

# WARE RIVER NEWS



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## SB hears update on hospital, town depts.

By Paula Ouimette  
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WARE – Town Manager Stuart Beckley provided a summary to the Selectboard of recent meetings that have been held with Baystate Health, regarding the former Mary Lane Hospital.

Attending the meetings are Beckley, Hospital Review Committee Nancy Talbot and a member of the Historical Commission.

At the March 6 meeting, Beckley told the Selectboard that Baystate Health had committed to cooperation during a meeting with state legislators.

He said there has been concern from residents about the removal of pavement from the hospital site, which will be addressed with state legislators in a follow-up meeting.

Beckley said the Hospital Review Committee and Historical Commission are researching alternate uses for the hospital, keeping the need for a medical service in town at high importance.

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## WCES students run DAILY PODCAST



By Ryan Drago  
Staff Writer  
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WARREN – Every morning during the school day, the classrooms of Warren Community Elementary School view the daily podcast.

The WCES podcast features sixth grade students reporting morning announcements and other school community activities throughout the school year. When these students start the sixth grade, some of them apply and submit a resume to become part of the pod squad and host the daily school podcast.

After the application process, the applicants are narrowed down to four or five candidates. This process of

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Turley Photo by Ryan Drago

Sixth grade students at Warren Community Elementary School get early reporting experience by hosting their school's daily podcast.

## USDA grant would cover 35% of new cruiser cost

By Paula Ouimette  
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HARDWICK – Capital Planning Committee Chair Mark Korzec updated the Select Board about the feasibility of purchasing a new vehicle for the Police Department.

At the March 11 meeting, Korzec said the U.S. Department

of Agriculture has offered a Community Facilities grant for \$23,450, which would leave a balance of around \$43,557 that the town would be responsible for. He said the Finance Committee has reviewed funding for the vehicle.

“Our suggestion was to get a four- or five-year loan and pay it back from Capital Stabilization,” Korzec said. There is currently \$50,000 in that account, and the

Capital Planning Committee plans to add \$50,000 to it each year.

“In four years, when that would be paid off, we’d have plenty of money for the other capital purchases that were coming up,” he said.

Town Administrator Nicole Parker said the Community Facilities grant is for a “shovel-ready” project that is not construction and covers 35% of the

cost. She said the funding will be gone as of Sept. 30, and the town’s portion has to be paid in full.

In order to meet the parameters of the grant, Parker said the town would need to have the title of the vehicle, and if they paid with a loan, they wouldn’t receive that title for several years.

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## Selectmen appoint new building inspector, town accountant

By Paula Ouimette  
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WARREN – The Board of Selectmen appointed William R. Cantell as the town’s Building Inspector and Zoning Enforcement Officer for a one-year term.

At the March 7 meeting, Board of Selectmen Chair David Dufresne said Cantell is qualified and knowledgeable.

Cantell said he started as a contractor in the early 1990s in Brimfield until 2018, when he became a local inspector in Southbridge. He was hired to conduct inspections of multi-family buildings, annual liquor license inspections and buildings with over 50 people occupancies.

Cantell also became the Building Commissioner of Wales and Brimfield. He is also the regional inspector for Barre, which also includes three other towns.

He said Warren is the second largest town he covers.

“I’m looking forward to getting things going,” Cantell said.

Cantell said he enjoys doing inspections and that he follows up on all valid code enforcement complaints.

### New Town Accountant

The board approved an employment agreement between the town and Jaclyn Bonner to assume the role of Town Accountant.

“She seems like a very good fit for the town,” Dufresne said.

Town Administrator James Ferrera said it was “very clear” to the committee that Bonner stood out as a candidate with her background and experience.

Bonner will start March 25.

Ferrera also thanked interim Town Accountant Madeline Witaszek for stepping up for the town.

“She came in, and she was extremely helpful in getting us to where we are today,” he said. “Thank you very much for your dedication; your hard work certainly doesn’t go unnoticed.”

Dufresne said Witaszek has always been an asset to the town.

### CDBG application

A public hearing was held for the fiscal year 2024 Community Development Block Grant application.

Chris Dunphy, principal planner with Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission presented information about the grant, and the projects this round of funding would cover.

“I’ve been helping Warren for over 20 years now, develop these applications...and we’ve done quite well with it,” Dunphy said.

Dunphy said he has been working with the Community Development Advisory Committee to determine eligible projects. He said they’ve been successful in targeting the village centers in town.

This year, the proposed projects will focus on West Warren, specifically River and Central streets.

“The waterlines on these two streets are asbestos lined and they’re undersized,” Dunphy said. “For those two reasons alone, we think it’s worthy to go ahead and seek funds to replace them.”

River Street will be 100% reconstructed with a new waterline, new road surface and improved stormwater drainage system.

“Due to the limitations of the grant applications, we’ll only be able to afford the installation of a waterline on Central Street, but we hope to come back in a future year and finish off the road,” Dunphy said.

Dunphy said the application is

Please see **WARREN**, page 6



Turley Photo by Ryan Drago

This amazing house sculpture was made by Quaboag Regional High School senior Chloe Fredette.

## Student's art displayed at West Brookfield library

By Ryan Drago  
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WEST BROOKFIELD – For a month, guests at Merriam-Gilbert Public Library will witness talented artwork.

This past weekend, the work done by the Quaboag National Art Honor Society and National Junior Art Honor Society Chapter members was featured during their opening night of the exhibit.

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## Purple for Prevention Week

Chris Herren speaks at school and community assemblies

By Paula Ouimette  
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BARRE – For Quabbin Regional High School alumni Cody Handrahan, stepping back into his high school gym and standing in front of an assembly of students and staff; was a feeling almost beyond words.

“It’s an honor and a privilege to be back here,” Handrahan said at an assembly last Thursday evening, held in commemoration of Purple for Prevention Week.

Handrahan attended the high school in 2008-2009, but never graduated. As a young teen, he smoked and drank a lot to fit in with his peers.

“Very quickly, that changed,” he said, when he became addicted to opioids at just 15 years old.

Handrahan had the opportunity to work with Q-DRUG (Quabbin Drug Response Unifying Group) when it first started, and had its members’ support when he hit rock bottom and told his mother he would take his life.

“They stuck by my side,” he said.

Q-DRUG’s founder Neki Jenkins thanked Handrahan for sharing his story, adding that she is “so proud of him.”

Jenkins then introduced former Boston Celtics point guard Chris Herren, who had spent the day at the school speaking with students in middle and high school as part of Purple for Prevention Week.

Herren first came to the school district in 2013, sharing his story from his days playing basketball in his driveway as a kid, to going pro, and losing everything he had to addiction.

“I’ll never be like that guy,” Herren recalled thinking to himself as a teenager when he sat through an assembly similar to this one.

Herren said if he could go back to 1994 to that assembly, he would listen.



Turley Photo by Mary Whitelaw

Former NBA player Chris Herren stands with Q-DRUG members Neki Jenkins (left) and Mary Whitelaw (right).

Over the last 15 years, Herren has spent most of his time traveling, speaking at schools and connecting with students, hoping to empower them to feel good about themselves and avoid using substances in order to feel comfortable around their peers.

“We put way too much energy into the worst day and not the first day,” Herren said.

Herren grew up in a home that was shaped by addiction, as his father is an alcoholic.

“My mother was always by herself in her bedroom reading,” Herren recalled.

He remembered the first time his mother had the courage to tell his father that she would leave him if

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### SPORTS

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# SPORTS

## Quaboag defeated in final regular season game



Colton Allen attempts a three-pointer.



Will Goodwin makes his way down the court.



Adam Benkert shoots from the free throw line.



Turley photos by David Henry www.sweetdogphotos.com Zach Dermian shoots in traffic.

SOUTH HADLEY – Last Saturday afternoon, Quaboag 5-6 Suburban League boys basketball was defeated 47-15 at South Hadley in a matchup played at South Hadley High School. It was the final regular season game for both teams and the Suburban League playoffs were scheduled to begin this week.

## St. Patrick's Road Race set for this Saturday

By Gregory A. Scibelli  
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HOLYOKE – The weekend of St. Patrick's Day is synonymous with the popular parade in the streets of downtown Holyoke. But equally tradition is the 10K St. Patrick's Day Road Race.

The road race was disappointingly cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and again in 2021 when COVID-19 rates rose due to the vaccine not being as widely available at the time.

But last year, the race returned to the joy people throughout the region and beyond and Holyoke once again became a hub of activity beginning with "Race Day."

And the sights and scenes of St. Patrick's Day weekend were also back in the Paper City the past two years as the downtown area around Maple and High Streets were lined with patrons. Bars and restaurants were filled with people going in and out, the Mummer's gave their performance, and children and others were able to participate in the

Please see **RACE**, page 10

## Quabbin alum Nassir participates in MASCAC championships

WESTFIELD – Abdi Nassir, a graduate of Quabbin Regional High School, has been a regular participant this winter on Westfield State University's Track and Field team after spending the fall as part of the cross country team.

Most recently, Nassir took part in the conference championship meet, placing fifth in the one-mile run. He completed a mile in less than five minutes at 4:45. He went on to participate in the 3,000 meter run, a distance of just under two miles. He placed third in that event with a time of 9:37.



Hunter Griswold passes on the run.



Adrien Moskovitz passes on the run.



Trevor Allard makes a shot.

## Pioneers lose state tourney opener to Panthers

By Tim Peterson  
Sports Correspondent

PALMER—The Palmer Panthers won a preliminary round home game in the Division 5 state boys basketball tournament for the second time in the past three years.

Led by senior Andrew Menard and freshman Taydem Haley, who combined for 48 points, the 23rd-seeded Panthers advanced into the round of 32 with a 79-51 victory over the 42nd-seeded Pathfinder Tech Pioneers on Feb. 27.

"It's really good for these guys, especially the two seniors, to have a home win in the states," said Palmer head coach Missy Rocker said. "As soon as we found out that we would be facing Pathfinder, the kids were very excited about playing against their friends."

Two years ago, Palmer defeated the Hampden Charter School East, 61-40, in a preliminary home game before losing at Hopkins Academy in the round of 32.

This year's postseason journey also came to an end for the Panthers in the round of 32 following a 68-49 road loss to the 10th-seeded Douglas Tigers two nights later.

Palmer finished their season with an 11-10 overall record. Menard, who scored 13 of his 22 points against the Pioneers during the second half, and Shawn Troche are the two seniors listed on the Panthers varsity roster.

"Andrew and I have been playing on the same basketball teams since we were little kids," said Troche, who chipped in with seven points. "It feels amazing to win a state tournament game in our final home game. We lost in the round of



Adam Slonka ranges for a layup from the right side.



Turley photos by David Henry www.sweetdogphotos.com Richie Gula shoots for the Pioneers.

32 two years ago and we're hoping to get to the round of 16 this year."

Haley, who's a tri-captain captain with the two seniors, played in his first state tournament game against Pathfinder Tech. He netted 18 of his career-high 26 points after halftime.

"Winning a game in the state tournament feels really good," Haley said. "There was a lot of pressure on us, but we worked very

hard as a team."

Troche was very impressed with Haley's outstanding performance.

"Taydem is only a freshman, but he scored 26 points, which is amazing," he said. "He always plays every game with a lot of confidence."

Pathfinder Tech, who has made

Please see **PIONEERS**, page 10

## Ware's season ends at Hoosac Valley

By Tim Peterson  
Sports Correspondent

CHESHIRE—At the end of January, the Ware boys' basketball team lost a non-league game at Hoosac Valley by twelve points.

When the two squads faced each other for the second time in the Division 5 round of 16, the final outcome was pretty much decided by halftime.

The top-seeded Hurricanes, who held a 30-13 halftime advantage, coasted to a 53-30 home victory against the 17th-seeded Indians, last Tuesday night.

The second half was a little bit closer, as the Hurricanes only outscored the Indians, by six points (23-17).

The Indians, who finished their season with a 12-10 overall record, advanced into the round of 16 following a thrilling 56-55 victory at 16th-seeded Tahanto

Regional on February 29.

Senior Jack McKeever led the way offensively for Ware in that contest with 19 points.

McKeever was also the Indians leading scorer against the Hurricanes with eight points. He made a couple of 3-pointers. His younger brother, Owen, who's a junior, chipped in with six points. Sophomore Brady Guimond, who also made a 3-pointer, added five points.

Rounding out the scoring column in the season finale were senior Gavin Konozek (4 points), sophomore Alex Orszulak (3 points), senior Josh Mulligan (2 points), and sophomore Jack Gaudreau (2 points).

The only other senior listed on the Indians varsity basketball roster is John Mumper.

Hoosac Valley (20-2) was scheduled to host eighth-seeded Hopedale (12-10) in the elite eight.



Mark Laviolette, of Ludlow makes his way up the right side of the ice.

## Papermen represent region in new league

HOLYOKE – The Holyoke Papermen, an amateur adult hockey team, was in action last Saturday afternoon. The Papermen are brand new adult team participating in the Union Hockey League, a new adult league in the New York and New England region. The new team got started in January and is playing a 32-game season with seven other teams that joined the league. Home games are played at Fitzpatrick Rink in Holyoke.



Turley photos by David Henry www.sweetdogphotos.com Vinnie McAllister sends a pass away.



Nick McNally comes into the ice and immediately takes control of the puck.



Gaetano Delonge receives a pass.



Zach Paisley heads up the left side of the ice.



Nick Cambria looks to center the puck.