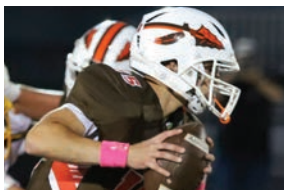




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AGAWAM

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State representative candidates make their case

By Gregory A. Scibelli
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AGAWAM – Coming up on Tuesday, Nov. 3, the most local race town residents will be helping decide is who will represent the Third Hampden District in the Massachusetts House of Representatives. Incumbent State Rep.

Nicholas Boldyga, a Republican, was elected in 2010 and has held the seat since. This year, he is being challenged by Thomas Hendrickson, an Agawam City Councilor, and a Democrat, and Jason Perron, a former Southwick Select Board member, who is running as an independent. This year, the Agawam Ad-

vertiser asked the candidates the same four questions followed by one specific question posed to each individual. Here are for the four questions all candidates received:

1. Affordability of basic necessities, gas, groceries, electricity is choking residents. What can you do in the state legislature to curb

the issue and how would you sell other legislators to see it your way?

2. State voters overwhelmingly agreed the auditor should audit the legislature's spending. It has yet to happen due to multiple legal challenges. What is your stance on the issue and what would you do to either

help or hinder efforts to get the legislature audited in the near future?

3. Negative campaigning has been a big part of this year's election race for the Third Hampden District. Do you believe this is an effective way to reach voters and how do you feel about the tone of your current campaign?

4. Name a bill you would introduce within your first 100 days in office and explain how you would get it passed.

Below, see what the candidates have to say and remember, early voting is already underway or be sure to get out and vote on Nov. 3 from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. in one of Agawam's eight precincts.

Thomas Hendrickson, Democrat (challenger)

Affordability: As a City Councilor, I spearheaded efforts to pass Community Choice Energy Aggregation in Agawam, which will reduce energy prices once it's implemented. I also passed a resolution supporting One-Touch-Make-Ready legislation, which would amend state laws to make it easier for internet providers to build fiber optic networks, compete with Comcast's monopoly, and lower the cost of internet in Agawam. I also support single-payer healthcare, which would reduce healthcare costs in Massachusetts by almost \$30 billion/year. The biggest obstacle to lowering the cost of living in Massachusetts is the influence of corporate special interests.



Eversource, Comcast, and the health insurance industry are raking in record profits by price-gouging everyday people, and they're obstructing efforts to lower the cost of living in order to protect their profits. As State Representative, I will stand up to corporate spe-

HENDRICKSON | page 12

Jason Perron, Independent (challenger)

Affordability: There are two areas I'd really like to focus on.

First is government spending and local aid. We need to look at where our tax dollars are going, cut unnecessary spending, and get a better return on the money we're sending to Boston.

Having served on a Selectboard, I know how difficult municipal budgets can be. I'd like to see more of that money returned to our cities and towns, helping provide essential services while reducing the burden on property taxpayers.

Second is energy costs. Massachusetts has some of the highest electricity rates in the country, and I'm concerned about how much state-mandated energy



policies are contributing to those costs.

I've also talked about moving away from the term "green energy" and focusing on what's actually less environmentally impactful.

Nuclear energy, particularly newer small modular reactors and improved cool-

PERRON | page 12

Nicholas Boldyga, Republican (incumbent)

Affordability: Massachusetts has become one of the most expensive states in the country, and Beacon Hill's failed policies are a major reason why. I've consistently fought to lower taxes, reduce government spending, and roll back costly mandates that drive up energy prices. I've filed amendments to reduce the gas tax and sales tax, eliminate state income taxes on qualifying tips and overtime. When it comes to energy, I've filed budget amendments to suspend public policy charges on utility bills which would reduce utility bills by upward of 30%. I'll continue making the case to my colleagues that affordability isn't a Republican or Democrat issue. Families across Massachu-



setts are struggling and we need to put their financial well-being ahead of political agendas.

Audit legislature: It's clear that Beacon Hill is broken. Nearly 72% of Massachusetts voters overwhelmingly demanded an independent audit of the Legislature, yet

BOLDYGA | page 12

Agawam officials raise Italian flag at Town Hall ceremony

By Brendan Rooney
Correspondent

AGAWAM — Residents, community members, local dignitaries, elected officials, and others gathered outside Town Hall on Oct. 6 to recognize Italian Heritage Month with the town's annual Italian flag-raising ceremony — a tradition first established last year.

Agawam Mayor Christopher Johnson addressed the crowd first by offering insight into the observance.

"The biggest ethnic population in Agawam is Italian-Americans, and they have done a tremendous amount for our community, so this is just a small tribute that pays homage to them, for all of the support they've given Agawam over the years, and for being an active part of our community, so we couldn't be happier to fly the Italian Flag," Johnson said.

Next to the podium was Paul Picknelly, president of Monarch Enterprises and honorary Italian consul for Western Massachusetts,



Above: Officials and others from the community waiting for the ceremony to begin. Right: The Italian Flag is raised and hanging high outside Agawam Town Hall.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY BRENDAN ROONEY

praising the efforts of Johnson and City Council President Anthony Russo in helping establish a sister-city partnership with Reggio Calabria in Italy.

"I'd like to congratulate Mayor Johnson and Anthony Russo for their involvement in creating a sister-city relationship with Reggio Calabria in Italy," Picknelly said. "Truly, that is a huge feat, and you should be proud of your leadership here in Agawam

for creating that."

Picknelly's speech also highlighted an upcoming milestone: Agawam is looking to host the mayor of Reggio Calabria sometime next spring.

"Currently, that hasn't been coordinated yet, but we've made the introductions, and we're very happy to host them here in the spring," Picknelly said. "We look to have opportunities for everybody to meet the mayor of

Reggio Calabria, with more details to come."

Following Picknelly was US Congressman Richard Neal (D-MA-01), who reflected on the contributions that Italians provided to the world before pivoting to how different cultures share a common value aimed at improving America, drawing connections to the local Italian community in Agawam

FLAG | page 6



Fire Chief Sirois creates plan to improve ambulance response times

By Quinn Suomala
Correspondent

AGAWAM — Fire Chief Alan Sirois presented to the city council a plan to improve ambulance response times in town.

The plan requires six new positions, hiring firefighter paramedics and single role paramedics to staff a third ambulance in the town.

These paramedics would be put into teams of three

and work on alternating days, with their shift from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

"That is the busiest portion of the day when the majority of the calls we need to respond to are being missed right now and have to be filled by mutual aid services," Sirois said.

The goal of this plan is to ensure that more ambulance calls stay inside of Agawam. Agawam has seen a substantial increase of 911 calls over

the past few years, but the fire department numbers have stayed the same.

In 2012 they were at 3,500 calls a year. Last year they had 5,496 with the same two ambulances

As a result, they have had to make more mutual aid calls, where they request assistance from ambulances in nearby towns.

Mutual aid reliance has gone up 13.6% year over year, according to Sirois.

While these mutual aid calls are helpful, they decrease the response time by several minutes.

Agawam has the best ambulance response times in the state, consistently making it to the scene in under eight minutes.

"We will receive, from 2025, the fastest stemming response for our ambulances in Western Massachusetts," Sirois said. "That doesn't happen with mutual aid respons-

es. It takes too long."

With mutual aid calls, as they come from further away, it takes an average of 12 minutes.

In moments where minutes can mean the difference between life and death, this is a crucial impact.

"If you stop breathing, you have 10 minutes," Sirois said. "If we can't get you breathing again in that 10 minutes, you have a vastly higher chance of having a negative outcome."

Sirois believes that adding this third ambulance will decrease the amount of mutual aid calls the town needs to make significantly.

Additionally, these new positions will come at no additional cost to the taxpayer.

The town will make back revenue as they will not lose calls to mutual aid. Furthermore, the new ambulance will

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SPORTS

Privedenyuk's goal secures win for Brownies

AGAWAM – Last Tuesday evening, the Agawam High School boys soccer team got its lone goal in the first half.

Leon Privedenyuk scored on a pass from Aidan Monaghan and the Agawam defense did the rest in a 1-0 win over Min-

nechaug Regional. The Brownies got two more wins during the past week and have risen to .500 for the season at 6-6-3

with just three games remaining. Agawam needs two wins or a win and a tie to qualify for tournament.



Nathan Bassette chases down a loose ball.



Yasser Atanane clashes with an opponent for the ball.



Benjamin Grechka makes a stop on defense.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI



John Carra runs into the Minnechaug defense.



Morgan Platten makes his way up the field.

Brownies football gets first win

AGAWAM – Last Thursday evening, Agawam High School football finally notched its first win of the season. In Week 6, the Brownies defeated Putnam in conference action 32-20. Ryan Sexton would run for 107 yards and two touch-

downs. Gavin Cruz and Jesse-Paul Hackman also scored touchdowns with Cruz having 74 yards receiving. Quentin Scafuri had 68 yards on the ground. Agawam will host Chicopee Comprehensive on Friday night, Oct. 23 at 7 p.m.



Joseph Cravo kicks off for the Brownies.



The offensive line blocks on a play.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI



Domenick Pisano rolls out for a pass.



Nicholas Iellamo blocks on the offensive line.