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AGAWAM

ADVERTISER NEWS

A TURLEY PUBLICATION | www.turley.com

April 30, 2026 | Vol. 48, No. 9 | \$1.00

www.agawamadvertisernews.turley.com

Historical Association dedicates Agawam's new

By Christina Gioscia
Correspondent

AGAWAM – On Sunday April 19, at the Thomas Smith House in Agawam, the Agawam Historical Association hosted the dedication of Agawam's very own Liberty Tree. The dedication was free and open to the public. There for the dedication were members of Agawam's Historical Association as well as members of the 25th Continental Regiment for a musket salute. Agawam High Chamber Choir member, Chelsea Casamento sang the National anthem. The Thomas Smith House and the Delmore Hawthorne Garage were open for attendees to walk around and see the artifacts inside. Inside the Thomas Smith House were warm refreshments, perfect for the chilly rainy afternoon.

President of the Agawam Historical Association David Cecchi provided some insight on the symbolism behind the Liberty Tree dedication.

"We wanted it to be on Apr. 19," Cecchi said. "It's an important day in our history. I wish the weather cooperated, but we figured the people who appreciate that it's the nineteenth will be here. The Liberty Tree was a meeting place for early colonists who

were rebelling against the rule of King George. It became kind of a rally point. Throughout the colonies there were similar groups, and they had similar liberty trees. So, it is really a symbol of our early fight for liberty."

Former Agawam City Councilor Peter Smus talked about what the Liberty Tree here in Agawam means to him.

"A lot of stuff, if you don't pay attention to what happens in the past, good or bad, it can be repeated in the future," Smus said. "Some of it, you don't want to repeat. And it's always really nice to know your heritage, everything about it. It's very important for the town."

Agawam Historical Association Treasurer Katy Krause mentioned significance of hosting the Liberty Tree dedication on Apr. 19.

"It's what kicked off the American Revolution," Krause said. "So, out in the Boston area, there was a crowd of people who were, you know, kind of harassing the soldiers, and they were harassing them back, and somehow, accidentally, a shot went off. The Boston Massacre. We don't usually do Sunday events, but be-



Members of the 25th Continental Regiment with Agawam's new liberty tree at the dedication ceremony on Apr. 19.

TURLEY PHOTO BY CHRISTINA GIOSCIA

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City council tables eminent domain takings for intersection

By Gregory A. Scibelli
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AGAWAM – Last week it took fewer speakers, but a large turnout of support as the Agawam City Council heard the public's concern about the effects plans to im-

prove the five-way intersection at the Cooper St., Rowley St. and Suffield St. (which is Rte. 75).

The council would not even discuss the eminent domain takings that were presented as a resolution, instead unanimously voting

to table the measure at the city council meeting held last Tuesday evening.

The main speaker during Citizen's Speak Time was Alfred Pajer, owner of Pajer Superette, a long-standing Agawam business located at the corner of Cooper and Rowley

streets.

Plans to improve the five-way intersection would have involved taking some land from the Pajer property, and would have eliminated parking spaces at the location.

Employees and customers of the business stacked the

Agawam Senior Center to support Pajer as he pleaded with the city council not to approve the eminent domain takings.

"They're going to take us out of business if we lose one-third of our parking lot," Pajer said.

He expressed a willingness to work with town officials on the design, but said not at the sacrifice of his business.

The land takings would occur in the front of his store.

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City Council approves borrowing \$2.57M for two new fire trucks

By Gregory A. Scibelli
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AGAWAM – Two fire trucks in the Agawam Fire Department's fleet are reaching the end of their useful life and the Agawam City Council last week approved borrowing \$2,577,398 to purchase two new fire engine pump trucks.

According to Mayor Christopher Johnson, "the Agawam Fire Department currently has four fire engine pump trucks with two assigned to each station. Two of the current fire engine pump trucks were purchased in 2018 and they are currently deployed as front line vehicles in each station, and the other two fire engine pump trucks were purchased in 2008 and they are deployed as reserve in each station. The 2008 fire engine pump trucks are nearing the end of their serviceable life and there is considerable lead time to have new vehicles manufactured and deliver."

Johnson said the delivery team to build the truck and get it to Agawam is approximately 850 days, well more than two years.

Because of that, Johnson said the debt would not come into play in the town's budget for a couple of years.

There is also a discount of more than \$124,000 per truck if the bill is paid in advance at the time the order is placed. However, Johnson advised against doing such as thing after analyzing the interest in borrowing the funds now versus when the vehicles are delivered. He said the town is currently making more than 4% interest on reserve funds, making it prudent to hold onto the money.

Chief Alan Sirois, in a memo to the Agawam City Council, said the two older pump engines have higher maintenance costs and a greater likelihood of mechanical failure during emergency response.

"While still functional,

they no longer provide the level of reliability expected of reserve apparatus and instead present a growing operational vulnerability," Sirois said.

With the current estimated build and delivery time, Sirois puts the timeline sometime in late 2028 or early 2029 to have it available for use.

The cost of the new apparatus also includes \$45,000 per truck for trade-in.

"Approving this project will ensure the fire department maintains a reliable and modern fleet capable of supporting both front-line and reserve operations for the next 20 years," Sirois said. "Replacing aging apparatus will reduce maintenance costs, minimize downtime and improve overall system enhancing firefighter safety and operation effectiveness during emergency incidents."

The council approved the request, allowing the proposal to build the new pump engines to move forward.



AHS announces top graduates

Last week, Agawam High School announced who its valedictorian and salutatorian would be for the Class of 2026. The Valedictorian is Matilda Larochele, and the Salutatorian is Keira Murphy.

SUBMITTED PHOTO



SPORTS

Brownies eek out win over Longmeadow

AGAWAM – Last Monday afternoon, Agawam High School baseball squeaked out runs in the fourth and fifth innings to take a 3-2 lead, holding it down for the win at School Street Park. Cole Ingham and Gavin Cruz had two

hits each. Cruz, Joseph Wilkinson, and Parker Bean all drove in runs for the Brownies. Bean also tossed a complete game, scattering two runs on six hits. He walked three and struck out four. Agawam is now 4-6 this season.



Above: Aiden Wykes scampers home with a run. Below: Dominic Chriscola gets ready to swing.



Parker Bean delivers a pitch to the plate.



Lukasz Korcz leads off third base.



Above: Cole Ingham comes up throwing in center.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI



Dominic Chriscola gets ready to swing.



Zachary O'Connor throws home to start a run-down.

Pitching still needed for the 2026 season of the Pioneer Valley Baseball League

SOUTH HADLEY – The Pioneer Valley Baseball League, an adult baseball league for players who are age 18 and over, still has open roster spots for 2026 season.

The league is especially in need of some additional pitching for a couple of its teams. The season is just two games in and there are 20 games remaining through the summer with playoffs taking place in August.

The adult league will be administered by the Quabbin Valley Baseball League, and a registration link is on the home page of the league's website www.quabbinvalley-baseball.org. Thought it will be under the Quabbin umbrella, there will be no major changes in how the league is operated.

This year, the PVBL will have a 22-game regular season schedule followed by

a double-elimination playoffs. The league, which had five teams last year and had to utilize multiple byes throughout the season, will be fielding a sixth team this season.

The league is a wood-bat only league utilizing playing under regular baseball rules though all players do bat. The league operates on a Saturday-Tuesday schedule. Games are played on Satur-

day mornings with 10 a.m. starts typical and on Tuesday evenings with start times in the 5:30 to 6 p.m. range. The league will start play in late April and run through the end of August. There are slots open for both full-time players and part-time players. The fee for full-time players will be \$260 with part-time players getting up to 11 games for \$130. Fees paid go toward the operation of the

league, paying for insurance, umpires, fields, and baseballs. No one profits in any way. Those who sign up after the season begins will pay a prorated fee for the season.

In addition to the new sixth team, there are limited open roster spots on the other teams in the league, so get your registration in as soon as possible to participate in this season.

Games are played at

ballfields throughout the region from as far south as Southwick's Whalley Field, through South Hadley's Beachgrounds and up north at Frontier Regional High School in South Deerfield.

For any questions, please go to the league website for more information.

The league hopes interested players will come out and join the fun this spring and summer.