

BUDGET | from page 1

Student enrollment is down by 24 students as of the official Oct. 1, 2025 count used for state aid calculations, a decline that affects Chapter 70 funding even though the district's current net loss is just four students. At the same time, the district is seeing a roughly 3% increase in special education needs, as well as increasing student mental health, social-emotional and behavioral needs.

Superintendent Francis said the district is also facing volatility in special education transportation costs, contractual salary increases, rising cleaning expenses and a 6% increase in Palmer's assessment to Pathfinder Regional Vocational Technical High School. Out-of-district tuition costs have also risen sharply in recent years, with increases of 14% two years ago and 7% last year, while the district is still awaiting final figures for the coming year.

Health insurance costs represent one of the most dramatic jumps in the budget, increasing by 35%. The district is also anticipating a 15% reduction in its federal Title I entitlement grant, which Francis said is tied to a reported decline in Massachusetts poverty data.

The governor's preliminary budget includes a \$90,000 increase in Chapter 70 funding for Palmer, but Francis noted that the school district does not directly receive all of that increase as unrestricted spending power within its own operating budget.

He said the district remains committed to Student Opportunity Act evidence-based practices, including preschool for four-year-olds, collaborative co-teaching models and diverse enrichment opportunities such as after-school programs, arts and athletics. But continued support for those

priorities is increasingly difficult.

"In FY27, our level service request was a 3.6% increase," Francis said. "The town manager's recommendation to the town council is 0.87% less than 1% which puts us at a deficit, all told, over the course of the past four fiscal years is a little over \$1 million."

That FY27 gap, later clarified in discussion as a projected \$525,000 deficit for the coming year alone, follows a pattern of structural shortfalls in the district budget dating back several years. Francis said the district has already reduced staffing through attrition, eliminating 16 positions since FY24, but warned that further reductions may not be possible without layoffs.

"However, with a \$525,000 deficit in FY27, I don't think that we can do that just through attrition this year," he said.

Committee members reacted strongly to the contrast between the town manager's recommended 0.87% increase for Palmer Public Schools and the 6% increase in the town's Pathfinder assessment.

"So Pathfinder is getting a 6% increase and we're getting 0.87," Noonan said. "Do towns speak out against those kinds of increases at the regional level?"

Another member proposed direct action.

"Could we, as a committee, send a letter to the Palmer Town Council and ask them to officially oppose that 6%?" one member asked.

Ultimately, the committee approved a motion directing the drafting of a letter to the Palmer Town Council expressing opposition to the disparity in school-related budget allocations and urging councilors to tour district schools to better understand existing limitations.

Youth Sports Program Concerns

Committee members also addressed concerns sub-

mitted by email regarding limited access to the Old Mill Pond School gymnasium for youth sports programs, including Palmer Youth Basketball Association teams and Old Mill Pond basketball teams. Officials acknowledged the difficulty of balancing school and community use of the facility and the challenge of adding space at the school.

"The other comment was an email regarding the gymnasium use and Homer not having enough resources to support the youth athletes and requesting a feasibility study to look into whether or not that would be something that could happen," one committee member said.

The discussion around gym space foreshadowed broader concerns voiced later in the evening about overcrowding and resource limitations at Old Mill Pond.

Student representatives speak on school news

The committee then turned to student representatives from both district schools, whose reports highlighted a busy spring of academics, extracurricular events and student recognition.

Fifth grade student council member Grace Level presented the Old Mill Pond report, offering a snapshot of school life from the elementary level.

"Good evening school committee members. My name is Grace Level. I am a 5th grade student member of the Old Mill Pond Student Council. I'm going to share with you the news from Old Mill Pond," she said.

Level outlined a range of recent and upcoming activities, including the school's Spring Open House, outdoor winter programming through the "Cold Weather Warm Hearts" initiative, and an MCAS Glow Party pep rally designed to encourage students in grades 3 through 6 ahead of testing. She also

highlighted the school's "March Mathness" competition, which features ST Math puzzles, and the "Thunderbirds Stick to Reading" reading log program, culminating in a special April 3 "Game Day" event and a band performance.

Old Mill Pond students have also taken part in educational trips and are preparing for more this spring. Sixth graders recently visited the Museum of Fine Arts to study the Ancient Egypt exhibit, while fifth graders are set to attend an Ecology School field trip in April. The school is also seeking volunteers for an upcoming Career Day.

Level noted that students in grades 4 through 6 in the band will perform at a Springfield Thunderbirds game on April 3, while the school's Parent Teacher Organization is preparing for its "Someone Special and Me Dance" on April 10 in the Palmer High School gym. That event is expected to be a major draw, with 800 tickets available. She also reported that a recent "Snowball Fight" fundraiser raised \$900.

The report also included recognition of students, faculty and staff, as well as thanks to the Palmer Cultural Council for helping fund field trips and student projects.

At the high school level, senior Kelsey Coyle presented a similarly wide-ranging report that touched on travel, athletics, leadership development, testing and end-of-year milestones.

"Good afternoon. My name is Kelsey Coyle. I'm a senior here at Palmer High School and I'll be providing an update on the past month's events and what to expect in the next month," Coyle said.

Among the highlights was a student trip to the Dominican Republic during February break, which provided students with cultural immersion experiences despite travel delays. Coyle also reported that members of the student

council attended the Massachusetts Association of Student Councils' 49th annual state conference in Hyannis.

She said winter sports recognition night was well received, spring sports officially began March 16, and several students earned notable honors. Dylan Doherty, Gavin Smola and Steven Fredette were selected for the Western Massachusetts Senior Basketball All-Star Game, while Doherty was also recognized as one of the top 45 football players in Western Massachusetts. Evelyn Ledoux was named an "unsung hero" by girls basketball coaches.

Coyle also previewed a packed spring calendar, including National Honor Society trivia night, the school's "Night of Belonging" on March 19, 8th Grade Signing Day on March 27 for students committing to Palmer High School, and a clothing drive running from March 29 through April 10. She noted that sophomores would take English Language Arts MCAS exams on March 24 and 25, juniors are selling prom tickets, and upperclassmen have opportunities ahead such as a Trade and Career Fair on April 3 and a campus cleanup effort on April 11.

Additional events include a tennis fundraiser on April 15, the annual Mock Accident on April 16, and key senior milestones in May, including prom, the Great East Music Festival, Class Day and graduation on May 31.

Director of Finance Report

Director of Finance and Operations Sara Menard reported that as of Feb. 28, the district had spent or encumbered 81.4% of its approximately \$5.3 million budget, with transportation and tuition lines showing especially high usage due to contract encumbrances. Both school-based budgets were tracking at around 50%, though substitute costs were running higher than expected.

"Our substitute spend combined is at 70.0% of the total budgeted, but we are only 63.2% through the year for them because they run on a different pay schedule," Menard said. "So as you can tell that is higher than I would have expected."

Menard said end-of-year transfers from salary lines to substitute lines are likely. She also reported that the district's before- and after-school revolving account remains healthy, with a balance of \$173,000.

The committee approved several action items during the meeting, including acceptance of two donations: \$600 from Beverly and David Grennan to the Old Mill Pond music band department, and \$3,035 from the Palmer Rotary Club for Palmer High School scholarships.

"The Old Mill Pond elementary School received a generous donation of the \$600 from Beverly and David Grennan to their music band department," committee member Bonnie Rathbone said.

"The Palmer High School received a generous donation of \$3,035 from the Palmer Rotary Club," Rathbone added.

Members also approved revisions to Section E of the Palmer School Committee policy manual, including updates to policies covering safety, test management, first aid, emergency plans and closings, vandalism, transportation, school bus safety, drug and alcohol testing, conduct on buses and universal free school meals.

"Under the direction of MASC, the policy subcommittee has met to review section E of the Palmer School Committee policy manual," Rathbone said.

The committee also approved budget transfers with no net financial impact to address known line-item gaps and anticipated spending needs.

Public notices

**Commonwealth of Massachusetts
The Trial Court
Probate and Family Court
Hampden Probate and Family Court
50 State Street
Springfield, MA 01103
(413)748-7758**

**Docket No.
HD24P2595EA**

**Estate of:
Dorothy H Langevin**

**Date of Death: 06/04/2024
CITATION ON GENERAL
PROBATE PETITION**

To all interested persons:

A Petition has been filed by: **Beverly Hoekstra of Hampden, MA** requesting Application of Cy Pres Or Deviation.

You have the right to obtain a copy of the Petition from the Petitioner or at the Court. You have a right to object to this proceeding. To do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance and objection at this Court before 10:00 a.m. on 04/13/2026.

This is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline by which you must file a written appearance and objection if you object to this proceeding. If you fail to file a timely written appearance and objection followed by an Affidavit of Objections within thirty (30) days of the return date, action may be taken without further

notice to you.

WITNESS, Hon. **Claudine T. Stoudemire**, First Justice of this Court.
Date: March 16, 2026

Rosemary A Saccomani,
Register of Probate
03/26/2026

**Commonwealth of Massachusetts
The Trial Court
Probate and Family Court
Hampden Division**

**Docket No.
HD26P0327EA**

**Estate of:
Patricia Anne Loneto**

**Date of Death:
November 29, 2025**

**INFORMAL PROBATE
PUBLICATION NOTICE**

To all persons interested in the above captioned estate, by Petition of Petitioner **Joyce M. Genholt of Monson, MA.**

Joyce M. Genholt of Monson, MA

Daniel R. Genholt of Coventry CT

have been informally appointed as the Personal Representative of the estate to serve **without surety** on the bond.

The estate is being administered under informal procedure by the Personal Representative under the Massachusetts Uniform Probate Code without supervision by the Court. Inventory and accounts are not required

to be filed with the Court, but interested parties are entitled to notice regarding the administration from the Personal Representative and can petition the Court in any matter relating to the estate, including distribution of assets and expenses of administration. Interested parties are entitled to petition the Court to institute formal proceedings and to obtain orders terminating or restricting the powers of Personal Representatives appointed under informal procedure. A copy of the Petition and Will, if any, can be obtained from the Petitioner.
03/26/2026

NOTICE OF MORTGAGEE'S SALE OF REAL ESTATE

Premises: 3 Maplelawn Drive a/k/a 3 Maple Lawn Drive, Monson, MA 01057

By virtue and in execution of the Power of Sale contained in a certain mortgage given by Paul L Bucklin and Donna J Bucklin to Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as Mortgagee, as nominee for Mortgage Research Center, LLC dba Veterans United Home Loans, and now held by **The Secretary of Veterans Affairs, an officer of the United States**, said mortgage dated July 8, 2015 and recorded in the Hampden County Registry of Deeds in Book

20780, Page 146, as affected by a Loan Modification dated June 16, 2016 and recorded in the Hampden County Registry of Deeds in Book 21396, Page 338; said mortgage was assigned from Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as nominee for Mortgage Research Center, LLC DBA Veterans United Home Loans to PennyMac Loan Services, LLC by assignment dated March 14, 2016 and recorded with said Registry of Deeds in Book 21114, Page 388; said mortgage was assigned from PennyMac Loan Services, LLC to The Secretary of Veterans Affairs, an officer of the United States by assignment dated June 25, 2025 and recorded with said Registry of Deeds in Book 26174, Page 585; for breach of the conditions in said mortgage and for the purpose of foreclosing the same will be sold at **Public Auction** on April 29, 2026 at 01:00 PM Local Time upon the premises, all and singular the premises described in said mortgage, to wit:

Certain land situated in Monson, Hampden County, Massachusetts, off the Westerly side of Main Street, 1927 State Highway Layout, bounded and described as follows:

Beginning at an iron pin in the Northerly line of a proposed street which runs Westerly from Main Street, said iron pin be-

ing the Southwesterly corner of premises conveyed by Edward L. Dickenson, et ux, to Harold C. Wood, et ux; thence South 89° 19' West along the Northerly line of said proposed street, 150 feet an iron pin; thence North 0° 41' West along land now or formerly of Ernest W. Bridges, 92.5 feet to an iron pin; thence North 89° 19' East still along land now or formerly of said Bridges, 150 feet to an iron pin at land of said Woods; thence South 0° 41' East along land of said Woods 92.5 feet to the place of beginning.

Together with the right to pass and reposs on foot or with vehicles over the aforesaid proposed street, which proposed street is now known as Maple Lawn Drive.

The premises are shown as Lot Number 6 on a "Plan of Lots in Monson, Mass., surveyed for Ernest V. Bridges, Scale 1" = 40', November 22, 1954, Kenneth C. Sherman, Engineer-Surveyor, Palmer, Mass."

Subject to a taking for a sewer easement by the Town of Monson dated August 20, 1979 and recorded with Hampden County Registry of Deeds in Book 4818, Page 254.

Being the same premises as conveyed to the mortgagors herein by a deed recorded immediately prior hereto.

The description of the prop-

erty contained in the mortgage shall control in the event of a typographical error in this publication.

For Mortgagor's Title see deed dated June 2, 2015 and recorded in the Hampden County Registry of Deeds in Book 20780, Page 144.

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

FIVE THOUSAND (\$5,000.00) Dollars of the purchase price must be paid in cash, certified check, bank treasurer's or cashier's check at the time and place of the sale by the purchaser. The balance of the purchase price shall be paid in cash, certified check, bank treasurer's or cashier's check within thirty (30) days after the date of sale.

Other terms to be announced at the sale.

Brock & Scott, PLLC
23 Messenger Street
2nd Floor
Plainville, MA 02762

Attorney for The Secretary of Veterans Affairs, an officer of the United States

Present Holder of the Mortgage

(401) 217-8701
03/26, 04/02, 04/09/2026

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