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SB chair calls for unity, transparency

By Paula Ouimette
Editor
pouimette@turley.com

WARE – Selectboard Chair Josh Kusnierz said the town is facing “real challenges.”

“It’s clear that we must face them together,” he said.

At the Selectboard’s May 5 meeting, Kusnierz said many people feel frustrated about the appearance of the town’s streets and the lingering impact of the closing of Baystate Mary Lane Hospital. He said these issues effect the quality of life, public health and safety.

He said the “pressure is intense and unsustainable” on the town’s public safety personnel, with the closing of the hospital.

“We are going to be taking action,” Kusnierz said. “We will lead with transparency and integrity, ensuring that every decision reflects the town’s best interest. At the same time, we will welcome collaboration with other boards, committees and any resident who wants to move the town forward and not backward. Together, we can make sure every voice is heard, and every idea counts.”

Kusnierz said the it’s the Selectboard’s responsibility to rebuild trust with residents.

“I ask for your partnership, not just your presence,” he said. “The road ahead may not me easy, but I am confident, together, we can make Ware a town we’re proud to call home.”

Open meeting law complaint

Town Attorney Nicole Costanzo said a draft response to Cindy Allen Bourcier’s open meet law complaint against the Selectboard dated April 26 has been written. She said Bourcier’s complaint “has a number of allegations,” including agendas, agenda postings and meeting minutes of all boards and committees.

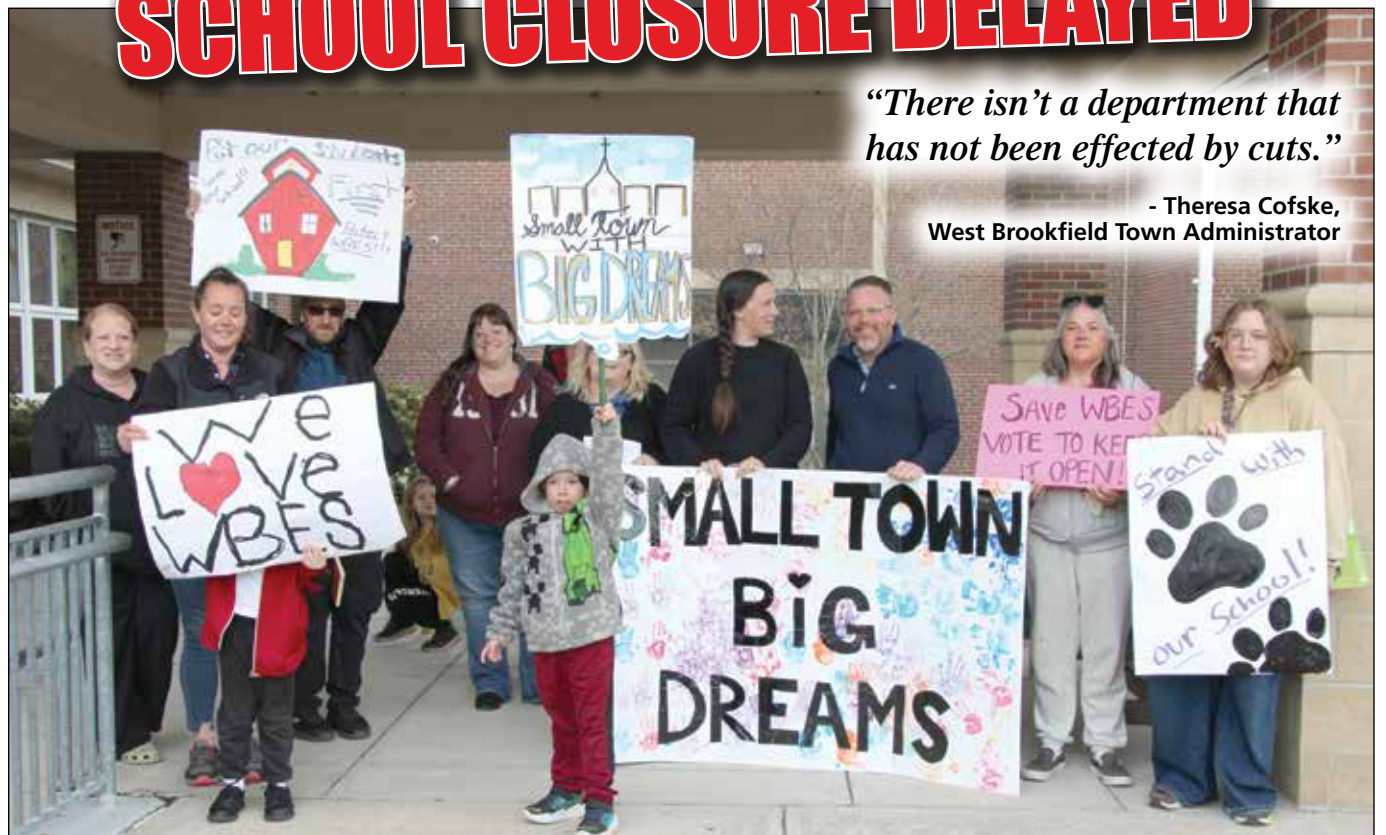
“The allegations in the complaint don’t allege any sufficiently specific violations, if you look at them, they’re very broad,” Costanzo said. “Not identifying specific meetings where agendas were improper or meeting minutes weren’t properly created.”

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SCHOOL CLOSURE DELAYED

“There isn’t a department that has not been effected by cuts.”

- Theresa Cofske,
West Brookfield Town Administrator



Turley Photo by Paula Ouimette

Parents and students stood outside Quaboag Regional Middle High School in support of keeping West Brookfield Elementary School open.

Vote keeps elementary school open

By Paula Ouimette
Editor
pouimette@turley.com

WARREN – West Brookfield Elementary School will remain open, after a motion to close the school at the Quaboag Regional School Committee’s meeting failed to pass.

The vote came after overrides questions failed to pass at West Brookfield’s annual town election.

Override votes

The need for an override was explained by West Brookfield Town Administrator Theresa Cofske at the May 11 School Committee

meeting.

In the past, the town used one-time revenues or free cash to fill the budget gap, which is not a recommended financial practice. She said the town’s Advisory Committee and Financial Consultant have warned against this practice for years.

“Clearly you can see the

trend...there was a structural gap going back years,” Cofske said.

For fiscal year 2027, Cofske said the town was told by the Department of Revenue that they could not use free cash to support their operating budget.

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Selectmen continue to review ATM articles

By Ryan Drago
Staff Writer
rdrago@turley.com

WARREN – The Board of Selectmen met on May 7 and welcomed their newest elected member, Ray Kopacko.

During a brief discussion of reorganizing the board, Richard Eichacker will remain as the chair of the board, Derick Veliz will remain vice-chair, and Kopacko will be the clerk.

The board continued their review of the warrant

articles and the fiscal year 2027 budget for the Annual Town Meeting on June 11. Town Administrator James Ferrera began by giving a brief synopsis of what happened during West Brookfield’s election.

The Town of West Brookfield had two ballot questions that both failed for overrides. To his understanding, the officials of West Brookfield are planning to address the outcome of their election during a Quaboag Regional School Committee meeting.

There are 24 articles on the warrant. Ferrera is waiting for any decisions from the board that may have to be added to the warrant. For example, Ferrera asked if there would be an article regarding the above minimum contribution for the school. Also, any additional changes the board would want to make.

Ferrera did go over some of the articles that were recommended by the Capital Planning Committee. One article is for improvements to the Senior Center.

There is also an article for a stabilization account for a new police cruiser. Article 23 will address the snow and ice deficit.

The Town Administrator would like to get the warrant signed and close on May 14.

The board did have some questions about the school budget. Ferrera said the School Committee is meeting again soon and he believes they’re going to be working on a new budget.

Ferrera said he has not seen any final numbers as of yet and believes a lot of

them are still fluid. West Brookfield is also restructuring their budget.

The omnibus budget has been updated and there are some changes to health insurance and increases that reflect new hires from the Fire Department. There are also two separate budgets for Highway.

Fire Chief Adam Lavoie spoke on some of the budget items tied to the fire department.

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Select Board welcomes new member

By Zacharias Fragkiadakis
Staff Writer
zachf@turley.com

HARDWICK – The Select Board held its first meeting with new member Zack Spencer, who was voted into the position during the May 2 annual town election.

The first order of business was the reorganization of the board, and Spencer read a nomination letter.

“We are not in a position where we can afford instability, conflict and the loss of key personnel,” Spencer said.

He said there have been concerns from the town about the actions of the board from employees. Spencer said it is the board’s job to create a stable and professional work environment, and the employees keep the town running.

“I am interested in stabilizing this town and moving forward,” he said.

Spencer said the nomination of a chair determines how the board functions, and nominated Select Board member Jeff Schaaf as chair. Schaaf seconded the motion, with an apology to Select Board Vice-Chair William Tinker.

“It’s nothing personal,” he said.

The motion to appoint Schaaf chair passed 2-1, with Tinker voting no. The board

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Quaboag Hills Chamber of Commerce holds annual awards dinner



Turley Photo by Ryan Drago

Shown from left are James Przypek, Mary Dembkowski, state Rep. Todd Smola, Kim Mongeau and Amanda Hellyar. Dembkowski was the recipient of the Volunteer of the Year Award during the 2026 Quaboag Hills Chamber of Commerce Choice Awards Dinner at Steaming Tender Restaurant in Palmer.

By Ryan Drago
Staff Writer
rdrago@turley.com

PALMER – The Quaboag Hills Chamber of Commerce held its Choice Awards Dinner at the Steaming Tender Restaurant.

This dinner is held to honor the year’s finalists and winners of prestigious awards that highlight individuals and businesses in the Quaboag Hills Region of Massachusetts.

Serving as the Chief Executive Officer of the Chamber is James Przypek, who made the announcements during the awards dinner at Steaming Tender held on May 6. President of the Chamber is Renee Niedziela, who presented the plaques

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Superintendent Eric Duda (left) met with Governor Maura Healey to accept the grant of \$3.5 million.

Pathfinder receives record-breaking grant

By Marcelo Gusmão
Staff Writer
mgusmao@turley.com

PALMER – Pathfinder Regional School District has been awarded a monumental \$3.5 million grant from the state.

Earlier this month, Superintendent Eric

Duda attended the official announcement event and press conference in Marlborough that was hosted by Governor Maura Healey to announce the funds being awarded to Pathfinder.

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SPORTS

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WARE BOYS VOLLEYBALL WINS 15TH

Turley photos by Gregory A. Scibelli
Ryder Cahalan looks for a point.



King Stallings gets ready to send down a spike.



Sebastian Schmidt serves for the Indians.



Lucas Schilling sends a set up toward the left side of the net.



Jonathon Adkins sends a hard spike down.



Aidan Montone gets low hit to keep the ball in play.

SPRINGFIELD – More than a month ago, Ware High School boys volleyball had a tough opening to the regular season, losing to Granby. The loss did not phase the Indians, as they have now gone on to win 15 games unanswered. The latest was a 3-0 sweep of the Libertas Academy Charter School in Springfield last Friday afternoon. The Indians had no trouble scoring the sweep, and had just two regular season games remaining against Commerce and Veritas Prep. Ware has already beaten both teams during the regular season. Ware is assured a spot in the state tournament, and hopes to also compete in the Western Mass. tournament as well this year.

Indians edge Palmer baseball

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

THORNDIKE— A decade ago, Zach Handzel won his final game as a starting pitcher for the Palmer baseball team against archrival Ware. Since becoming the Panthers varsity coach, Handzel hasn't been able to celebrate a victory in the rivalry series.

In the only meeting of the regular season between the two neighboring high schools, the Indians squeaked out a 3-2 senior night victory over the Panthers at St. Joe's Park in Thorndike on May 4.

"We didn't get the job done in tonight's game. We left a lot of runners in scoring position," Handzel said. "This has always been a huge rivalry game and the players on both teams know each other very well. I'm really hoping that we can play them during the postseason tournament."

The last time that the Panthers (8-5) defeated the Indians on the baseball diamond was in 2019. They were able to sweep the season series that spring. Joe Lombardi was the Panthers winning pitcher in both games.

The Indians had a 9-5 overall record following last week's non-league home win.

"This is a very big win for us against our rivals," said Ware interim head coach Shawn Clark. "Palmer is a very good team, but my guys came to play tonight. It was an outstanding pitcher's duel. We've lost a couple of close games this season, so it feels nice to win one."

One of the seniors listed on the Indians roster is Brady Guimond, who was the winning pitcher in his final regular season start against Palmer.

Guimond allowed two runs (one earned) on six hits with five walks and seven strikeouts in 61/3 innings. The only reason Guimond didn't finish the game on the mound was because he had reached the 115 pitch limit.

"It's always a lot of fun playing against Palmer, especially on senior night," Guimond said. "It's a little bittersweet."

The other Ware seniors, who were honored during a pregame ceremony are Troy Dufresne, Brodie Koczur, Alex Orzulak, Jack Gaudreau, Kyle Kaczuwka, and Marek Luongo, who's the team manager.

"It's an outstanding group of seniors," Clark said. Baseball is a challenging sport, but the seniors always have an enjoyable time when they're on the field together. We're really going to miss them a lot next year.

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Monson boys lacrosse takes down Central

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

MONSON -- Prior to last Monday's home game against Springfield Central, Monson senior Wyatt Breault had never been a goalie in a varsity lacrosse game.

The Monson offense helped their first-time starting goalie by scoring the first five goals of the Suburban League matchup. The Mustangs held onto the lead the rest of the way as they swept the season series against the Golden Eagles with a 10-6 victory.

"Our backup goalie played very well in his first

varsity start," said Monson head coach Michael Quinn. "I'm sure that he was very nervous before the start of the game."

Breault, who made eight saves, replaced senior Riley Hurst, who was sidelined with the flu.

Breault and Hurst both attend Pathfinder Tech. They're able to play lacrosse for Monson as part of a co-op.

The other student-athletes from Pathfinder Tech listed on the Monson boys' lacrosse roster are freshman Grayson Contacos, senior Parker Libiszewski, senior Dom Menard, sophomore Lukas Roy, senior Bradyn Wilson, senior Harold Black, junior Gavin Peters, senior Rhees Hageman, freshman Parker Lang, and sophomore John Morrison.

One of the players from Monson High School is junior Kyle Beaudry, who led the way offensively with four goals against Golden Eagles. The duo of senior Landon Couture and Libiszewski chipped in with a pair of goals. Junior Brennan Peterson added a goal and a team-leading four assists.

The Mustangs, who had a 9-3 overall record, will be competing in the Division 4 state tournament for the first time since 2024. They only won one game a year ago.

"We only lost one player



Turley photo by Gregory A. Scibelli
Dom Menard looks to get around a defender.

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Adam Adams dives safely into second base.

Panthers fall in close matchup with Leicester

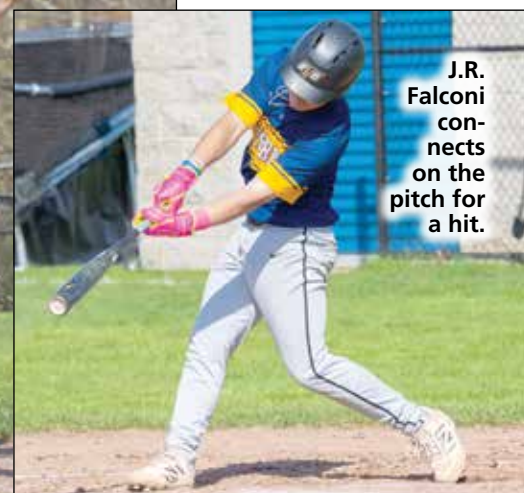
Turley photos by Jeffrey Haynes
Andy Warfield winces as he is struck by a pitch.

BARRE – It was a busy home work for the Quabbin Regional High School baseball team, thought the Panthers did lose one game to a rainout last Wednesday. Last Monday, the Panthers

defeated Narragansett 3-1, but suffered a 10-8 loss to Leicester. With the defeat, Quabbin stands at 5-7. They have more games on the schedule, but are looking for that .500 record needed to qualify for the Division 4 state tournament. Coming up, the Panthers will host Murdock High School at 3:30 p.m. on Thursday, May 14. They host Bromfield on Monday, May 18 at 4 p.m.



Ian Haupt stretches out to make the catch as the runner sprints to first base.



J.R. Falconi connects on the pitch for a hit.