"Our life is frittered away by detail... simply, simply." – Henry David Thoreau

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SCHOOLS & YOUTH

School committee budget overview

By Wendy Long
Correspondent

At their Nov. 4 meeting, Superintendent Dr. Melissa Matarazzo and School Business Administrator Amy Mason presented an overview of the process they will undergo to develop and finalize the budget for the 2027-2028 school year.

Work will begin this month. Budget requests from schools and departments for Fiscal Year 2028 are due to the Central Office by Thursday, Nov. 15. The Finance Subcommittee will meet to review those requests on Wednesday, Nov. 18.

The school committee will get their first look at the gap between those requests and information about expected revenue at that time. The Governor's budget will be released in January 2027and the Finance Subcommittee will meet to review the proposed budget before it is presented to the full committee on Feb. 10, 2027.

The school committee will hold its annual budget hearing for town officials and the public on March 3, 2027 to take input and answer questions, before the final budget is adopted by the school committee on March 10. Annual Town Meetings (ATMs) will take place in May and June of 2027 for Blandford, Chester, Huntington, Middlefield, Montgomery and Russell and must pass in at least four of the six towns.

Under Mass General Law, regional school districts must have approved budgets in place no later than 45 days before their first member town's Annual Town Meeting, and no later than

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SCHOOLS & YOUTH

Gateway Boys Soccer takes WMASS Championship

By Wendy Long
Correspondent

It's been 24 years since Gateway won a Western Mass Championship for boys soccer.

Gateway and Hopkins Academy squared off through 80 minutes of regulation and two 10 minute overtimes ending with a 0-0 tie.

Then came penalty kicks that would determine the final outcome of the contest: a 4-1 win for Gateway.

J.V. Coach Josh Turner was a member of the last boys soccer team to win that championship in 2002.

Varsity Coach Andy McCaul had two earlier WMASS Championships on his student resume and played on the only Gateway team to ever win a state championship.

They both remember the excitement of the community tradition of being met by a firetruck on Route 20 and being escorted back to the school with lights and sirens after winning a championship.



Turley Publications photo by Wendy Long

Gateway senior co-captains, from left, Roan Boeri, Jacob Maynard, Zachary Hess, Elijah Chepurenko and Jackson Renaud met for practice on Wednesday, Nov. 4 to begin preparations for the state tournament after taking the Western Mass Class D Boys Soccer title on Monday, Nov. 2.

It had been so long that the current team had never heard of, nor experienced, such a thing. Their escort was slightly muted, but thrilling nonetheless, the players said.

They'd drawn a late game and didn't return to town until 11:30 p.m.; too late for sirens or for townspeople flicking porch lights and cheering from their front yards, as in the past.

Still... "It was great. Anytime you can let another generation experience what you experienced," McCaul said as Turner nodded in agreement. "That's why you're back here doing this."

The players, coaches and Gateway's Athletic Director all weighed in on the achievement a few days later.

Senior Jacob Maynard, who plays wing, wryly noted that he was really glad that he switched from cross country to soccer this year.

Senior Roan Boeri,

SOCCER, page 8



Original photo by Michael Eurquhart, Jr. of MassLive and used by permission

The Gators adjusted their championship team photo by photoshopping in Wes Anderson, who left the game in the first half with a broken leg. That adapted photo was mounted on card stock and signed by the team as a get well card to Anderson.

BLANDFORD

Board looks at Fire Chief memorial

By Mary Kronholm
Correspondent

At the Nov. 2 Select Board meeting, member Corinne Shartrand thanked the town boards, committees and commissions that participated in the Halloween Party on Saturday, Oct. 31.

"There were 14 tables" she said, with decorations and treats. A comment repeated to her was, "So much better than Trunk 'R Treat."

Watson Park memorial

The board then heard from the fire department regarding the memorial in Watson Park honoring the late Fire Chief Thomas Ackley. Some of the plantings have been done and a plaque has been prepared which will be on a rock at the site.

At the end of the day the cost, covering two different fiscal years, will be $4,479.93. The Fire Department is providing labor. More planting is to be done in the spring and next summer.

Town Administrator Cristina Ferrera explained funding, for specific purposes if on a special town meeting warrant, the funds would roll over into the next fiscal year; is this in line with what the Watson Park Trust Funds can cover?

Ferrera will have the board review the trust instrument. She does believe it may be in line with "park upkeep and beautification" of the park.

Otherwise, Coury said it may be funded from free cash and would have to be presented to the town at a special town meeting. She said it is necessary to be clear on the funding source and town counsel will be consulted.

BOARD, page 6

HUNTINGTON

Board of Health discusses issue with consulting firm for rising costs



Turley Publications Photo by Wendy Long

Board of Health members Kat Peterson and John Bergeron met with the Huntington Select Board to discuss concerns on rising costs for continued PFAS testing.

By Wendy Long
Correspondent

HUNTINGTON – At the Wednesday, Nov. 4 meeting of the Huntington Select Board, two members of the town's Board of Health met to discuss issues they are having with Huntley Associates, PC a consulting firm working with the town to do mandated Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances testing at the site of the town's old landfill on Basket Street.

In the past few years, the town has grappled with issues resulting from PFAS leaching from the landfill and contaminating the household well at 51 Basket St.

Present were Town Administrator Jennifer Peloquin, Select Board Chair Roger Booth, Select Board members Rob Drabiuk and John McVeigh along with Board of Health members Kat Peterson and John Bergeron.

Discussion on the PFAS issue was compounded by the departure of Booth for that portion of the meeting. Booth, a retired environmental engineer who is a consultant in this field, had checked with the state's Ethics Commission, and was advised to recuse himself from taking part in meetings on this issue.

As reported after the meeting by Peloquin, Huntley Associates, P.C. submitted a proposal for a three-year contract (Fiscal Year 2027 - $20,000, FY2028 - $19,800 and FY2029 - $21,900 plus mileage, copying and postage reimbursables) on Oct. 28.

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HILLTOWNS

Jon Davine retires as State Fire Marshal in January

The Healey-Driscoll Administration announces the retirement of State Fire Marshal Jon M. Davine after a career of nearly 30 years in the Massachusetts fire service.

He will step down as Massachusetts' 19th state fire marshal on Jan. 22, 2027.

"State Fire Marshal Davine's leadership and collaboration have helped Massachusetts lead the way in firefighter health, safety, and training," said Governor Maura Healey. "His calm and steady guidance have been invaluable to our crisis planning and response. I am deeply grateful for his service and wish him and his family the very best after so many years protecting public safety."

"From major fires and emergencies to collecting and reporting the data that drives our fire safety strategies, State Fire Marshal Davine has been a trusted leader and a valued partner," said Public Safety & Security Secretary Gina K. Kwon. "His passion and commitment to fire protection at every level of government have helped make Massachusetts one of the most fire-safe states in the nation."

"Serving as State Fire Marshal and leading the Department of Fire Services has been my greatest professional honor and privilege," State Fire Marshal Davine said. "I especially want to recognize the dedicated staff at DFS, who work tirelessly in support of our firefighters and our Commonwealth. They deliver the highest standards of training, operational support, and fire protection expertise every single day."

State Fire Marshal Davine was sworn in on Aug. 16, 2023. Under his leadership, the Massachusetts Department of Fire Services undertook a series of initiatives, responses and modernizations to improve fire protection, firefighter training, emergency preparedness, and hazard awareness in the Commonwealth, including: coordinating Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and Explosive preparation and staffing for the 2026 World Cup games in Foxborough; assigning State Police fire investigators, code compliance officers, and support personnel to the Gabriel House fire response and investigation in 2025; deploying hundreds of missions to assist local and state agencies battling Massachusetts' unprecedented 2024 brush fire season; expanding the fire service's understanding of the risk posed by lithium-ion battery fires by hosting a symposium of subject matter experts and launching new data collection tool in 2023; consolidating two Hazmat districts to more efficiently serve western Massachusetts; broadening access to free firefighter cancer screening; opening a new burn building to improve firefighter training in southeastern Massachusetts and bringing the Commonwealth into the top 5% of states reporting fire data through the new National Emergency Response Information System.

Prior to his state service, State Fire Marshal Davine was chief of the Northampton Fire Department. The first state fire marshal to graduate from the Massachusetts Firefighting Academy, he rose through the ranks there during a 25-year career as a firefighter, Hazmat technician, and member of the Department of Fire Services' Joint Hazard Incident Response Team.

He is a veteran of the US Marine Corps.

The state fire marshal is selected by the Massachusetts Fire Service Commission. That eight-member body is appointed by the Governor and represents the fire service, insurance industry and Executive Office of Public Safety & Security.

Its members will meet in the days ahead to determine the process and timeline for selecting a new marshal.

Massachusetts appointed the nation's first state fire marshal in 1894. Today, the role oversees almost 1,000 full-time employees and contract staff on three regional campuses, with four operational divisions and the administrative offices that support them.



Submitted photo

Jon Davine State Fire Marshal retires in January 2027 after a career on nearly 30 years in Massachusetts fire service.

MassDevelopment announces grant recipients

MassDevelopment announce $4,610,000 in grants from the Small Business Technical Assistance Program to 42 community and economic development organizations that provide support services to small businesses in Massachusetts.

Local Fiscal Year 2027 awarded projects area: Berkshire Agricultural Ventures (Great Barrington) - $77,740, Impact South County (formerly CDCSB) (Great Barrington) - $71,935. Cooperative Development Institute (Northampton) - $150,000, The ICA Group (Northampton) - $112,935 and Valley Community Development (Northampton) - $150,000.

Awarded organizations will use the grants, ranging in size from $50,000 to $150,000, to expand advising, training, and capital access programs for businesses with fewer than 20 employees. The funding supports services such as one-on-one technical assistance, business skills workshops, and improved pathways to financing, helping small and microbusinesses start, stabilize, and grow.

"Small businesses are the backbone of our economy - creating jobs, supporting families and making our downtowns stronger," said Governor Maura Healey.

"Massachusetts has an important ecosystem of community and economic development organizations that help small businesses succeed through easily accessible, hands-on advising, training, and capital access programs," said MassDevelopment President and CEO Navjeet Bal. "Our Small Business Technical Assistance program helps organizations expand this support to reach more small and microbusinesses, in every corner of the Commonwealth."

Administered by MassDevelopment and funded by the Commonwealth, the Small Business Technical Assistance Program empowers community development corporations, community development financial institutions, and other nonprofit business service providers to increase access to business planning support and capital for underserved small businesses throughout the state.

The Small Business Technical Assistance Program also funds professional development for service providers through capacity-building "train-the-trainer" opportunities, including workshops, peer learning, and partnerships with educational institutions.

Last year, in Fiscal Year 2026, MassDevelopment awarded about $4.4 million in grants from the Small Business Technical Assistance Program to 54 organizations; this funding helped awarded organizations deliver assistance to more than 3,300 small businesses across Massachusetts and unlock a total of $91,222,460 in capital to help these companies meet their goals.

MassDOT lists I-90 bridge painting

The Massachusetts Department of Transportation announces daytime bridge painting and tree trimming on I-90 eastbound and westbound in the towns of Stockbridge, Lee and Becket.

All work is weather dependent and will take place at the following locations and times

In Stockbridge, bridge painting will be conducted on I-90 eastbound and westbound at mile marker 6.4 now through Friday, Nov. 13 from 7 a.m.-5 p.m.

In Becket and Lee, tree trimming will be conducted on I-90 westbound from mile marker 14.8 to mile marker 12.0 on Thursday, Nov. 12 from 7:a.m.-3:30 p.m.

Appropriate signage and law enforcement details will be in place to guide drivers through the work areas. Drivers traveling through the area should expect delays, reduce speed and use caution.

All scheduled work is weather dependent and subject to change without notice.

For more information on traffic conditions, travelers are encouraged to: Download the Mass511 mobile app or visit www.mass511.com to view live cameras, travel times, real time traffic conditions and project information before setting out on the road. Users can subscribe to receive text and email alerts for traffic conditions. Dial 511 and select a route to hear real time conditions. Follow @MassDOT on X, formerly known as Twitter, to receive regular updates on road and traffic conditions.

PLEASE REMEMBER TO
RECYCLE THIS NEWSPAPER

Domestic Violence Task Force meeting on Nov. 18

The Southern Hills Domestic Violence Task Force will meet in person on Wednesday, Nov. 18 from 3-4:30 pm.

Anyone interested in attending should email SouthernHillsDVTaskForce@gmail.com and details will be sent.

The task force to be sure to keep survivors safe does not publicize the location.

Gateway Regional hosts senior brunch and concert

Gateway Regional School, 12 Littleville Road, holds their annual senior brunch and concert on Wednesday, Dec. 2 with the doors opening at 9:15 a.m.. brunch at 9:30 a.m. and the concert at 10:30 a.m.

Seniors in Russell, Montgomery, Huntington, Chester, Middlefield and Blandford should RSVP to their Council on Aging by Monday, Nov. 16.

Depending on what town they live in, they should call Russell 413-862-6217; Montgomery at 413-642-8143; Huntington at 413-685-5283; Chester 413-354-7735; Middlefield 413-623-2079, extension 9 and Blandford at 413-848-4279, extension 400.

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USDA INSP. FRESH BONE-IN BEEF CHUCK ROAST or STEAK $6.69 lb
USDA INSP. GROUND FRESH DAILY DIET LEAN GROUND BEEF 5 LB BAG $5.28 lb

USDA INSP. FROZEN BONELESS CHICKEN TENDERLOINS TRAY PAK. $1.29 lb
USDA INSP. FROZEN CODINO'S STUFFED SHELLS w/RICOTTA 4 OZ. $5.99 ea
USDA INSP. FROZEN 12" APPLE PIE w/LATTICE CRUST 5 LBS $6.99 ea
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