

REDUCTIONS from page 1

folks that wanted lower than where we ended, some that wanted a little higher than where we ended. We found a sort of compromised number, but we also felt that the projections from the consultant were a little bit on the high side and we felt with some of the changes that are coming through, that we might see a little more modest impact,” Slaughter said. “Nonetheless, the overall impact averaged across the different plans we have is an increase of 11.2%.”

He added two plans that a small number of people are on will go up about 15%, while two larger plans that comprise “96% of all of our enrollments” had one going up 10.5% and the other at 11 or 12%.

“So the hope is that that will have a sufficient resource fund our insurance and our healthcare needs for the coming fiscal year. The impact, though, being at less than 13% versus what we had projected previously, was a reduction in our insurance costs,” Slaughter said. “It’s a little less than 2%, each percentage points roughly \$70,000, so that’s roughly in the right neighborhood of what we think our costs will be at this new percentage. So, we have a little more certainty about that aspect of it.”

Slaughter said the net effect “is our overall budget picture got better by about \$65,000 or so.”

“So that’s good news. It’s not great news because we’re still at a request of funding from each of our communities much higher than they’re indicating they can fund, and so there’s additional work we’ll need to go through to get to a budget and get the support of the town Select Boards and Advisory Committee and Finance Committees and, ultimately, town meetings,” Slaughter said. “So, we’ve got a fair amount of work to do, still more information coming in at all times, but a little bit of good news, a little bit of bad news, more good than bad, but I wanted to share those with you and give you the rationale on what changed, really, in the last week.”

Vice Chair Dr. Michael Tirabassi asked how many FTES could be in jeopardy.

“We’re talking about a \$2 million budget,” Tirabassi said.

Superintendent Dr. John Provost said he hoped “that isn’t where we end up and that’s not true” as he’s managed contraction with the budget since starting his tenure, including not giving a level-service budget.

“Every year has been some kind of cut. This year, and fortunately, we’ve been able to do a lot of what we needed to do through attrition. But, a \$2 million gap, just no; I would say an estimate of somewhere north of 20 FTES,” Provost said.

Slaughter added “how exactly that would occur” also has multiple factors to

consider like salary and benefit impact.

“As we go through our work and think about what are those changes we’re going to make, exploring what are those particular impacts of given choices will refine that over time and have impact on some other areas of the budget too,” Slaughter said. “So, like I say, benefits is one area gets impacted but might also, depending on how choices are made, it may impact other aspects of non-personnel expenses as well. We’ll just have to see.”

Slaughter reiterated how all aspects of the budget would continue to be refined and reviewed “to look for any savings we can find in any other places.”

“The challenge is that the parts of the budget that aren’t sort of directly students don’t have a lot of movement. Our buildings take about the same amount to heat, to light, etc year over year. So, those don’t change much. The materials we need for curriculum in our classrooms doesn’t change much. We got about same number of students, so things are fairly fixed in their costs,” Slaughter said. “And there’s inflation pressure along those. A lot of those go up from year to year, so it’s really challenging to find non-personnel related things that make impact in a significant way in the budget. So, it’s going to be really hard, really, month or so before we get down to the final sort of version you guys vote on.”

On Sean Kennedy’s question on how much of that \$2 million would he be able to find, Slaughter said he was unsure and “it’s a small piece.”

“I don’t know that I want to hazard a particular guess on what that would be,” Slaughter said. “But, it’s going to be a pretty small sort of slice of that \$2 million. If we carve out, I don’t know, \$150,000, that would be awesome, but I don’t know if we can do that.”

He added continued work on contract negotiations would be a “pretty critical piece of the puzzle” as well.

“We’re having those honest and forthright negotiations in good faith and we’ll see where that lands and then materialize those particulars into this as we move ahead,” Slaughter said. “I wouldn’t even begin to suggest that settling the contract is going to solve this problem. There is some level of reduction we’re likely going to need to make, because I think where we are in bargaining positions at the moment and where we’ll ultimately land is going to be such that holding our staff levels at the levels we have and projected level here is going to be a level of resource that the towns just don’t have the resource to support whether they want to or not. They just may not have it go to give. So, there’s going to be tough choices ahead.”

For more comments, check out this week’s edition.

BACKYARD from page 6

bright beautiful winter’s afternoon and this uncalled for visit was icing on my day’s cake.”

He offered to share this bluebird story. He said, “I was sitting on my meditation cushion yesterday watching my breath emerge from a deep silence and then gently return back into it. There was no counting, no manipulation, only watching, only flow. After some time had passed, I opened my eyes because I felt I was being closely watched.”

“I have a bird feeder right outside of my window and sure enough a male bluebird or one of his offspring from a previous summer, was perched and staring directly at me. Two summers ago I named the parent bluebird, ‘Sunshine’ and last May he returned to the same nesting box in my front yard.

Quizzically, Sunshine leaned slightly forward. He was amazingly close.”

“It was beautiful, glorious to see his blue rust colored body outlined by a background of white snow still clinging to frozen lilacs and tall trees. The sight of this sent ripples of love, that became currents of joy, to course through me.”

“I felt a smile stretch a mile wide across my whole being. It was like being visited by a long absent friend. Within minutes this made me get up and fill another feeder with dried mealworms be-



Evening grosbeaks

cause bluebirds aren’t seed eaters like many of the other birds that seek nourishment here. Like my breath, the mealworms disappeared into a well of silence. A contented peaceful silence that then took flight.”

Evening grosbeaks

A Cummington resident sent a photo of evening grosbeaks at her feeder. She said they are part of a flock that come to visit the feeders often.

People may report a bird sighting or bird related experience by emailing mybackyard88@aol.com or edowner@turley.com or mailing to Barre Gazette, P.O. Box 448, Barre, MA 01005. The Palmer office has a new phone system and I will be getting an extension where messages may be left. I will publish the number as soon as it is set up.

PUBLIC NOTICES

TOWN OF WILBRAHAM PUBLIC HEARING: LIQUOR LICENSE MULTIPLE AMENDMENTS

(Posted 2/4/2026)
The Wilbraham Select Board will hold a public hearing under Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 138, Section 12, on **Monday, March 2, 2026 at 7:15 pm**, at the Town Office Building, 240 Springfield Street, Wilbraham, to hear public comment on an application to amend an annual Section 12: All Alcoholic Beverages License submitted by CCW Catering, LLC., located at 859 Stony Hill Road, Wilbraham. The applicant seeks the following amendments: Change of Manager, Change of Officers/Directors/LLC Managers, Change of Ownership Interest, and Change of DBA. All those wishing to comment on the referenced application will be heard. This hearing will be conducted in person and virtually.

Wilbraham Select Board
Local Licensing Authority
02/12/2026

WILBRAHAM PLANNING BOARD PUBLIC HEARING

In accordance with M.G.L. Chapter 40A, Section 5, the Wilbraham Planning Board will hold a Public Hearing on Wednesday, March 4, 2026 at 5:45PM in the Town Office Building, 240 Springfield Street, to give interested parties the opportunity to comment on proposed amendments to the Wilbraham Zoning By-Law described below:

- 1) To amend Section 4.10 of the Zoning Bylaw, Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) Regulations, to require 1 off-street parking space for all ADUs, except for ADUs within a 1/2 mile radius of a transit station.
- 2) To renumber and recaption the Zoning Bylaw as

Chapter 250 of the Code of the Town of Wilbraham; (b) renumbering each section and subsection of the bylaw accordingly; (c) inserting article, section and subsection titles; and (d) updating internal references to reflect the new numbering system

3) To make the following changes to the renumbered and recaptioned Zoning Bylaw (Chapter 250):

- a. General revisions to ensure consistency of terms and correction of typographical errors
- b. Amend Section 250-1.3 to modify the following definitions: assisted living residence, building envelope, clearing envelope, family day care home, hazardous material, registered marijuana dispensary and sign
- c. Amend Section 250-3.5B(14) to remove the special permit requirement for a family day care home consistent with recent changes to state law
- d. Delete blank Section 3.9.4 “Accessory uses: industrial”
- e. Amend Section 250-4.11.G. to remove a duplication of the word “snowplowing”
- f. Amend Section 250-5.1 to clarify language in the Residential Multiple Dwelling District
- g. Amend Section 250-6.5 to clarify applicable zoning districts for new vehicle sales
- h. Amend Sections 250-6.5.1 & 250-7.2G to change “American Standards Association” to “American National Standards Institute”
- i. Amend Section 250-7.6 to reflect changes in state law and regulations related to Registered Marijuana Facilities
- j. Amend Section 250-9.1 to correct and update legal and map references applicable to the Floodplain Overlay District
- k. Amend Section 250-10.4 to make grammatical corrections and to change “Federal Aeronautics Administration” to “Federal Aviation Administration”

l. Amend Section 250-10.5 to

correct terms related to civil engineers and land surveyors and to delete a reference to the MA Department of Environmental Protection “Division of Air Quality”

m. Amend Section 250-10.7 to correct scrivener errors

n. Amend Section 250-15.3 to increase the fine for violations from \$100 to \$300 for each offense.

o. Amend the appendix related to scenic roads to include the entirety of the language in MGL c. 40, Section 15C

The complete text of the proposed amendments is available for review in the Town Clerk’s Office and the Planning Office during normal business hours and posted for public viewing on the Planning Board page of the Town of Wilbraham website at www.wilbraham-ma.gov/123/Planning-Board. All persons interested or wishing to be heard on this matter are urged to attend the public hearing. Both in person and virtual participation are available. To participate virtually go to <https://meet.goto.com/684280605> or call 866-899-4679 (Access Code: 684-280-605).

James Rooney, Chair
02/12, 02/19/2026

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. HD26P0192EA
Estate of:
Elizabeth C Hetzel
Date of Death: 11/12/2025
CITATION ON PETITION FOR FORMAL ADJUDICATION

To all interested persons:
A Petition for **Formal Pro-**

bate of Will with Appointment of Personal Representative has been filed by **Peter P Porowski of Belchertown, MA** requesting that the Court enter a formal Decree and Order and for such other relief as requested in the Petition.

The Petitioner requests that **Peter P Porowski of Belchertown, MA** be appointed as Personal Representative(s) of said estate to serve **Without Surety** on the bond in **unsupervised administration**.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

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 the return day of 02/26/2026. 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 day, action may be taken without further notice to you.**

UNSUPERVISED ADMINISTRATION UNDER THE MASSACHUSETTS UNIFORM PROBATE

A Personal Representative appointed under the MUPC in an unsupervised administration is not required to file an inventory or annual accounts with the Court. Persons interested in the estate are entitled to notice regarding the administration directly from the Personal Representative and may petition the Court in any matter relating to the estate, including the distribution of assets and expenses of administration.

WITNESS, Hon. Claudine T.

Stoudemire, First Justice of this Court.

Date: January 29, 2026
Rosemary A Saccomani,
Register of Probate
02/12/2026

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. HD26P0227EA
Estate of:
Nan Hee McMinn
Date of Death: 10/19/2025
CITATION ON PETITION FOR FORMAL ADJUDICATION

To all interested persons:

A Petition for **Formal Probate of Will with Appointment of Personal Representative** has been filed by **Anthony D Valicenti of Burke, VA** requesting that the Court enter a formal Decree and Order and for such other relief as requested in the Petition.

The Petitioner requests that **Anthony D Valicenti of Burke, VA** be appointed as Personal Representative(s) of said estate to serve **Without Surety** on the bond in **unsupervised administration**.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

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 the return day of 03/03/2026. 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 writ-**

ten appearance and objection followed by an affidavit of objections within thirty (30) days of the return day, action may be taken without further notice to you.

UNSUPERVISED ADMINISTRATION UNDER THE MASSACHUSETTS UNIFORM PROBATE

A Personal Representative appointed under the MUPC in an unsupervised administration is not required to file an inventory or annual accounts with the Court. Persons interested in the estate are entitled to notice regarding the administration directly from the Personal Representative and may petition the Court in any matter relating to the estate, including the distribution of assets and expenses of administration.

WITNESS, Hon. Claudine T. Stoudemire, First Justice of this Court.

Date: February 03, 2026
Rosemary A Saccomani,
Register of Probate
02/12/2026

Please check the accuracy of your legal notice prior to submission (i.e., date, time, spelling). Also, be sure the requested publication date coincides with the purpose of the notice, or as the law demands. Thank you.

Wilbraham-Hampden Times

OBITUARY POLICY

Turley Publications offers two types of obituaries. One is a free, brief **Death Notice** listing the name of deceased, date of death and funeral date and place.

The other is a **Paid Obituary**, costing \$275, which allows families to publish extended death notice information of their own choice (with a word limit of up to 500 words) and may include a photograph. **Death Notices & Paid Obituaries** should be submitted through a funeral home to: obits@turley.com.

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

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