up with the different questions for the trivia game. They hoped they would help people to learn a bit about Pride history while having fun.

Delano came up with all the activities as they wanted to ensure there were things for everyone to do.

"I wanted to have a mix of things that were asynchronous activities so people could drop in and activities we could do together," Delano said. "I also always like to have something hands on for kids who are more tactile."

Delano also hoped that having the various activities would help the kids to feel more comfortable meeting new people and talking with them.

They wanted to have this event as a safe space for the teens to come in and feel welcomed.

"I think it's always important to have programming that affirms LGBTQ+ teens," Delano said.

Given the amount of anti-trans and anti-LGBTQ+ rhetoric going around, Delano wanted to ensure that teens could find an environment where they felt safe and supported.

"It is important that we go out of our way to make

sure that the LGBTQ+ youth knows that we support them and we want them to have access to queer books that they want or need, and a safe place with supportive adults," Delano said.

Additionally, Delano wanted to give the teens a space to connect with one another.

"It's fun to hear people open up about their experiences and connect...and to provide a safe and fun environment for them," Delano said.

They were proud of the teens who came out to the party, and glad that everyone seemed to enjoy themselves.



Teens enjoy playing Pride trivia bingo at Agawam Public Library.

Agawam High School celebrates Class of 2025

Amanda Munson
Staff Writer
amunson@turley.com

AGAWAM – On June 14, the Agawam High School class of 2025 graduated 232 students on Saturday at the Springfield Symphony Hall. The program began with the graduates' processional, principal's welcome, mayor's address, superintendent's address, president of the class of 2025 address, salutatory address, valedictory address, and the awarding of diplomas and certificates.

Performances by the combined bands from Director William Hueglin and combined choirs Director Amanda Johnson, with special recognition to the graduates who will be entering the military during the Pledge of Allegiance. Graduates were also recognized for being in the National Honor Society, Pro Merito, Renaissance, Peer Leadership, La Societe Honoraire de Francais, and La Sociedad Honoraria Hispanica.



The address to the class of 2025 was given by President Terence K. Cheung, president of the class of 2025, who took a selfie before signing off.



After moving their tassel, the AHS graduates throw their caps into the air signifying the end to their high school careers.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY AMANDA MUNSON

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2025

Year in REVIEW

JULY

Concerts



Matthew and Daniela Balsamo at the School Street Park Concert on July 9.



Mother and son, Liz Frogameni and Marlow Frogameni, at the School Street Park Concert on July 9.



People who attended the library's summer reading kick-off could play arcade games at the arcade on wheels.

TURLEY PHOTO BY QUINN SUOMALA

Fun and games at the APL summer reading kick-off

By Quinn Suomala
Staff Writer

AGAWAM – The Agawam Public Library held their summer reading kick-off on Monday, June 23.

During this event kids and adults were welcome to play board games, do crafts, eat ice cream from the Moolicious Ice Cream truck and play games on the arcade on wheels.

The library staff tried to have a variety of activities so anyone could come in and enjoy themselves.

"The concepts we were going for were an all-ages program, something kids can do and also adults could enjoy," Children's Librarian Pamela Weingart said.

One of the available activities was a make-your-own board game craft, which many families were excited to take home and get started on.

"We have an outline of the board game and then kids and families can add all the special parts in," Weingart said.

All of these activities were to encourage people to come to the library and sign-up for the summer reading program.

There are summer read-



Kids, teens and adults were welcomed to come do crafts and play games at the library during their summer reading kick-off.

ing programs for kids, teens and adults. Kids and teens can earn a raffle ticket for every half hour they read which they can then use to enter into a raffle for the variety of prizes the library has available.

Adults earn a raffle ticket for every hour they read, and they can also use those tickets to try to earn prizes.

Kids, teens, and adults can also earn raffle tickets for doing different activities

(such as reading a fantasy book or going to an event at the library) and for completing the summer reading challenge.

To sign up for the summer reading program online, go to the website at <https://agawamlibrary.beanstack.com/reader365>.

There is a community summer reading goal for the summer. The APL is challenging the community to read for a total of 5,000 hours.

"We've started doing community goals so everybody is reading together and contributing to the goal we have," Adult Services Librarian Cher Collins said. "I think it helps to have everyone work collaboratively toward that common goal."

Collins also hopes the community goal will help to encourage adults to participate in the summer reading program just as much as the kids.

Boys track 4x100 team makes Nationals

By Christina Gioscia
Correspondent

AGAWAM – On June 21, Agawam Boys Track 4x100 Relay Team went to nationals and placed 15 out of 79 participating teams. Raheem Allen, the team's coach, had a great experience coaching the team all the way to nationals and is proud of their spectacular accomplishment.

"As a coach - I felt happy for the boys, they have worked extremely hard all season long and it was great to watch them see the results after all the work they put into their training," Allen said. "It was an experience that they will be able to share with each other forever. The standard of excellence that was set from the beginning pushed each athlete to the next level. Those standards helped them to hold each other accountable and helped with forming a special bond between them as runners. I am proud to be called their coach."

"Qualifying for nationals was amazing and a plus for the Town of Agawam. Being able to achieve this the first year as a Track Head Coach is humbling - but allows me to acknowledge that there is still more work to be done and to continue to build The

Agawam Track Program. My job as the coach was to keep these guys grounded, finish the season strong, stay competitive, and win at each meet. We found out we qualified for nationals after our third meet of the season while suffering our first loss of the season to an outstanding Longmeadow team. However, the loss was the driving force for us to work harder at practice as a relay team and overall track team. As their coach I wanted to teach them how to humble themselves after a loss, accept some success and show them this is something that we can build off as individuals and as athletes. I have told them from day one that 'I am looking to change the culture of the team and create a winning atmosphere here at Agawam. My only ask of them was for them to buy into what I am putting out and the rest will speak for itself. My most memorable moment outside of watching the boys prepare and run great races would be them handing me the baton they used after a race and them saying, 'This is for you, coach.' For me, that showed the growth in their character. That showed proof that they bought into everything that I was putting out and in their growth throughout the season."



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Agawam Boys Track 4x100 Relay Team, Julien Gebo, Dominic Rodriguez, Chris Bates, and Marcus Stallwoth, participated in Nationals.

Opinion

Guest Column



I'm on SS disability, should I switch to regular Social Security?

Dear Rusty:
Should I take my Social Security now at age 62, or wait till I am 65?

I've been collecting SS disability due to health issues and was curious if I should wait or claim my regular Social Security retirement benefits now.

Signed: Disabled but Wondering

Dear Disabled but Wondering:

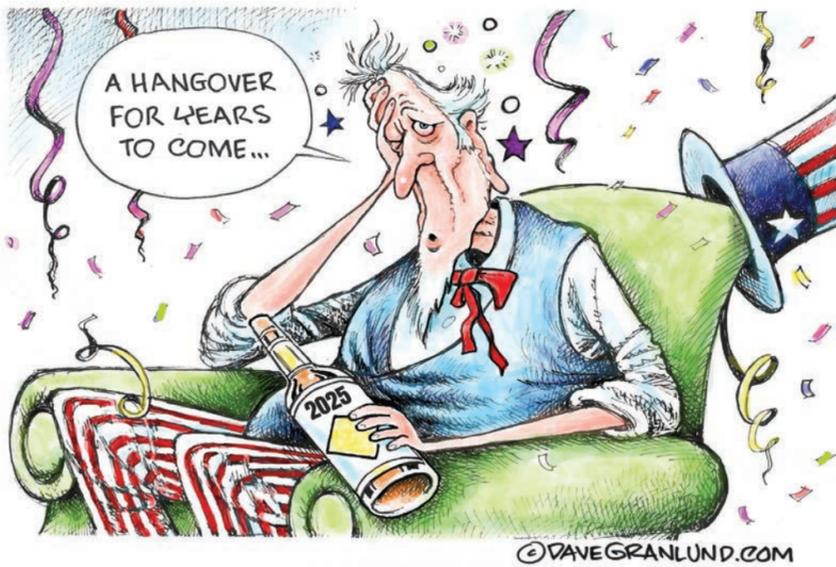
If you are now collecting Social Security Disability Insurance benefits and you are still disabled, it would be a disadvantage to claim your SS retirement benefits at this time age 62 or even at age 65. That's because your SSDI benefit is the same as your Full Retirement Age amount, as calculated for you at the point you became disabled. Born after 1959, your FRA is age 67, but you are already receiving your FRA benefit while on SS disability even though you have not yet reached your full retirement age. That full SSDI benefit will automatically convert to become your SS retirement benefit when you reach your full retirement age.

If you were to claim your normal SS retirement benefit any earlier than your SS full retirement age of 67, the amount you get would

be reduced for claiming early. At your current age, you would likely get between 75% and 80% of what you are now receiving on SSDI (depending on your exact age in the month you claim and at age 65 you would get about 87% of what you are now receiving on Social Security disability.

In other words, as long as your disability continues and you remain eligible for Social Security Disability Insurance benefits, you should not switch to your normal SS retirement benefit, because you would get less money. And the resulting benefit reduction would be permanent.

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Sighting of a Sora



The Massachusetts Audubon Society reported a sighting of a sora on Nauset Beach in Orleans on Cape Cod between Dec. 10 and 16.

Soras are small, chubby, chicken like birds with long toes and between eight to ten inches tall. Their stubby bill distinguished them from other rails in the United States and Canada, which have longer bills. They also frequently hold their short tail cocked up showing their white patch under the tail.

Soras are mottled gray and brown with white-edged feathers, but the feature that stands out the most is their yellow candy-corn bill. Other field marks include a black mask, throat patch and vertical white lines on the sides. Females tend to be less brightly colored than males and have less black on the face and throat. Juveniles also lack the black mask.

Soras have a distinct walk pushing their head forward with every step while nervously flicking the tail upward, exposing the white under tail feathers. They tend to forage in dense vegetation, but also venture into open areas from time to time. Their long toes help them walk on top of floating mats of vegetation. Soras make their homes in freshwater wetlands with emergent vegetation such as cattails, sedges and rushes. During migration and winter, they also use brackish marshes, flooded fields and wet pastures.

The Sora makes its presence known with plaintive whistles and whinnies rising from the marshes all across North America. Despite its abundance, it is not often seen: As with other rails, it spends most of its time hidden in dense marshy growth or wet meadows. Occasionally it will walk about in full view at the edge of a pond, delighting any birders, who happen to be nearby. Although Soras might seem like weak fliers when seen fluttering over the marsh, they regularly migrate long distances, many going to South America for the winter.

Cape Cod bird sightings

Besides the sora, the following sightings were reported between Dec. 10 and Dec. 16. A western tanager was found at Mass Audubon's Wellfleet Bay sanctuary. The male painted bun-

ting continued at a feeder in Brewster. Other bird sightings included a clapper rail and six western willets in South Chatham, two common terns in North Chatham, a blue-headed vireo

hour period to count birds. Data from the CBC can be utilized in many ways, including to monitor trends in bird populations, document range shifts over time and examine how climate



and a yellow-breasted chat in South Orleans, a common yellowthroat and for northern shovelers in Harwich and a short-eared owl.

Birds seen at Race Point in Provincetown were a black guillemot, 200 razor-bills, 13 dovebies, three common murrelets, 45 black-legged kittiwakes, six Iceland gulls, a red-necked grebe and 75 northern gannets.

Other sightings around the Cape included two continuing Eurasian wigeon in Yarmouth Port, two Barrow's goldeneyes at Loop Beach in Cotuit, a great egret at Mass Audubon's Skunknet River sanctuary in Barnstable, a Nashville warbler reported at a house in Yarmouth, continuing unseasonably large numbers of tree swallows in various places including over 50 in Falmouth, two western willets in Chatham and an American golden plover in North Truro.

Christmas bird count

From Dec. 15 to Jan. 5, the Christmas Bird Count will commence in the U.S., Canada and 18 other countries in the Western Hemisphere. Countries are divided into geographical regions with 35 in Massachusetts and each region will pick a single 24-

change may impact the winter distributions of birds.

CBC data has been used in hundreds of analyses, peer-reviewed publications and government reports over the decades.

Birds likely seen in Massachusetts are chickadees, titmice, many species of woodpeckers, bluebirds, Carolina wren and many raptors. Migrants from the north include kinglets, some raptors, snow bunting and some sparrows. Waterfowl seen mostly along the coast are dabbling and diving ducks. Irruptive species that are only present in some years are evening grosbeak, red crossbill, white-winged crossbill, redpoll, pine grosbeak and red-breasted nuthatch.

Helping birds

People may help birds by participating in the Christmas Bird Count. It is an important source of data on birds.

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.

Scholarship and Fellowship funds available

WESTFIELD - The Horace Smith Fund, located in Westfield, Massachusetts has scholarship and fellowship money available for residents of Hampden County, MA. Graduating high school seniors and students already in college may apply for Scholarships of up to \$12,000. Those in their final year of college and previous college graduates pursuing advanced degrees may apply for Fellowships of \$15,000. Applicants must maintain at least a B average in college and be enrolled as full-time students.

Awards are made based on both academic achievement and merit. Of great importance is a personal written account of why the student feels deserving of financial assistance and their goals in pursuing higher education.

Last year, \$297,000 was awarded to 24 individuals. Scholarships were given to 18 graduating seniors from 11 Hampden County high schools. Three scholarships were also awarded to current college students to

assist them in completing their undergraduate degrees, and three fellowships were given to college graduates pursuing advanced degrees, who had graduated from Hampden County high schools.

The Horace Smith Fund was established in 1899 by the successful and generous philanthropist named Horace Smith, co-founder of Smith & Wesson, established in Springfield. The scholarships and fellowships are named for Walter S. Barr, a West Springfield businessman, whose widow left the bulk of the family estate to The Horace Smith Fund in 1950.

Completed applications must be received either electronically or by mail to The Horace Smith Fund at 16 Union Avenue, Suite 2K, Westfield, MA 01085 no later than March 15, 2026. Applications will also be available at local high school guidance offices, college financial aid offices, online at www.HoraceSmithFund.org or by phoning (413) 739-4222.

Christmas Tree collection same day as trash collection mid January

AGAWAM - The Department of Public Works is pleased to announce that USA Waste and Recycling will be providing a collection of Christmas Trees during the week of Jan. 12 to 16.

Christmas trees will be

collected on the same day as scheduled trash collection. Please be aware that the regular trash truck will not be collecting trees, a separate truck will be running for the collection of trees.

Christmas trees 7' or larger

must be cut in half and placed on the tree belt no earlier than 7am of the collection day listed above.

Trees in plastic bags will not be collected.

It is not the responsibility of the hauler to dig out trees

buried in the snow due to plowing or excessive snowfall prior to the scheduled collection days.

In the event of a snow delay during the scheduled collection week, residents should make alternative ar-

rangements to recycle their trees at the Bondi's Island Landfill. Collection routes for trees will not be re-scheduled.

Residents may dispose of trees prior to or after the scheduled collection days at the Bondi's Island Landfill.



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It's a new year of fun at Agawam Public Library

AGAWAM – All of us at the Agawam Public Library hope you had a relaxing and joyful holiday season, and we cannot wait to share what we have in store for the New Year.

Winter is here to stay, and what better way to stave off the cold than by curling up with a good book? Our Adult Winter Reading Challenge will run from Tuesday, Jan. 20 through Saturday, Feb. 21 and is an excellent way to jump start your 2026 reading goals. Log your reading and complete activities to earn raffle tickets that can be entered to win one of our five grand prizes! We've also challenged the Agawam community to collectively read 1,500 hours, and every hour you log during this reading challenge will help us reach our goal. To get started, please visit agawamlibrary.beanstack.org to participate online or visit the Agawam Library Information Desk to participate in person. Registration for this challenge will begin on Tuesday, Jan. 20 and the last day to enter your raffle tickets for the end-of-challenge drawing is Saturday, Feb. 21.

Attention wrestling fans. We have an extra special event this month that you won't want to miss. Author, podcaster and former WWE media journalist Brian R. Solomon will host a presentation and book signing for his latest book, *Irresistible Force: the Life and Times of Gorilla Monsoon* on Saturday, Jan. 24 at 10 a.m. Brian worked at World Wrestling Enter-

tainment in the early 2000's as a creative services and publications copy editor and later became a staff writer for their suite of magazines and WWF.com website. He has interviewed and interacted with countless wrestling legends over the course of his career. Brian's encyclopedic knowledge of professional wrestling is clearly displayed in his biography of Gorilla Monsoon, one of the original character wrestlers in the early days of the WWF/WWF and later the "voice" of the WWF events. Don't miss this amazing opportunity to connect with this prolific chronicler of the professional wrestling world! Please register to attend.

If one of your New Year's Resolutions is to be more active, there's no better time to start than at our Resolution Walk with the Agawam Public Library Walking Group! Join librarian Kristen Frost on Saturday, Jan. 3 at 9 a.m. to get your heart pumping and your step count up. Weather permitting, this group will meet at School Street Park in Agawam; please meet at the pavilion (Corey Street entrance) and be sure to bundle up. Registration is required. If you're looking to exercise more but don't favor the cold, check out our weekly Chair Yoga classes instead. Instructor Heidi Taberman leads participants in an hour of gentle chair yoga on Wednesday mornings at 9:05 a.m. in the Clini Community Room. Classes are drop-in and no registration is required.

Looking to try out a new hobby this year? Boy, do we have you covered! Winter Gardening with Master Gardener Shari Petrucci is the fourth installment of our series "Gardening Through the Year". In this session, Shari will cover the many winter projects that keep gardeners busy and prepared for spring. Topics will include how to read a seed catalogue, making a garden journal, planning your garden for spring, ordering seeds from your plan, and a hands-on winter sowing workshop using perennial seeds! This workshop will take place on Monday, Jan. 5 at 6:30 p.m.. Attendees are asked to please bring a seed catalog and a clean, empty one gallon milk or water jug. Information on obtaining a seed catalog can be found on our online event calendar when you register to attend. If you're a fan of board games and card games, then our monthly Game Night is perfect for you. Stop by on Wednesday, Jan. 7 at 6:30 p.m. for a fun evening of playing games like Settlers of Catan, Ticket to Ride, Munchkin, and more. Have a favorite game you'd like to share? Bring it along! This is a drop-in event for adults ages 18 and older, and light refreshments will be served. Tea & Trivia is back with two new sessions this month: join us on Tuesday, Jan. 20 at 6:30 p.m. or Wednesday, Jan. 21 at 2:30 p.m. for a couple of rounds of Jeopardy and pub-style trivia. We will use the same questions for both

sessions, so register for the time you prefer and join us for some fun.

If your holiday spending has left you feeling stressed, start yourself on a new path with your finances at our event How to Reduce Spending with Jean Deschaine, Vice President/Senior Financial Center Manager of Berkshire Bank. Maybe you feel like you should have money left at the end of the pay cycle and are not sure why you don't. Maybe you are working toward a financial goal but need more cash flow to achieve it. Perhaps you want help with cutting back on unnecessary spending. This workshop explores a variety of options to reduce the amount of money spent in an effort to cover priority expenses and reach goals. Get yourself started on the right path to financial wellness this year. This event will take place on Monday, Jan. 12 at 6:30 p.m. in the Clini Community Room. Registration is required.

Uncover your story, or create one that's new! Are you a writer looking to connect with other writers? Join our Writers Group hosted by Katherine Anderson on Thursday, Jan. 15 at 6 p.m. This in-person workshop is open to writers of all levels and genres. There will be opportunities for peer and host feedback, finding opportunities for submission to magazines, literary journals, and presses, and more. Registration is required. Join Adult Services Librarian Cher Collins on Thursday, Jan. 15 at

6:30 p.m. for Introduction to Genealogy, a class for beginners looking to unravel the mysteries of their family tree. Learn basic research strategies as well as tips and tricks for getting and staying organized. Please register to attend.

If you're curious about eBooks, are seeking a free alternative to Audible, or just got a new reading device for the holidays, be sure to join us for our Library Tech Class: Learning About Libby! We'll show you the essentials on how to find and borrow new eBooks and audiobooks, along with some helpful hints and tips. Feel free to bring your smart devices and/or your e-Readers with you to the class. You will need your library card and your PIN/password to set up Libby, so please try to make sure you have those ready to go in advance! We will have two sessions this month on Wednesday, Jan. 21 at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 27 at 10 a.m. Registration is required.

If you're not able to stop by the library in person this month, check out our online offerings! Our Virtual Author Talk Series for January kicks off on Tuesday, Jan. 13 at 2 p.m. with David Brooks. Author of *How to Know a Person: The Art of Seeing Others Deeply*, Brooks will lead a riveting and timeless conversation on how to connect with people from all walks of life, and why doing so is paramount to our individual and communal growth. On Tuesday, Jan. 20 at 2 p.m., jour-

nalist Julia Hotz will discuss her book *The Connection Cure: The Prescriptive Power of Movement, Nature, Art, Service, and Belonging*. The first book on social prescribing, *The Connection Cure* explores the idea of nature, art, and service as a form of healing medicine. Mystery fans take note: author Liz Moore will invite readers into a rich and gripping dynasty of secrets and second chances in a discussion of her best-selling novel *The God of the Woods* on Wednesday, Jan. 28 at 7 p.m. Please register to attend any of these author talks by visiting library.org/agawamlibrary. More of a history buff? Join us on Wednesday, Jan. 21 at 7 p.m. for *How Librarians Became the Unlikely Spies of World War II*. Learn the true untold story of the academics who became OSS spies, invented modern spycraft, and helped turn the tide of the war to defeat the Nazis. This event is held in collaboration with the Tewksbury Public Library; please register online to attend.

Thank you to the Agawam Center Library Association for sponsoring select library programs. Upcoming holiday closings include: Monday, Jan. 19 for Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. During the winter months, any closings or late openings due to inclement weather will be reported to local TV stations 22 and 40, as well as their websites and the library's social media platforms.

Mixed Media Exhibit coming to Wistariahurst

HOLYOKE – Wistariahurst Museum is excited to announce the upcoming exhibit *Metamorphosis*, opening Jan. 6, 2026. This exhibit features artists who have attended one or more of the artist sessions held at Wistariahurst Museum. These sessions, led by artist and volunteer Linda Devine, serve as a way for local artists to network, share their work with one another, and develop as artists. The artist sessions have been held monthly since January of 2025, and the group of artists has strengthened their

skills each session. To celebrate the growth these artists have made over the past year, they will be exhibiting their work in Wistariahurst's gallery. *Metamorphosis* has a theme of change, which each artist has interpreted their own way through several mediums, from painting and sculpture, to writing. Artists express themes of personal change, changes in nature, fashion, culture, and more.

Artists featured in this exhibit include J. Arthur Birth, Natasha Colon Ortiz, Linda Devine, Lydia E. Freytes Rodriguez, Emily Munsell, Mau-

reen Naff, Catalina Rojas, Whit Kilpatrick Russell, Carolyn Ruszala, Deborah Skelly, Darlene Swiszc, Chuck Collins, and Mike Worden.

The opening reception of *Metamorphosis* will be held on Tuesday, Jan. 6, from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. Wistariahurst is an artist-friendly space that encourages creativity and supports the growth of this region's artists. Open Gallery Hours will be held from Jan. 6 through Feb. 24 on Mondays (10 a.m. to 2 p.m.) and Tuesdays (4:30 to 6:30 p.m.), which will also be free and open to the public.

Education Association to hold fundraiser

AGAWAM – The Agawam Education Association is having their annual fundraiser to raise funds for scholarships. This year's fundraiser is the AEA Super Bowl Squares and Kickoff Raffle. When you purchase a Super Bowl square (\$25) your purchase includes a raffle ticket for the Kickoff Raffle. The raffle prizes total close to \$3,000 (\$100 cash

prizes, professional sporting events, and we have a loaded locals day too that includes a couple prizes for those who are not local as well, including \$50 cash). The raffle ticket is eligible for prizes each day and runs from Thursday to Sunday for the four weeks leading up to the Super Bowl.

The Super Bowl Squares payout are:

End of first quarter - \$200
End of second quarter - \$200
End of third quarter - \$200
Final Score - \$400
For more information or to purchase a square, please contact Kathy at kgoyette-jediny@agawamed.org
Venmo, check, and cash are accepted.

Free solar tech training at Holyoke Community College begins Jan. 7

HOLYOKE – Holyoke Community College is running a free 16-week training program for people interested in getting a jump start in the clean energy field as solar technicians.

The in-person, hands-on program runs Monday through Thursday and on select Fridays beginning Wednesday, Jan. 7, from 5:30 to 8 p.m. on the main HCC campus and at Holyoke High School's Dean Tech campus. It concludes on May 1.

Program participants will earn OSHA 30 safety credentials while learning fundamental electrical and

construction skills and how those skills are applied in solar photovoltaic systems design, installation, operation, and maintenance. The program also includes job readiness and career development components.

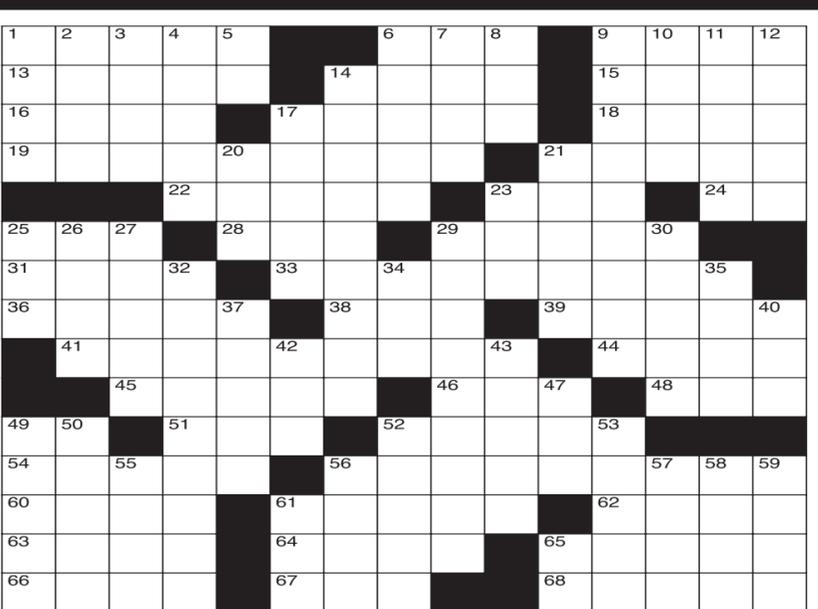
Upon completion, participants will be coached on how to apply for apprenticeships as solar installers and electricians or for jobs in building trades or clean energy fields.

Eligible students must be 18 years of age or older, authorized to work in the United States, and have a high school diploma, GED or HiSET. For a complete list of

program requirements, or to apply, please go to: hcc.edu/cleanenergy

The program is funded through a grant from the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center and the Massachusetts Executive Office of Education, in partnership with the Coalition for an Equitable Economy, Springfield Works, Holyoke Public Schools, and the MassHire Hampden County Workforce Board.

For more information, please contact Mary Wagner, HCC clean energy training manager, at 413-552-2802 or mwagner@hcc.edu.



CLUES ACROSS

- Lakes
- Electromotive force
- Invests in little enterprises
- Longtime Utah Jazz coach
- Small sailboat
- Actor Idris
- Mild yellow Dutch cheese made in balls
- System that detects objects under water
- Harsh, grating noise
- Steward
- A fencing sword
- Infections
- Actress Ryan
- Sodium
- Swedish castle
- A lump of slime
- African antelope
- Insurance providers
- Choosy

CLUES DOWN

- Millisecond
- Spanish city
- A sudden very loud sound
- "The Indiana Jones of beer"
- Tin
- Sea eagles
- Volcanic crater
- Type of coat
- Women's apartments in Ottoman palace
- Divulge a secret
- Norwegian playwright
- "It's a Wonderful Life" director
- Poisonous perennial plant
- 18-year astronomical period
- Clothes
- Places to sit
- Family of regulator genes
- New York ballplayer
- Impressive in size or scope
- Jacques __, French

biologist

- One from the Big Apple
- Genus of woolly lemurs
- Songs to one's beloved
- Indigenous person of N.E. Thailand
- Supplemented with difficulty
- Farewell
- Investment account (abbr.)
- One from Utah
- Begets
- A male child
- Break apart
- Brief appearance
- Partner to "oohed"
- A light informal meal
- Fabric with smooth, shiny surface
- One billionth of a second
- Ancient Italian-Greek colony
- Close tightly
- Mail out
- Language
- Computer characteristic

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CROSSWORD SOLUTION ON PAGE xx

2025 AUGUST



Culvert project leaning toward early September completion

By **Brendan Rooney**
Correspondent

AGAWAM — This week, Agawam Department of Public Works Superintendent Mario Mazza gave a major update on the completion of the Northwest Culvert project.

Mazza said early September is now the target date for the full re-opening of North Westfield St. Mazza said he expects full access before the Big E kicks off, which is welcome news as people look for

various alternate routes to avoid Big E traffic depending on their destination.

The initial plan was for the road to be accessible by the end of August, just in time for the start of the upcoming school year. However, Mazza confirmed that may not happen, reinforcing the early September reopening.

From there, Mazza laid out an initial timeline by starting with the confession that the project was bid on a few years ago, but was eventually delayed due to utility pole

work, which took place last summer, until completion in the fall of 2024, which forced the DPW to make a consensus decision to delay the project until this past spring, and things kicked off in April.

“It’s a \$2.5 million project, more or less,” Mazza said of the estimated cost of the renovation. “The complete culvert replacement is going to be equipped with aluminum head walls, with riprap, which will hold everything in place with a concrete footing.”

In addition, Mazza also noted besides the initial delay of the utilities needing to be addressed, the only other hindrance was just minor weather delays. He also cited similarities to the project that was renovated on North St, which took a bit of time to complete, due to materials being substituted out; however, he felt overall positive about how everything has gone.

“Overall, I think the project has been on schedule, but more or less, no complaints,” Mazza said.



Gravel from the road project is piled closer to the actual construction site. This portion of North Westfield St. has been closed for months.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI



On the north side of the culvert project, the road is blocked off to thru traffic.

Residents stage opposition to lithium-ion battery storage facility

By **Brendan Rooney**
Correspondent

AGAWAM — Latest developments are starting to emerge from the ongoing red-hot button issue of the community of Agawam rallying against the Planning Board’s approval of the lithium-ion battery storage facility, as an open forum was held this past Monday night from within the Agawam Public Library, in the Judith Clini Community Room.

The forum was organized and led by Nick and Jessica Dion, frustrated Agawam residents who have been assisting in the appeal, as revealed by a statement pro-

vided by the couple, while offering a platform to provide clarity and dispel any misinformation that has been formulated as of late.

“First, Nick and I are not the ones spearheading the appeal. I have been assisting residents who are abutters to the proposed site for the Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) facility. I work near the Springfield courthouse, and I offered to help by delivering their paperwork for filing,” they said.

The Dion’s then explained, “The meeting was a way to provide residents with clear, factual information about battery energy storage facilities — what they are, how

they work, the potential risks, and what to do in the event of a fire.”

On July 23, residents took action and filed an appeal, which was started by a group of residents who live near 404 Silver Street, citing safety concerns, noise pollution, while others felt concerned about the lack of time being offered to get educated about the project, along with the close proximity of wetlands. The residents also provided additional context to refute the claims that the appeal was a lawsuit, which was falsely reported by noting, “Second, this is not a lawsuit and no one is ‘suing’ the zoning board. It is a zoning ap-

peal that was filed in Hampden Superior Court.”

However, with the appeal now in court, this could potentially help the plan set forth by the city council. The resolution was put forth by City Councilors Anthony Russo, George Bitzas, and Peter Smus, who stated that the passage of the bill, titled “An Act requiring local approval for battery storage facility permitting,” would reinforce “municipal autonomy and democratic input in land use decisions.” In an attempt to fight this assignment of returning local control to cities and towns, instead of having the state mandate and dictate everything.



2025 SEPTEMBER

Councilors warned about e-bike issues

By **Amanda Munson**
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Luckily they were both able to swerve and avoid disaster.”

AGAWAM – On Sept. 2, the city council had resident Cecilia Calabrese visit and speak on behalf of neighbors, drivers, parents, and families in the area about the issue with e-bikes and children riding them around the city. Calabrese’s reason for visiting the meeting was due to an incident regarding her neighbor and a driver on an e-bike.

Calabrese began by describing the close call.

“My neighbor was driving down the road, luckily in my neighborhood everyone knows to drive nice and slow,” Calabrese said. “And disaster was narrowly averted by a child that was riding an e-bike came down and whipped around a blind corner on the wrong side of the road. It was within a heartbeat a direct collision of the car and this person.

Her statement to the city council was meant to implore parents and families due to the back-to-school season and the expected increase of e-bike ridership in the city.

“Please make sure your children know to obey the rules of the road starting on staying on the right side of the road,” she said. “Drivers, keep your eyes open and slow down. This is something that is fairly new in our town, I don’t remember ever seeing the number of electric bikes, especially in my section in Feeding Hills as I have over the summer. Sometimes kids get a little fun with their friends and show off and they have to be careful out there. I am really here as a thank you to this council for recognizing this is an issue.”

Festival highlights local artists, newest Mosaic

By **Quinn Suomala**
Correspondent

AGAWAM – Agawam Community Arts and Artisans held their annual Art Festival last weekend at the Polish-American Club.

With 75 artists and artisans participating as vendors, attendees could find and enjoy almost any kind of art or craft they could think of.

President of ACAA Ceil Rossi was delighted by the variety of artists she was able to bring in for the festival and excited to see people from the community come out for the day.

“I look forward to having a good time, meeting new people and making new friends,” Rossi said.

Rossi hoped that this event would be a way to remind the community of the art that exists around them.

“I think it is very important to keep art alive,” Rossi said.

Through this art festival the ACAA hoped to help keep art alive not just through the vendors, but also by raising funds for scholarships.

All artists at the festival donated one piece of art for a silent auction. All proceeds raised from this auction will go to the Gloria McClellan Scholarship, which is a scholarship that gives funds to high school seniors that intend to go into the arts.

“Last year we gave out three \$1,200 scholarships to high school seniors,” ACAA Art Education Co-Chair Robin Fernandes said.

Additionally, the New England Mosaic also helped to raise funds for this scholarship.

This mosaic is created in conjunction with many local communities. Different

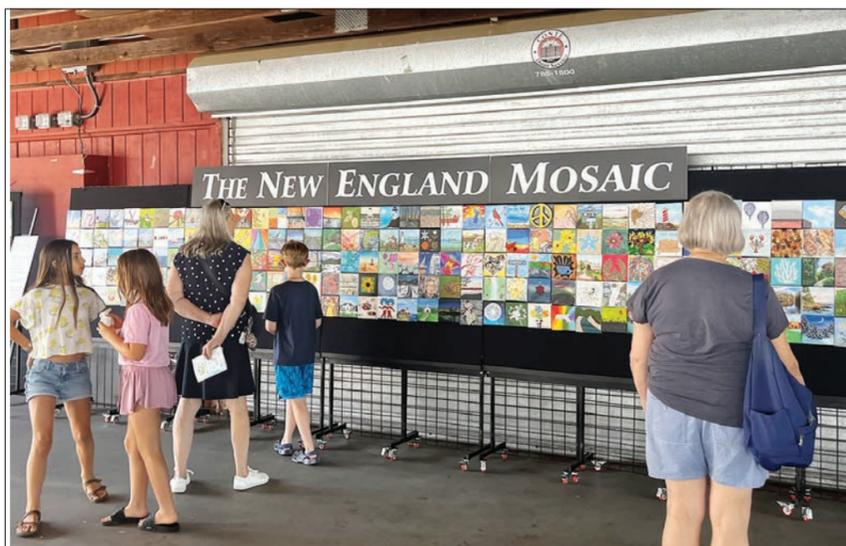
libraries sign up for the program and receive a variety of six inch by six-inch canvases

that community members are welcome to pick up and decorate.



A variety of community artists and artisans displayed their work at the Agawam Community Arts and Artisans Art Festival.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY QUINN SUOMALA



The New England Mosaic was on display at the Agawam Community Arts and Artisans Art Festival.

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2025 SEPTEMBER



Junior High hosts 'Maze Day' in preparation for back to school

By Amanda Munson
Staff Writer
amunson@turley.com

AGAWAM – Just before the start of school, the Agawam Junior High School opened their doors in preparation for the back-to-school season where families, parents, and guardians went through the paperwork maze to get their students all ready

for a successful start for the school year. The school teaches seventh and eighth grade students, the families of each grade level were given a time to attend the day to fill out paperwork, explore new opportunities, and participate in the welcome session hosted by AJHS Principal Norman C. Robbins.

The purpose of the maze

day was simple; to get families to fill out the paperwork for the upcoming school year so the students and parents can focus on the school year but there's a catch. Walking into the school building, families were greeted by a welcome table that had students sign in and were directed into the cafeteria with a maze of tables that ranged

from the PTO, drama and music club, food services, and much more.

After students had the opportunity to browse the variety of displays AJHS offers, families were directed into the library on the second floor to pick up the students' Chromebook and charger for the year, then encouraged to explore the building. Over-

hearing the conversations of families and classmates, many were sharing summer vacation trips and wondering how the school year would be in the next couple of days, while snacking on the complementary popcorn and drinks the school offered for the day.

Sitting down with the AJHS principal of 19 years,

Robbins proudly mentioned that the maze day couldn't have been possible without the staff who were there volunteering on their summer break. When asked about his time at AJHS, Robbins began by sharing the number of changes and growth he's encountered over the years.



AJHS Food Service Nutritional Professionals; Kitchen Manager Mel Gaynor and Assistant Kitchen Manager Cheryl Terramagra assisted families with the food schedules.



AJHS Principal Norman C. Robbins and Assistant Principal Michael J. Donovan, Jr. in front of the sign titled, attitude is key.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY AMANDA MUNSON



Gendreau turns in large pumpkin

Agawam resident Marc Gendreau placed third in this year's Big E Pumpkin Contest. His homegrown pumpkin weighed in at 1,279 pounds. It is on display

through the end of the Big E. Agawam Day at the big fair was held earlier this week. More photos from the fair will be in next week's edition.

2025 OCTOBER



Town receives \$125K earmark to help with roof replacements

By Gregory A. Scibelli
gscibelli@turley.com

AGAWAM – Last week, State Sen. John Velis, D-Westfield, hosted a check presentation at William Sapelli Elementary School to award a \$125,000 earmark to the Town of Agawam for the Agawam Public Schools.

The funds will be used toward Agawam's pursuit of replacing roofs at not only Sapelli School, but at the town's other three elementary schools, Granger, Phelps, and Clark.

Velis secured the funding from the Fair Share Supplemental Budget this past spring. The money will be a big help as the town pursues other sources of funding for the roof projects.

"I think it is really, really important," said Velis. "I think this is the type of stuff that I really prioritize when it

goes down to Boston and trying to track these funds that aren't as prevalent and widespread as they were, but to be able to get them and bring them back to the district."

Earlier this year, Mayor Christopher Johnson informed the school committee that roof replacements were needed at the schools.

All four schools have flat roofs with membrane sections. All of the roofs are starting to have issues. Various weather events have likely contributed to some of the issues in the past few years. The year 2023 had an unusually large amount of rain. The year 2024 had several strange weather events related to high winds, remnants of hurricanes and tropical storms, and the past winter has been plagued with combinations of winter weather, including some significant ice storms.



State Sen. John Velis talks about the importance of funding needs after awarding \$125,000 to assist in the roof replacements for the elementary schools in town.

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SPORTS

Tough start continues for Brownies

AMHERST – On Monday, Dec. 22, Agawam High School ice hockey continued to have a tough time defending goals against the opposition in a 5-1 loss against host Amherst Regional at Orr Rink. Amherst, which co-ops with Pathfinder Tech, got off to a slower start,

but exploded for four goals in the third period to secure the win. Graham Arguin had two goals, Ethan Mooney and Joshau Feldman had a single goal each. Anthony Barbarini had Agawam's lone goal. Amherst is now 2-2-1 while Agawam fell to 0-5.



Brady Klinakis heads toward the offensive zone.



Casey Thomas makes a backhand play.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI



Kaeden Clifford looks to pass through an Amherst defender.



Nick Brown heads past the center line alongside Joe Wilkinson



Zack Hollister collects the loose puck.

Railers fall at home to Norfolk

WORCESTER – The Railers' recovery from a slow start has been fueled by great goaltending. They got some again Saturday night but it wasn't enough as they were shut out by the Norfolk Admirals, 3-0 on Dec. 20.

Isaac Poulter made 22 saves to record the white-wash for the winners. It was the second of his career against Worcester. The other one happened almost exactly three years ago. He blanked the Railers, 7-0, on Dec. 23, 2022 while playing for Adirondack.

Thomas Gale was the losing goalie for Worcester but turned in a winning perfor-

mance and earned the Number 3 star.

He made just his second start of the season, first since Nov. 9. He has also made one relief appearance. Tristan Lennox, just off the injured list, was the Railers' backup. Parker Gahegan got the night off completely after having appeared in nine straight games.

The visitors beat Gale just once. Their last two goals were empty netters. He made 23 saves and kept it a winnable game.

Shutouts happen, but this one was especially painful since Norfolk's only regulation goal was shorthand-

ed. Chase Yoder scored it at 14:34 of the second period as the Railers mishandled the puck behind their own net.

It came out to Yoder just outside the crease and he was able to get it past Gale.

Jack Jaunich and Kristof Papp had the empty net goals.

The victory snapped a four-game losing streak for Norfolk. Admirals were 2-15-0 in their previous 17 games before Saturday night.

They kept the Railers pinned in their own zone for long stretches of the game and blocked a lot of shots in front of Poulter. Any good chances Worcester had,

Poulter took care of.

Gale's performance was the latest in a long string of standout games by Railers goaltenders.

Worcester is 10-5-0 in its last 15 games. Its goalies have posted a 1.82 goals-against average in that span and a remarkable .941 saves percentage.

The game was the 72nd as head coach for Nick Tuzzolino. That is the equivalent of a full ECHL season. His record for those games is 37-27-8, good for a .569 winning percentage.

That is second to the Ice-Cats' Don Granato among the city's various coaches.

Brownies beat Bombers, bust losing streak

AGAWAM – Last Tuesday evening on the road, Agawam High School boys basketball defeated Westfield 70-59. In the win, Trevor Moynihan had a huge game for the Brownies with 31 points.

He had an impressive seven 3-pointers. Gavin Cruz scored 16 points for the visitors and Brody Shee-

han added 11 points in the victory. The win broke up a three-game losing streak.

Agawam boys basketball faced Putnam Vocational earlier this week and the Brownies next face off with Pittsfield on Friday, Jan. 2 at 7 p.m. They then go on the road to face Holyoke High School on Monday, Jan. 5 at 7 p.m.

Follow Turley Sports on Instagram

Sports

Brownies now 1-3 this season

AGAWAM – Heading into the holiday break, Agawam girls basketball very much needed a win and finally got one on Tuesday, Dec. 23, getting revenge against the Terriers with a 40-28 win.

Agawam had losses to East Longmeadow and SICS before scoring their first win of the season. Sophia Laprise had 11 points in the win for the Brownies. Agawam is now 1-3 on the season.



TURLEY PHOTOS BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI
 Clockwise from left: Allana Rose goes up for a rebound attempt; Isabella Laprise fakes then gets around an opponent; Sophia Laprise rushes to the hoop; Gianna Goodrow looks for another approach to the hoop; Olivia Izzo makes a run into the arc.



T-Birds get big comeback for win over Bridgeport

SPRINGFIELD – The Springfield Thunderbirds (10-12-4-2) overcame a two-goal deficit with less than eight minutes remaining en route to a stunning 4-3 overtime win over the Bridgeport Islanders (11-14-2-1) on Sunday afternoon inside the Mass-Mutual Center.

In desperate need of a pick-me-up, the Springfield power play drew first blood just seven seconds into their first opportunity, as Samuel Johannesson whistled a

one-timer over Henrik Tikkanen's blocker arm at 6:33 of the first. Johannesson's second goal of the season, set up by Alek Kaskimaki, was just Springfield's second power-play goal in its last 26 man advantages.

After a relatively quiet opening half of the period, T-Birds netminder Georgi Romanov was far busier in the closing six minutes of the frame, denying all 11 shots that came his way in the first 20 minutes.

Bridgeport's rugged pressure paid dividends at 4:30 of the second as Joey Larson chopped a net front shot past Romanov, tying the game at 1 apiece on Larson's fifth goal in six games against Springfield.

In a period that saw the Isles outshoot Springfield 15-3, the visitors vaulted to the lead at 15:35 as Cam Thiesing intercepted a pass deep in the T-Birds end and whistled a wrister over Romanov's blocker to send the game to the intermission with Bridge-

port in front, 2-1.

Sean Day further buoyed the Islanders' lead at 3:57 of the third, as he picked up a loose puck in the slot off a Thiesing faceoff win and snapped a forehand through Romanov's stick side, ballooning the Bridgeport lead to 3-1.

With the T-Birds in dire need of a jolt, the power play provided just that at 13:03 as Marc-Andre Gaudet gathered a puck inside the right-wing circle and wired home his first

AHL goal under the crossbar behind Tikkanen, making it a one-goal game with 6:57 remaining.

With Romanov on the bench for an extra skater, the T-Birds got payback on the Islanders, who tied a game last month under similar circumstances. Luff cradled the puck along the right-wing circle and funneled a pass across the crease, where Dillon Dube steered it behind Tikkanen, tying the score with just 1:05 remaining.

As a result, the game went to overtime, and after coming up short in each of their prior six games that extended past regulation, the T-Birds did not allow a similar outcome this time. Just 43 seconds into overtime, Luff gathered the puck and scooted around a defender down the left wing, drove to his forehand side, and lifted a wrister past Tikkanen, picking up his third point and third game-winning goal to secure the come-from-behind victory.

Sports / News

Candidates for 2026 HoopHall announced

SPRINGFIELD – The Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame announced the list of eligible candidates for the Class of 2026, featuring several high-profile first-time nominees.

Notable new candidates for the Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame Class of 2026 include the 1996 USA Basketball Women's National Team, Mike D'Antoni, Jamal Crawford, Elena Delle Donne,

Blake Griffin, Joe Johnson, Candace Parker, Bruce Pearl, and Kelvin Sampson. Marv Albert, Mark Few, Doc Rivers, and Amar'e Stoudemire are among returning eligible candidates.

"The candidates for the Class of 2026 have each left an indelible impact on the game of basketball," said John L. Doleva, President and CEO of the Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame.

"Through defining performances, influential leadership, and achievements that helped elevate the sport on the national and international stage, this year's ballot recognizes those whose legacy continues to shape how the game is played, coached, and celebrated."

The first look at the list of eligible nominees was provided by "NBA Today" on ESPN, hosted by Malika An-

draws, with Ramona Shelburne, Tim Bontemps, Kendrick Perkins, and Shams Charania in studio. A complete list of eligible candidates can be found below.

Finalists chosen from the applicable Category Screening Committees for the Class of 2026 will be announced at a later date. The entire Class of 2026 will be unveiled during a nationally televised broadcast on Sat-

urday, April 4, during Final Four Weekend.

The Finalist and Class Announcement times and broadcast networks will be announced by Monday, Feb. 9.

Enshrinement Weekend will begin at the Mohegan Sun on Friday, Aug. 14, with the Tip-Off Celebration and Awards Gala, followed by the Enshrinement Ceremony the next day at Spring-

field's historic Symphony Hall.

All VIP Packages, single-event tickets to the Ceremony, Tip-Off Celebration, and Awards Gala, as well as other ancillary events, will go on sale on Saturday, Apr. 4. All packages and tickets will be available for purchase at hoopball.com.

The complete listing of events and pricing will be released on Monday, Feb. 9.

DPW hosts used holiday light collection

AGAWAM – Frustrated with broken holiday lights, or just have a bunch that no longer suits your needs? No matter what the reason, resist the urge to throw old holiday lights in the curbside trash or recycling collection cart. Holiday light strings are known as "tangles" in the recycling industry. Tangles are things like plastic

bags, ropes, cords, hoses, wires, and light strings that jam sorting machinery by wrapping around the equipment, which is dangerous for workers.

Light strings may be delivered to the Department of Public Works front office from Dec. 1 to Jan. 16. This program is for light strings only: incandescent, LED and

"icicle" light strings with wires and attached bulbs. Boxes, bags, and packaging must be removed before placing lights in the recycling container. Alternative options for recycling light strings would include mail-back programs such as holidayLEDs.com or Christmas-light-source.com

Agawam Day in Florida tradition continues

ST PETERSBURG, FL – The 45nd annual "Agawam Day in Florida" will be held on

Wednesday, March 4, 2026 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. For-

mer Agawam residents, old friends, classmates and relatives will meet at Fort DeSoto National Park, St. Petersburg, FL, for a reunion, picnic, raffles, hugs and to share old

memories. For more information, contact: Hank Drownowski call/text 860-462-7273 or email - hdrew2452@gmail.com.

Follow Turley Sports on Instagram

Turley Publications sports department has recently joined Instagram. You can find our account by searching "turleysports." We will regularly feature sam-

ples of photos that you will see in our publications on a weekly basis. Please follow and share with your friends and loved ones. We will be featuring photos from all 11

of our sports sections, but as always, you can see all the photos that appear by subscribing to your local paper or picking up a copy in your community.

Town still in need of snow plow operators

AGAWAM – The Town of Agawam is still seeking independent contractors to assist the town with plow and snow removal operations during the winter.

The town website states the requirements for plow operators. They must have: A minimum eight-foot plow

on a personal truck, must be available 24/7, must have at least \$500,000 general liability insurance, must have proof of workers compensation for employees, a W-9 shall be provided to the Town of Agawam, and each drive must submit their legal name, date of birth, and

a valid driver's license. The town offers competitive rates and pays promptly.

Full applications with specifications are available on the town website or by going to the Department of Public Works building located at 1000 Suffield St.

Police confirm operations have moved

AGAWAM – Last Thursday, the Agawam Police Department issued a press release confirming their departmental operations have all moved to the new headquarters at 1070 Suffield St.

All telephone numbers for the Agawam Police Department remain the same. Members of the public seeking to obtain reports, file a report in-person or any other

matter that requires the assistance of our department that should utilize this location for those purposes. The old location at 681 Springfield St., Feeding Hills is now closed. No services either emergency or non-emergency are available at our former location. The police department also reiterated its main telephone lines. Of course, any emergencies, one should

dial 911.

But the main line for routine non-emergency calls is 413-786-4769.

For records, press 1. The office hours at the police department are Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., and the offices are closed on weekends and holidays and from 12 to 1 p.m. weekdays for lunch.

DEATH NOTICE

Shawn Timothy Byrne
December 19, 2025
Panama City, Florida

Town nurse announces last-chance flu shots

AGAWAM – Flu season is upon us. The Agawam Health Department still has a very limited supply of senior High-dose flu vaccine and regular flu vaccine available. Once gone there will be no more until next year.

Home visits available to be scheduled for homebound seniors.

Don't be sick for the holidays, get vaccinated today.

Please call Nurse Pam at 726-9722 to schedule an appointment.

Public Notices

Town of Agawam Moore Street and Valley Street Phase 1 Infrastructure Improvements Bid # 25-450-019 LEGAL AD

The Town of Agawam, through its Department of Public Works (DPW), the Awarding Authority, is seeking bids from qualified contractors for roadway and associated infrastructure improvements for its Moore Street and Valley Street Phase 1 Infrastructure Improvements Project, which consists of removal and replacement of 475 linear feet of sewer main, manholes and laterals, 550 linear feet of water main, service connections, fire hydrants, gate valves, full depth road construction, and all associated work for Valley Street (east) and the northern portion of Moore Street.

The project is estimated to cost \$602,222.78 and the total number of days until Final Completion is estimated to be ninety (90) days.

Contractors must be pre-qualified by the MassDOT's Highway Division Prequalification under the provisions of Section 34 of Chapter 90 and in accordance and 700 CMR 14.00 to be an eligible bidder. All proposals submitted by a bidder who is not pre-qualified by the Massachusetts Department of Transportation, Highway Division, Prequalification Program in the class of work of "SEWER and WATER" will

be rejected by the Owner. Wages are subject to Massachusetts minimum wage rates as per M.G.L. Chapter 149, Section 26 to 27H inclusive, and federal minimum wage rates pursuant to the Davis-Bacon Act, whichever pays more.

Mailed and hand delivered sealed bids will be received until **11:00 am, Wednesday, January 28, 2026** at the Town of Agawam Department of Public Works Municipal Annex, 1000 Suffield St., Agawam, MA 01001, Attn: Jennifer Bonfiglio, CPO after which time all bids will be publicly opened and read aloud. Bids shall be filed in a sealed envelope bearing the title "Moore Street and Valley Street Phase 1 Infrastructure Improvements Project, Bid #25-450-019" and delivered pursuant to the project's instructions.

General bids shall be accompanied by a Bid Deposit that is not less than five (5%) of the greatest possible bid amount and made payable to the Town of Agawam. Work is anticipated to start as soon as practical.

Construction Plans and Technical Specifications with the required Bid Forms and Contract Documents will be available on **Wednesday, January 7 at 12:00 pm** by request through the Town of Agawam, Office of Procurement, Jennifer Bonfiglio, Chief Procurement Officer, (413) 726-9742 or bids@agawam.com. A paper copy of the contract documents will be held and is

available for examination at the Department of Public Works, Public Works Municipal Annex, 1000 Suffield Street, Agawam, MA 01001 but must be coordinated with Gina Carestia (413) 821-0600.

This project is being funded through the City's FY'2024 CDBG Grant from the State Executive Office of Housing & Livable Communities, under the U.S. Department of Housing Urban and Development pursuant to Title I of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974.

The lowest qualified and most responsible bidder shall be awarded the project. The Town of Agawam reserves the right to reject all bids or to waive any informalities in the bidding. No obviously unbalanced bid will be considered in awarding this contract. Additional information regarding this bid may be obtained by contacting Jennifer Bonfiglio, CPO, at the Town of Agawam 413-726-9742. 01/01/2026

TOWN OF AGAWAM Public Hearing – Thursday, January 15, 2026, at 6:00 PM

FY 2024 Performance Hearing & FY 2026 Application Forum

The Town of Agawam, in association with the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, will conduct a performance hearing regarding the town's ongoing FY24 Community Development

Block Grant Programs. The hearing will take place at **6:00 PM on Thursday January 15, 2026**, in person at the Agawam Senior Center, 954 Main Street, Agawam, MA 01001.

The hearing will review the projects funded through the town's FY24 Community Development Block Grant Program including engineering designs for infrastructure improvements on Moore and Valley Streets, as well as the first phase of Moore and Valley Streets construction. These activities received funding through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities, Massachusetts CDBG program.

This hearing will also serve as the first public forum to solicit community input on potential activities to be included in a potential Agawam FY26 Community Development Block Grant application. All community members and stakeholders are invited to share thoughts on potential CDBG-eligible activities to be included.

The Senior Center is accessible. Persons who require special accommodations for the hearing should contact the town at least one week prior to the hearing date at (413)-726-9737. For further information contact Joe Hagopian at PVPC at (413) 781-6045 or jhagopian@pvpc.org. 01/01/2026

Commonwealth of Massachusetts The Trial Court Hampden Probate and Family Court 50 State Street Springfield, MA 01103 Docket No. HD20P0752PM In the matter of: Agnes Bulfant of Agawam, MA Protected Person/ Disabled Person/Respondent CITATION GIVING NOTICE OF CONSERVATOR'S ACCOUNT

To the named Respondent and all other interested persons, you are hereby notified pursuant to Rule 72 of the Supplemental Rules of the Probate & Family Court, that the **First and Final** account(s) of Susan A McCoy, Esq. of Springfield, MA as Conservator of the property of said Respondent has or have been presented to the Court for allowance.

You have the right to object to the account(s). If you wish to do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance and objection at this court on or before 10:00 A.M. on the return date of **01/14/2026**. This day is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline date by which you have to object to the account(s). If you fail to file the written appearance and objection by the return date, action may be taken in this matter without further notice to you,

including the allowance of the account(s).

Additionally, within thirty days after said return day (or within such other time as the Court upon motion may order), you must file a written affidavit of objections stating the specific facts and grounds upon which each objection is based and a copy shall be served upon the Conservator pursuant to Rule 3 of the Supplemental Rules of the Probate & Family Court.

You have the right to send to the Conservator, by registered or certified mail, a written request to receive a copy of the Petition and account(s) at no cost to you.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

The outcome of this proceeding may limit or completely take away the above-named person's right to make decisions about personal affairs or financial affairs or both. The above-named person has the right to ask for a lawyer. Anyone may make this request on behalf of the above-named person. If the above-named person cannot afford a lawyer, one may be appointed at State expense.

Witness, Hon. **Barbara M. Hyland**, First Justice of this Court.
Date: December 17, 2025
Rosemary A. Saccamoni
Register of Probate
01/01/2026

PUBLIC NOTICES ARE NOW ONLINE

- 1 Email all notices to notices@turley.com
- 2 Access archives and digital tear sheets by newspaper title.
- 3 Find a quick link to the state of Massachusetts' public notice web site to search all notices in Massachusetts newspapers.

Public notice deadlines are Mondays at noon, Fridays noon for Monday holidays.

visit www.publicnotices.turley.com



Agawam Advertiser 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.

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

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All real estate advertising in this newspaper is subject to the Federal Fair Housing Act of 1968, which makes it illegal to advertise any preference, limitation or discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status (number of children and or pregnancy), national origin, ancestry, age, marital status, or any intention to make any such preference, limitation or discrimination.

This newspaper will not knowingly accept any advertising for real estate that is in violation of the law. Our readers are hereby informed that all dwellings advertising in this newspaper are available on an equal opportunity basis. To complain about discrimination call The Department of Housing and Urban Development "HUD" toll-free at 1-800-669-9777. For the N.E. area, call HUD at 617-565-5308. The toll free number for the hearing impaired is 1-800-927-9275.

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2025 OCTOBER



The public begins to arrive and talked to the candidates.

Meet the Candidates

By Brendan Rooney
Correspondent

AGAWAM — Agawam Public Library played host to an informal ‘Meet the Candidates Night’ event that allowed the general public to walk around and meet the candidates running for City Council and the School Committee, as election season is fast approaching, with elections set for Tuesday, Nov. 4; also in attendance was current Agawam Mayor Chris Johnson.

Providing insight about the importance of the meet and greet was Nancy Siegel, Director of the Agawam Library.

“We did this for the first time back in 2023, and it was a great success,” Siegel said. “This is really the brainchild of Corinne (Wingard). She approached me two years ago and said, ‘I really want to start doing this again,’ and she explained to me what it was, and I said this

was the perfect fit for what the library should be doing,” Siegel noted that the library was the perfect place to house the event due to the available space, all in service of allowing the public to understand the importance of voting, before stressing the ‘most important thing they will do is vote.’

“It’s a way for the candidates to be their original selves; they can be relaxed, and don’t have to make talking points, so it should be a good way for the public not to feel put on the spot,” Siegel said. “It’s essentially a perfect opportunity available without the inclusion of unnecessary stress.”

In addition, attendees were encouraged to get information about voter registration, which was provided and coordinated by two Agawam High NHS (National Honor Society) members, Alex Nguyen and Jordin Agosto, who volunteered their time and service.

Harvest Fair falls on School Street Park

AGAWAM — Last Saturday, the Agawam Rotary Club hosted its annual Harvest Fair. The event has become a fall tradition since

it began at the old Veterans Green years ago. Now, there are more activities and tons of vendors who attend the event.



Several people brought their classic cars to display at the fair.



Owen Elwell works on his robot during a demonstration.

2025 NOVEMBER



Three challengers make the cut

Three incumbent city councilors lost their seats in last Tuesday’s election

By Gregory A. Scibelli
gscibelli@turley.com

AGAWAM — Last Tuesday, voters in the community returned one person to the city council, and two newcomers, while unseating three incumbents.

Former Councilor Cecilia Calabrese, who ran for mayor two years ago unsuccessfully, gave her up her seat on the council for the run. She was elected back to the city council this year.

Newcomers Peter McNair and Christine Rickmon also won seats. McNair won a seat for the first time after mul-

iple attempts running for council. Rickmon earned a seat in her first-ever election.

Departing the council are two first-term members, Maria Valego and Peter Smus. Also departing is Gerald Smith, who served the council for three terms.

For the second straight election, Edward Borgatti, owner of EB’s Restaurant, was the top vote-getter among the 16 candidates for city council.

Borgatti beat out Council Vice President Anthony Russo for the top spot, garnering 3,176 votes. Russo was second with 3,137 votes. Dino Mercadante came in a dis-

ance third with 2,587 votes. Others making the cut were Robert Rossi, George Bitzas, Rosemary, Sandlin, Thomas Hendrickson, and Anthony Suffriti.

Rickmon placed 11th, garnering 1,932 votes.

Richard Borsari, a political newcomer, was the first runner-up. Smus, Smith, Valego, and Uduak Enyiema all finished outside the top 11.

The School Committee race yielded one big surprise as Heather Zielenski, the only challenger on the ballot for one of the six seats against the incumbents, won the entire field. She received 3,079

votes to be the top finisher for a two-year seat on the school committee. Zielenski attributed her victory to making a lot of good connections (see related story).

The odd person out in the school committee race was Catherine McDougal, who joined the committee just two years ago. She placed seventh, receiving only 1,955 votes.

Also winning new terms to the school committee were Shelley Borgatti-Reed, Wendy Rua, Dawn DeMatteo, AJ Christopher, and Michael Perry.

Town honors veterans with wreath laying, ceremony

By Gregory A. Scibelli
gscibelli@turley.com

AGAWAM — It was very cold, windy, and there was even a little bit of snow falling at School Street Park. But that did not stop a crowd from gathering at the band shell to take part in the town’s annual Veterans Day ceremony.

Pat Asta-Ferraro of the Veterans Council, led this year’s ceremony, which included speeches from Mayor Christopher Johnson, and a special appearance from Rosemary Saccomani, the Hampden County Register of Probate.

“Thank you for being here to honor and celebrate our veterans,” she said. “It is more than a day on the calendar, and we should take time to

reflect on what Veterans Day really is. Do young people, especially those who didn’t have family who served...do they appreciate the sacrifice of those served or still wear the uniform?”

Saccomani said veterans left families, jobs, and every day activities so we could have the everyday freedoms we have every day.

“In a time where our country feels deeply divided,” she said. “Your service reminds us of what unites us. Let that inspire us to agree to disagree, and to listen more.”

Johnson recognized Ruth Bitzas for helping create the war memorials. It took years of research and records to come up with the names and then get the funding for the plaques.

“A heartfelt thanks to her



An American flag hangs from the new fire department ladder truck.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI

for those monuments so that we don’t forget those who served and those who gave the ultimate sacrifice for us,” Johnson said.

The ceremony also had a

bell-ringing from Fire Chief Alan Sirois, who featured the department’s new fire ladder truck at the event. Wreaths were laid at the town’s war memorials, which has been a longtime tradition.

2025 DECEMBER



New headquarters built for ‘modern policing’

By Gregory A. Scibelli
gscibelli@turley.com

AGAWAM — The move into Agawam’s new police headquarters is ongoing, with most of it expected to be fully executed by the end of the year.

But next Saturday morning, residents of Agawam, who are ultimately responsible for paying the debt on the more than \$14 million spent to refurbish the former HUB Insurance building at 1070 Suffield St, can come get a first-hand look at the building during an open house event.

At the open house, tour guides at the event will show the major improvements that Agawam police officers and command staff will be able to enjoy as they see policing get a major upgrade.

Mayor Christopher Johnson said the building was renovated and reinforced with the ability to expand and offer more storage and capacity in the future, if needed.

“When they moved into their current location, the building was already at capacity,” Johnson said.

In addition to major expansion of space, security is

also a major upgrade. Police department headquarters need a lot of secure spaces because of the files and evidence that are stored at them.

At the headquarters the department is in the process of departing, there were multiple locations for records along with multiple locations for evidence because the facility ran out of space. There was also a smaller, but adequate area behind the building for police to store and secure larger pieces of evidence such as vehicles of various types.

Both the records room



The new dispatch window for residents in need of assistance.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI

and evidence rooms have shelving that is on rails, allowing it to be moved easily by employees. Evidence shelving has barcodes in order for evidence to be properly cataloged and located.

Tax rate drops, shift remains same for FY2026

By Gregory A. Scibelli
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AGAWAM — The Town of Agawam, through the mayor and a vote of the City Council has established the tax rate for FY2026.

One again, the city council unanimously agreed to the 1.59 tax shift that has been used frequently during the past several years, and was the shift in FY2025.

“It’s that balance between trying to be fair to the resi-

dents and not being unfair to the businesses,” said Mayor Christopher Johnson.

Due to property growth and a less than the levy limit property tax goal, the tax rate will go down by more than a half-dollar per \$1,000 valuation.

The 1.59 shift agreed to by the council comes with a tax rate of \$14.10, down 54 cents from last year. The shift makes the commercial and industrial tax rate \$26.67. That is a decrease of \$1.03 from FY2025’s

rate of \$27.70.

Like most years, despite the lower rate, most residents could see tax bill increases due to property values going up. However, in the instance a property’s value does not change, that property own could actually see a drop in their tax bill.

“This is a fair shift given what the history has been,” Johnson said. “Average bills are going up more in Springfield and West Springfield than we are.”

Based on the average home value, Johnson showed a \$156 potential tax bill increase for residents, well below surrounding community average bill increases.

Residential property taxpayers make up nearly 79% of the taxed popular. Commercial and industrial property make up the remaining 21%.

For FY2026, the town seeks to raise \$77,769,105 million through the tax levy, which is more than \$18 million below the levy limit.