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AGAWAM

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Club celebrates 88th anniversary

AGAWAM – On Wednesday, May 20, the Catholic Women's Club of Agawam celebrated its 88th anniversary with a beautiful banquet

event at Storowton Tavern. The May Banquet was held at Storowton. And Club President Paula Raiche, Vice President Jackie Toussaint

and Treasurer Eileen Kane presented tea cups and saucers as a remembrance of the September "teas" and the many warm and wonderful

friendships made throughout the years. Honored guests were Deacon Dave Picard and Sr. Melinda Pellerin. It was a joyous evening.



SUBMITTED PHOTOS

Top photo, longtime members of the Catholic Women's Club of Agawam. Above, the tea cup table on display. Left, Treasurer Eileen Kane, Deacon Dave Picard, Vice President Jackie Toussaint and President Paula Raiche.

Pajer, town reach compromise to move forward with project

By Gregory A. Scibelli
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AGAWAM – After a massive turnout to a late April Agawam City Council meeting and a subsequent community information meeting and city council workshop, town officials were able to reach a compromise with Alfred Pajer, owner of Pajer Superette so an intersection project can go forward.

At its May 18 meeting, the council approved eminent domain takings at the five-way intersection that meets Rowley St., with Cooper St. and Suffield St. (Rte. 75). The town will utilize casino mitigation funds for the project. The goal is to modernize the intersection with new traffic signals and a couple of dedicated left turn lanes in order to help with the traffic flow. Sidewalk and crosswalks with proper ADA-compliant materials were also part of the plan. A rotary, or roundabout was considered, but ultimately ruled out.

One part of the project that was a major issue was the eminent domain takings on a few properties needed to widen the intersection.

Pajer, community supporters, and even some of his employees, addressed the city council in April, saying the land takings

that would have eliminated a few of parking spaces in front of his business would have hurt his operations and asked the council to consider other options.

The council responded by holding a workshop meeting for more community interaction and to ask more questions of project designers and Mayor Christopher Johnson.

The takings were then tabled at the first May meeting before compromise was reached between the Town and Pajer.

One thing of note was that the eminent domain takings would have eliminated approximately three parking spaces in front of the Pajer building, but there are actually no lined spaces in front.

The mayor's office says the exact details of the compromise cannot be shared until a contract has been signed between all the parties, but members of the city council were satisfied a solution had been reached in order to vote in favor of it. It is also not known if any of the current plans on the project have been changed to accommodate the agreement.

According to the presentation made last month, the design process for the intersection will continue and work will

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City council shows support for legislation to help with affordable Internet

By Gregory A. Scibelli
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AGAWAM – A resolution to support legislation currently in the state house that would major utility pole changes to accommodate high-speed fiber optic Internet was approved last month by the Agawam City Council.

City Councillor Thomas Hendrickson, along with Councilors Rosemary Sandlin and Edward Borgatti, are sponsoring a resolution that supports "One Touch Make Ready" legislation.

It passed through the full council as the town's legislative body agreed that affordable internet is a necessity for the Town of Agawam.

Supporters of the resolution referenced the fact that other communities nearby have been able to achieve fiber optic networks that

help create competition with Xfinity, which currently the main provider of Internet in the community.

"The price of internet access in Agawam is one of the most significant cost-of-living issues facing our community," said Councilor Hendrickson. "For many years, Comcast's stranglehold over Agawam's internet market has allowed them to charge exorbitant prices and has had severe consequences for Agawam residents. This legislation would make it easier for us to entice a competitor to come to Agawam, which would create market competition and fairer prices."

The councilors' resolution is to support HB.5290 and SB.2285, which would establish "One Touch Make Ready" applications in Mas-

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Bands come together



Every spring, the performing arts students from across the Agawam Public Schools come together to perform for the community. This form of collaborative event is unique to Agawam and showcased our K-12 performing arts students in a very meaningful way.



SPORTS

Brownies come up short for WMass title

AGAWAM – After fighting through the court system to playing in the Western Massachusetts Class A Championship game, Agawam High School took to a rainy Westfield State University and faced East Longmeadow. Unfortunately, it was the Spartans day as Agawam fell 9-4 on Saturday, May 23. Agawam had an early lead 3-2, but gave it up in the bot-

tom of the third inning and East Longmeadow never relinquished it again. Madelyn Pajer had a big game for Agawam, going 3-for-4. Taylor Stairs had a 2-for-3 game with a walk. She also had two RBI. The Brownies entered the state tournament last week and are already headed for the Round of 16 on Wednesday, June 3.



Taylor Stairs makes a catch for an out at third base.



The captains of Agawam High School softball, finalists in the Western Mass. tournament.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY WWW.SWEETDOGPHOTOS.COM



Above, Madelyn Pajer slides back to first. Right, Kiley Ryan makes a catch at first.



Valley Blue Sox ready for the 2026 season

HOLYOKE – The Valley Blue Sox return for the 2026 season after finishing last season at 20-22 record. Despite narrowly missing out on the playoffs, The Blue Sox ended the season on a high note with a dominant 23-1 win against the Upper Valley Nighthawks in July. The Blue Sox will open up their season June 4 against the Newport Gulls at home. The Gulls are coming out of the gates as Regular Season Divisional Champions, after posting a 29-15 record in 2025. The teams last met on a rainy July day in Rhode Island, where The Blue Sox pulled off a 6-5 comeback win in extra innings. “Regardless of who we have out there ... [it’s] just creating that kind of sense of urgency from the beginning .. and you want to certainly make a good first impression,” head coach John Raiola said. “Play hard

and compete, that’s really what I ask every day, no matter what ... [and] that starts on June 4.” Raiola returns as head coach of the Blue Sox after five seasons in the front office as the team’s director of baseball operations. Following the departure of former head coach Endy Morales in pursuit of the Banana Ball League, Raiola returns to a team that he coached to back to back NECBL championships in 2017 and 2018. Returning to the same coaching job he first stepped into 11 years ago, one of Raiola’s top priorities is to put a team on the field that is ready to compete. “It’s not just summer ball,” Raiola said. “It’s an opportunity for you to put your best foot forward and show that you, in basically an all-star league, can compete against

the best throughout all over the country, and show up and do it every single day.” The Blue Sox offense ranked in the top of the NECBL last season but the pitching staff struggled, finishing with a team ERA of 4.93, the eighth best in the league. Raiola, who served as a pitching coach at Western New England University and in the Cape Cod Baseball League with the Yarmouth-Dennis Red Sox, seeks to heighten the threat of Valley’s arms. “One thing that’s really important for us, and that I tell [the players] ... is that they leave better than they came,” Raiola said. “... You should have something that you know that you need to do and that you don’t do particularly well and we should be working towards solving ... so that when you leave, you

leave better than we found you.” Raiola spent the 2015-2019 seasons as head coach of the Blue Sox, and has been the head coach of the Elms College baseball team since 2020, where he’s posted a 94-120 record. Raiola is no stranger to NECBL titles. Prior to his time in Holyoke, Raiola won a championship as a part of the Newport Gulls coaching staff in 2009, another with the Keene Swampbats in 2011, and made a championship appearance with the Sanford Mainers in 2014. Raiola has exciting names to work with this summer from all over the country. Returning for the Blue Sox is infielder Michael Elko. Elko suited up for Valley in 39 games last season, tallying 165 plate appearances. The Texas native earned 30 runs with

34 hits and finished the season off with a 0.252 batting average. A senior at the University of Richmond, Elko’s college season ended with 52 starts and was named the Atlantic 10 Baseball Player of the Week back in March. Incoming Blue Sox shortstop Anthony Grabau has made headlines in his junior season at Fordham University. In 2026, he hit for a .303 batting average across 218 at bats, posting a .911 OPS, a promising left-handed bat. Grabau finished with nine home runs and 38 RBI and earned a spot on Baseball America’s College Team of the Week on April 21 at shortstop after an 11-for-21 week where he hit for the cycle. Grabau has been a defensive anchor at shortstop, starting all 55