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AGAWAM

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Robotics team competes at Championship

By Quinn Suomala
Staff Writer

AGAWAM – Rosie Robotics made it to the New England District Championships at the Big E.

The team placed in the top third in their division, in the district, in the U.S. and in the world.

Their final position in the district was 62 of 186 teams.

The competition itself was three days long, with the matches beginning at 1 p.m. on Thursday, Apr. 4 and continuing through Saturday, Apr. 6.

Thursday and Friday were focused on the qualifying matches and then Saturday was the double elimination playoffs.

To be a part of the playoffs, teams either had to be in the top eight or had to be selected by one of the top eight teams for an alliance.

Unfortunately, Rosie was not in the top eight, nor were they chosen for an alliance, though they were selected as a backup team should any of the competing teams' robots malfunction.

The team was very proud of how they performed in districts, and of the fact that they made it to districts to begin with.

"We performed solidly across the board," Team Member Vincent Barrett said. "We made a couple small mistakes but I think

there were really only a couple small things we could have improved on."

"This was my first time ever going to districts," Team Member Thomas Crouss said. "It was really fun."

The team had not made it to districts in several years and the team had set a goal at the beginning of the year to make it to this level of competition. They were delighted to have gotten the opportunity to experience districts.

"A highlight for me was getting to districts," Team Member Kylie Henry said. "And then we were very good in most of our matches."

"It was a really exciting event and there was so much there from games to the matches," Crouss said. "It was really cool."

Now it is officially off-season for the team, though that does not mean they will be stopping their work. They hope to compete in a few competitions throughout the summer and fall.

"We're really just building up, seeing if there is anything we wanted to change or learn for the next season," Henry said. "There are a

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Above, the pit crew kept the machine running with Faculty Advisor Jack Barry, Bob Fontaine, Owen Elwell and Philip Fini and the Team with AHS Principal Jim Blain at the Western New England University Event. Left, the Rosie Robotics team practiced with their robot, Echo, in preparation for the New England District Championships.

SUBMITTED PHOTOS

Committee gets look at school budget

By Quinn Suomala
Staff Writer

AGAWAM – At the school committee meeting on Apr. 9, Superintendent Sheila Hoffman gave an overview of the proposed FY25 school district budget.

The title for this budget is: Cultivating an Environment Where All Students Grow, Learn, and Belong.

The budget was built around key priorities identified for Agawam Public Schools. These priorities are: increased student achievement and increased engagement for all stakeholders.

The goals of these priorities are to decrease learning gaps that exist for certain groups of students and to strengthen the school community and ensure all members feel a sense of belonging within the schools.

"That requires us to transform teaching and learning to allow equitable access to high quality instructional resources, provide

unique learning opportunities for all students and bridge partnerships with families and community stakeholders," Hoffman said.

This proposed budget contains the last of the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Funds.

"The ESSER funds have helped us over the last few years in hiring additional positions to increase our family engagement, address mental health concerns and provide educators with instructional coaching to meet academic needs," Hoffman said.

These funds have also assisted in updating technology both for instruction and safety in the schools.

Additionally, this budget will continue to support the data collection system that tracks student data. This data is used in instructional and social/emotional interventions.

"The proposed FY25 budget has no elimination of programs," Hoffman said. "In fact, it propos-

es an additional Special Education program at the elementary level."

The total budget increase for FY25 is \$2,009,270, though the actual budget increase works out to be \$1,964,015. This is due to a reduction in the special service tuition budget totalling to \$19,833, as well as a decrease of \$25,423 to cost center based budgets.

"[The reduction in special service tuition] is only because the rest is offset by other funds outside of our local budget," Hoffman said.

This all adds up to a total proposed budget of \$51,924,442. The approved budget for FY24 was \$49,960,427, making the FY25 budget a 3.78% increase from FY24.

To break the proposed FY25 year budget down further, Hoffman explained that there would be a total salary increase of \$1,347,269. This increase includes

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Blockage and high river responsible for flooding

By Quinn Suomala
Staff Writer

AGAWAM – Mayor Christopher Johnson clarified concerns about flooding on Leonard St.

The main cause of the issue was the large compensatory flood storage area that stretches from behind Catherine Drive to near the Connecticut River behind Simpson Circle.

That flooding area was filling up with water as one of the outfalls (a culvert that drains under Leonard Street) was blocked.

It was this blockage that was causing water to rise up onto the backyards of some of the properties that border the compensatory flood storage area.

The crews in the area were able to unblock the outfall, but it took some time to locate where the culvert inlet was in order to clear it.

"We were able to unblock it but it took a while because all of this infrastructure predates anyway keeping any plans as to where any of it is," Johnson said. "We had to figure out where the culvert inlet was and being that it was underwater and down a severe slope it took a while."

Now that the blockage is cleared Johnson stated that the water will begin to drain out of the compensatory flood storage area.

"It's going to take a while as we're trying to get the water to flow at a normal pace and not just rush out, as then it would end up flooding the area that it was going to," Johnson said.

The water will travel out of the compensatory flooding area to the other side of Leonard Street where there is a large wetlands area.

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SPORTS



Brayden Federico throws on the run.



Liam Grealis circles the goal in the offensive zone for Agawam.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY
WWW.SWEETDOGPHOTOS.COM



Jaden Holloway winds up for a shot on goal.



Justin Lareau makes a catch.

Jorgenson nets OT game-winner

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

AGAWAM – The Agawam boys' varsity lacrosse team hasn't had very much success against Tantasqua Regional during the past decade. That all changed in the only meeting of the regular season between the two squads.

After battling back from a three-goal

deficit to tie the score late in the fourth period, Agawam junior Riley Jorgensen netted the game-winning goal with 1:54 remaining in overtime. It gave his team a thrilling 8-7 victory over the Warriors at Harmon A Smith Field, last Tuesday afternoon.

"We lost to Tantasqua twice last year and we held a 5-0 lead in one of those games," said Jorgensen, who joined the var-

sity lacrosse team as a freshman. "It feels amazing to finally beat them in overtime."

The last time that Agawam defeated Tantasqua in a boys' lacrosse match was

during the 2014 regular season when they celebrated a 10-6 win.

BOYS LACROSSE | page 9

Falcons third quarter rally hurts Brownies

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

WILBRAHAM – Less than a minute into the second half, the Agawam girls' lacrosse team was only trailing Valley Wheel League rival Minnechaug Regional by a goal.



Emiley Bussiere-Sykes takes her shot.

It didn't remain a close game for very long. The Lady Falcons scored the final five goals of the third period and added three more goals during the final period enroute to a 16-9 home win over the Brownies, last Thursday afternoon.

"This is a very good win for us," said Minnechaug head coach Maggie Kennedy. "I thought we played very well as a team, and this victory moves us a little bit closer to the .500 mark."



Finnola Mahoney looks for an open teammate.

Entering the school vacation week, the Lady Falcons had a 2-3 overall record and a 1-1 league record.

After losing to Agawam three times in 2022, Minnechaug swept the season series a year ago.

Junior Rylee Welch and senior captain Kaliana Gagnon each scored five goals for the Lady Falcons in the first meeting of the 2024 regular season against the Brownies (1-2, 0-1). Five other Lady Falcons players scored at least one goal.

"Having several different goals scorers is huge for us," Kennedy added. "Kaliana and Rylee have been our leading scorers so far this season."

Gagnon entered the school vacation week with a team-leading 20 goals, while Welch scored 13 goals in the first five games of the regular season.

The other two Lady Falcons senior captains are Brenna Slatery and Ainsley Sheehan.

The Brownies' leading scorer was senior captain Emma Murray with six goals. She scored three goals in each half.

"We rely on Emma to be one of our leading goal scorers in every game," said Agawam head coach Carla Lemnah-Warner.

GIRLS LACROSSE | page 8



Angelina Kozhenevsky sprints up the field with the ball.



Gabby Cosentini balances the ball as she makes a catch.



Emma Murray fires a shot on goal.
TURLEY PHOTOS BY SOFIA DIGRANDE

Ludlow defeats Agawam

AGAWAM – Last Tuesday afternoon, Ludlow girls tennis picked up the win at Agawam High School 4-1. All of the winners in the contest won in straight sets. Malina Dinis took the top victory in first singles. Ludlow also got wins by Gabriella Pereira in second singles, and Isabella Cyr in third singles. Sophia Alvaro and Ashlyn Mortimer got the win in second doubles. Winning for Agawam was the doubles combination of Autumn Vincze and Lydian Phommachanh. Ludlow is 2-0 to start the season while Agawam is out to a 2-3 start.



Autumn Vincze returns the ball. Left, Olivia Gryszowka goes for a point in first singles.



Lydian Phommachanh squares up a nice return hit.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY