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Chicopee resolution presented to DiZoglio

By **Brendan Rooney**
Correspondent

BOSTON/CHICOP-EE – State Auditor Diana DiZoglio officially met with Chicopee City Council Vice President/Ward 6 Councilor Sam Shumsky and Ward 5 City Councilor Joe Pasternak on June 1 to receive an official resolution that shows Chicopee is officially supporting the ongoing legislative battle over the release of the state audit, which 72% of the Commonwealth voted on.

The resolution of support was put into motion and co-sponsored by City Council President/Councilor-at-Large Frank Laflamme, Shumsky, and Pasternak and was approved 10-3 on May 19.

Reflecting on what this resolution meant to the ongoing efforts was Alysha Palumbo Garvin, director of Communications, who provided a statement on behalf

of DiZoglio.

“Our office is thankful to Chicopee and every municipality that has approved a resolution or sent a letter of support for the 72% voter-mandated audit of the Massachusetts Legislature,” Garvin said. “We need that support now more than ever.”

Shumsky felt this was a big win not only for the people of the Commonwealth, but also for Chicopee.

“I think that going forward from here, this is going to hopefully show other cities and towns that maybe they will support and propose similar resolutions, as Chicopee did, and I know we’re not the first city to do it, but I know that as important as this ballot question was two years ago, it’s even more important now and, I think that transparency and all levels of government are

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Diana Barabani recognized as Manager of the Year

By **Kristin Rivers**
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CHICOP-EE – Diana Barabani, nutrition manager at Bowie Elementary School, has been recognized as the Northeast Region Manager of the Year.

She was nominated by Melanie Wilk, director of Food Service at Chicopee Public Schools.

The Northeast Region Manager of the Year is presented by the School Nutrition Association. Barabani was announced as the recipient on April 28 ahead of School Lunch Hero Day, which is celebrated on May 1 and recognizes America’s dedicated school nutritional professionals.

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PHOTO COURTESY OF EMILY SORESENSEN

Diana Barabani holds up a salad. She was recognized as the Northeast Region Manager of the Year this spring.



TURLEY PHOTO BY KRISTIN RIVERS

A group photo comprising some of the committee members of the Advancing Chicopee Together/Adelantando Chicopee Juntos (ACT) Coalition, who hosted the Community Baby Shower.

ACT hosts Community Baby Shower

By **Kristin Rivers**
Editor
krivers@turley.com

CHICOP-EE – Families gathered at Stefanik Elementary School on May 30 for the first-ever Community Baby Shower.

The free, family-friendly event, hosted by the Advancing Chicopee Together/Adelantando Chicopee Juntos (ACT) Coalition, connected residents with local organizations, maternal and perinatal

resources and information supporting pregnancy and postpartum care.

Chaquita Ogbunize of Hats4Hearts, a foundation created in memory of her son, Solomon, who had a rare disease called Hypoplastic Left Heart Syndrome—or HLHS for short—explained while he was in the hospital, one thing that stood out was the hats.

“So, it’s something we carried on with us. We do an annual drive where we collect the hats and we usually pass

them out. We started giving them out to the NICUs, specialty hospitals for newborns and now we’re spreading the love amongst the community,” Ogbunize said.

Ogbunize heard about the event through a friend of hers who works for the Youth Mental Health Coalition, who, from there, was connected with one of the coordinators. She enjoyed seeing

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Topping Off Ceremony held for Singing Bridge Residences

By **Kristin Rivers**
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CHICOP-EE – A topping off ceremony for the Singing Bridge Residences project took place at the Western Buildings construction site on May 26.

The site—across the street from the post office—officially broke ground on October 1, 2025 and is located at the former Facemate site along the Chicopee River—comprising four acres—and will have 105 mixed-income affordable housing units, comprising 16 studio apartments, 21 one-bedroom apartments, 57 two-bedroom apartments and 11 three-bedroom apartments.

The city has committed \$800,000 in local HOME funds to support the development, while the developers have funded a \$37.3 million loan from MassHousing. Also, partnered with Hammad Graham of BD Singing Bridge LLC and Brisa Builders Development LLC of Brooklyn, New York, for this redevelopment project.

It is slated to be completed in June 2027, with residents moving in for August 2027; the third revitalization project for the Chicopee Falls area after the senior center and an assisted living facility.



TURLEY PHOTO BY KRISTIN RIVERS

D'Lynn Healey, vice president of business development at Western Builders, provides opening remarks.

The second and third phases of the overall redevelopment project will include the creation of a sports complex, a brewery/restaurant and professional office spaces.

D'Lynn Healey, vice president of business development at Western Builders, explained this was her first topping off ceremony and she’s been to many ground-breakings and ribbon-cuttings.

“Those typically center around public policy and the big banks and everyone who contributes financially

to the buildings, but the topping off ceremony is about the boots on the ground, the people who actually worked to put the building up and the community that it’s actually going to serve,” Healey said. “So, I’m very honored to be a part of this team, be a part of Western, be a part of the community.”

Mayor John Vieau shared how “the significance of this one is very special because there’s such a demand for housing here in Western Mass, especially right here in Chicopee.”

“So, repurposing of old mills into something special is what Chicopee’s been doing and this one is very special because there’s such a demand for housing here in Western Mass, especially right here in Chicopee.”

Vieau added, “This project represents more than just housing.”

“It’s new opportunity. It’s creating jobs for many of you and I just want to say thank you to Western Builders for building this amazing structure,” Vieau said. “As

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City Council strongly defends Zoom participation at meetings

One board member’s proposal sparked a long discussion.

By **Dalton Zbierski**
Correspondent

CHICOP-EE – Ward 9 City Councilor Mary Beth Costello stirred up a hornet’s nest during Tuesday’s meeting when she requested a discussion about banning Zoom participation.

Costello specifically proposed that Zoom participation during City Council

meetings be permitted only for illness and emergencies and that the item be sent to the city’s Rules Committee for a public hearing.

“My constituents, there were several, have brought up the Zoom issue and Zoom participation by city councilors for quite some time now,” Costello said.

The proposal met immediate opposition, as most of the board lined up for an opportunity to speak against it.

Councilor-at-Large Joel McAuliffe led the charge, as he motioned for the order to

be defeated.

When McAuliffe was told he could just wait and vote down Costello’s proposal, he emphasized, “I want my motion to supersede.”

McAuliffe then spoke for about as long as a councilor is permitted to speak during these meetings. He expressed that Costello’s order was bad policy, procedurally flawed and an attempt to solve a problem that does not exist in Chicopee.

“This issue, as we all know, is playing out in Springfield, and that’s really

the only reason that this is on our agenda here tonight,” McAuliffe said. “I am not interested in importing Springfield City Council internal disputes into our chambers. Chicopee should not change its rules because of political drama in a neighboring city.”

He then explained that remote access has enhanced transparency, expanded public access and helped ensure that the city’s business can continue without unneeded interruptions.

“We should not create unnecessary barriers that

could limit representation or make it harder for this council to do its work,” McAuliffe said.

He added that the process of making a change such as the one requested by Costello is much more complex than how she presented it.

“A vague order limiting Zoom participation to folks who have illnesses or emergencies is not workable or reasonable,” McAuliffe said. “Who is the one who gets to decide what a reasonable illness or emergency is?”

The councilor-at-large further noted that the state extended remote and hybrid meeting accommodations through June 30, 2027, which would make it even more difficult for Costello’s proposal to become reality.

Ward 1 Councilor Abigail Arriaga was upset by Costello’s order. She said she does “about a thousand things a day,” and sometimes that means not being able to make a meeting in person.

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IN THE CITY

CCHS held Annual Spring Concert

By Christina Gioscia
Correspondent

CHICOPEE - Chicopee Comprehensive High School hosted their annual Spring Concert featuring the CCHS choir and band on May 21.

The concert had a large turnout of community members there to support the students.

CCHS Choir Teacher Natalia Borowiec was proud of the students.

"I am most proud of the students' dedication and hard work throughout the entire preparation process. They challenged themselves with advanced musical selections and rose to the occasion with maturity, commitment, and passion. Watching them grow musically and personally has been incredibly rewarding. The chorus has made tremendous progress this year, both musically and personally. Their confidence, vocal technique, and overall performance quality have improved greatly," Borowiec said. "They have also become more supportive of one another, creating a positive and encouraging environment within the group. The choir has grown tremendously as a team this year. Students learned how to support and encourage one another, work together toward common goals, and build trust within the ensemble. Their friendships and sense of unity became stronger throughout the year, and that connection was reflected in their performances."

A focus point of the concert was the diversity that CCHS has amongst its community. Borowiec, Band Teacher Matt Sypek and

the students showcased this through the songs they chose and by inviting any students who wished to, to dress in their cultural attire.

"Our school has become increasingly multicultural, and that diversity enriches the learning experience for everyone. Music brings people together, and having students from different cultural backgrounds allows us to share traditions, perspectives, and experiences through performance. It creates a stronger, more welcoming community where students learn from one another and celebrate their differences," Borowiec said.

Borowiec then shared how the competition season has gone for CCHS choir and what the factors were for choosing which students to perform solos.

"This year, many students participated in District and All-State Choir competitions, where they represented our school with excellence and professionalism. We also had students compete in the Young Artist Competition for pianists. I am very proud of their accomplishments and the dedication they showed in preparing for these high-level performances. The music selection process focused on choosing about 10 songs that would best fit the voices, strengths, and size of the chorus," Borowiec said. "For soloists, students were selected based on vocal ability, musical expression, preparation, and how well their voices matched the character of each piece. The goal was to highlight the talents of the students while creating a balanced and engaging concert program."



TURLEY PHOTOS BY CHRISTINA GIOSCIA
CCHS Band teacher Matt Sypek and CCHS Choir teacher Natalia Borowiec at the CCHS Annual Spring Concert.

Sypek shared how these songs in particular helped the band grow as a group.

"I programmed some very challenging music for this concert cycle, and the students have done a tremendous job taking it from ink on the page to truly great performance. The band has come a very long way since the end of summer when we had our annual band camp, and we sound like a whole different band today than we did back then," Sypek said.

Sypek then explained how he incorporates essential learning elements whilst still keeping band enjoyable to be a part of for the students.

"For me, since the music

is our textbook, I make sure to choose music that will help develop certain skills, while also being fun to learn and perform. It's also important to me to program diverse music to expose students to different styles and musical traditions. I also try to include music written by composers of underrepresented backgrounds," Sypek said.

Each year CCHS hosts their Winter and Spring Concerts. This allows the students to showcase how their musical abilities have grown throughout the year, and feel supported by their friends, peers, family and teachers.

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Funded by the Coordinated Family & Community Engagement Grant from the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care.

City Council endorses Safe Streets 4 All Safety Action Plan

The plan uses federal funding to curb traffic-related deaths.

By Dalton Zbierski
Correspondent

CHICOPEE - Chicopee took a major step forward on Tuesday as it looks to ensure the safety of all pedestrians, bicyclists and drivers in the city.

With a unanimous vote, City Council approved Mayor John Vieau's request that it endorse the Chicopee Safe Streets 4 All Safety Action Plan for implementation.

The initiative is a community-focused attempt to curb traffic-related deaths and serious injuries in the city caused by collisions between cars, pedestrian or bicyclists.

The program is backed by federal funding, which enabled city officials to hire the Bowman Consulting Group to identify crash-prone areas through intricate data analysis and by gathering feedback

from residents.

Education is a key component of the effort, as all contributors look to make community members more aware of small details to prevent minor mistakes that can lead to deaths.

The Chicopee Safe Streets 4 All Action Plan, which can be accessed with a quick search online, is a well-put together document with relevant statistics, an area to submit feedback and a timeline of how the program will proceed in the city.

"I know that you've all received a link, or we can get you a hard copy, of our Safe Streets 4 All Safety Action Plan," Vieau told the council during Tuesday's meeting. "We are excited to receive this grant as we head toward Vision Zero, and now the intent is to really target areas of concern."

Vieau offered more promising news, as the funding will allow the city to embark on a project that could have a lasting impact.

"With the Safe Streets 4 All grant, they do offer you

the opportunity to implement one large project. We're excited to move forward in implementing it, but we need to get it endorsed by the City Council," Vieau said.

Assistant City Planner Patrick Collins offered further information about the city's involvement in the initiative. He pointed out two facets that will benefit residents.

"Not only does this plan provide us valuable recommendations for keeping our road users safe, it also makes us eligible for federal [Department of Transportation] funding, which will fund streetscape improvement projects. Those are two very critical pieces that will help us," Collins said.

Ward 9 Councilor Mary Beth Costello expressed concern that the public might not be aware of the program and the work that is being undertaken, but she is very pleased to see the council give the plan its full support.

"The city Planning Department and the Mayor's Office have been working very

hard for many years to make sure that our streets are safe and that pedestrian fatalities become zero. I applaud them for their initiative to make sure that the Safe Streets program is in full swing and that our streets will continue to be safe," Costello said.

During the public speaking portion of the meeting, an Everett Street resident voiced her opinions, while praising the program and what it is trying to accomplish.

Lisa Bienvenue has gone to the city numerous times with complaints about parking and traffic congestion in the city. She believes progress was made when the council endorsed the new plan.

"Lord knows, it's hard to get those kinds of pieces moving in a city of this size, and I'm glad to see it finally come together," Bienvenue said. "I'm thrilled that the city is talking about Vision Zero. It's been around for a long time, and that's an admirable goal to have - that we will have no roadway fatalities."



TURLEY PHOTO BY BRENDAN ROONEY

From Left to Right: Ward 5 City Councilor Joe Pasternak III, State Auditor Diana DiZoglio, and City Council Vice President/Ward 6 Councilor Sam Shumsky present DiZoglio with an official resolution in support of her ongoing efforts.

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Paramount in this day and age," Shumsky said.

Echoing similar sentiments was Pasternak.

"I feel I'm a representative of the people. So, what I'm looking for is I'm trying to give our other elected officials, our state reps, our senators, essentially everyone else involved in politics, to look at the facts and understand that the people ratified this vote; they want this, and let's get this done," Pasternak said.

He added this in response to the lack of transparency transpiring.

"And it's clear the request isn't being heard, and that's atypical of what government is today; people are getting fed up with it, and it's a time for a change," Pasternak said.

Pasternak said and proposed that those who voted continue to put up roadblocks should take note.

"Now, I think that, you know, all of the political people that are involved in this game should start looking at this and thinking about what they're going to say next election cycle," Pasternak said.

The latest developments

Two days later, this past Wednesday night, June 3, a major development came out of the State House, as the Massachusetts House of Representatives voted 125-28 to advance bill (H 5469) by a margin of 125-28, which looks to narrow the scope of

the voter-approved legislative audit that DiZoglio continues to pursue.

This latest development will now create a formal process and piece of legislation to govern public access to legislative records for DiZoglio, while also creating a new statute establishing a legislative records request process and codifying which records would be public - most of which are already publicly available - and subject the governor's office to the public records law from which they currently claim an exemption.

The bill also stops Secretary of State William Galvin's office—which usually oversees public records inquiries—from interfering in requests to the Legislature, but allows a path of judicial review, while simultaneously barring the courts from resolving disputes between the auditor and lawmakers.

It's not clear yet if the Senate will pass the bill, but it should be noted that state senators voted to turn over a limited set of documents to DiZoglio, due to a vote passing by a margin of 33-6. However, it should be noted that the documents the Senate plans to provide mirror the records she would be allowed to review under the new House bill.

The Chicopee Register reached out to DiZoglio for an official comment regarding the decision but did not hear back before press time. More to come soon.

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IN THE CITY

School Department's acquisition of new HQ nears completion

Operations will move to the facility at 219 & 225 Exchange St.

By Dalton Zbierski
Correspondent

CHICOPEE – The Chicopee school district is inching closer toward entering its new home on Exchange Street.

The facility at 219 & 225 Exchange St. is being praised for its accessibility, proximity to Chicopee Center, furnishings and ample space.

When the building is officially purchased from Westfield Bank, Chicopee Public Schools will have a new headquarters. July 10 is the proposed closing date.

A major step in reaching that mark occurred during Tuesday night's meeting of the City Council, as the board unanimously voted to approve several key items pertaining to the pending deal.

First, the council appro-

priated a sum of \$2,350,000 from unexpended money originally borrowed to pay costs of renovating the old library to pay the costs of purchasing the building to house the School Department's Administrative Offices.

The old library did not need the city funding because it received money from the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021.

"As we're all aware, the city is about to close [this deal]," Mayor John Vieau said. "Now, we're under agreement to purchase the property on Exchange Street, the former Balakier's/Williamson's Clothier/Hastings building. And we're going to move our admin offices from where we've been renting at Dulong Circle down to Chicopee Center."

The city has rented a space on Dulong Circle for the past five years. It has been criticized for being far from any bus routes and very out of the way for residents.

Also, while the city has paid around \$300,000 per year in rent at Dulong Circle, it will own the facility on Exchange Street outright when the deal goes through.

On Tuesday, City Council also approved a mayor's appropriation of \$10,000 to a Capital Project Expense account to complete the transaction.

"This is a compliment for the rest of the funding," Vieau said. "As you can see in the purchase and sale agreement, and from Order I, from the use of ARPA funds, we're able to use \$2.35 million. We're \$10,000 short of the acquisition; the sale price is \$2.36 million."

By approving a separate order, City Council facilitated a mayor's appropriation of \$20,000 to the same Capital Project Expense account. This regards furniture that is being left behind in the Exchange Street building.

"The building is furnished. It currently is West-

field Bank's underutilized mortgage center," Vieau said. "The furniture in there includes many partitions, many desks of solid wood and tables, and they are not interested in that furniture. It was appraised at the depreciative state that it's at right now, and I believe a lot of it is roughly about five years old."

Vieau said the value of the furniture is somewhere between \$40,000 and \$60,000. He thanked Westfield Bank for knocking down the price.

"We were able to negotiate. Since Westfield Bank is excited about Chicopee and our admin offices purchasing and moving downtown, they were willing to negotiate down to an acquisition price of \$20,000," Vieau said.

In the process of approving the mayor's orders, the council expressed great support for the deal and the building's location.

Ward 2 Councilor Shane Brooks represents the neighborhood where the school

district headquarters will be. He said it's a win-win for the city as well as parents and students.

"I think it's in our best interests to move forward. We're going to put this property to good use with the School Department," Brooks said. "It's on a public transit, it's going to be a valuable asset to the city and it's going to get us out of this black hole of Dulong Circle on the opposite side of town."

Ward 9 Councilor Mary Beth Costello thanked Vieau and all those who contributed to getting this deal near the finish line. She is confident it's the right decision.

"Moving the school administration office to downtown Chicopee is a fantastic idea. We've talked about that before. It's going to be a boost for downtown Chicopee, and we're not going to be paying rent. We're actually going to own the building," Costello said.

Ward 1 Councilwom-

an Abigail Arriaga recalled from a tour of the building the council received last year that the facility is in solid condition. She also loves the location.

"It's on a bus route, it's in the center and it's close to a lot of places so families can have one day to get all of their errands done so they don't have to take time off from work," Arriaga said.

It was brought up that the furniture at Dulong Circle is relatively new as well, and the council wondered what will become of it.

Vieau answered.

"What we're going to do, and we're very fortunate in that case, there are many other offices other than City Hall, for example Veterans Services, our Baskin property, they will have opportunities to get new chairs, new tables and new desks because a lot of the furniture at Dulong Circle was purchased when we started renting five years ago," Vieau said.

BARABANI from page 1

Barabani shared that, in addition to this award, she was put into the next round and won that award as well.

"I certainly did not expect to win because it was for the whole state of Massachusetts and I know there's a lot of great managers out there as well. So, I was shocked when I won, but excited that what we are doing as a team here is being recognized," Barabani said.

Barabani said this is her first year as nutrition manager at Bowie and was previously the assistant manager for the last three years. She's worked in food service for 16 years and started when her children were young so she could be on their schedule and work in the kitchen.

What fulfills her is this.

"It's definitely feeding the kids and seeing them try new things and this year, especially, we've been doing the hydroponic system, which is brand new. We just had this since January and that's kind of what prompted Melanie to nominate me for the award," Barabani said. "So, we have done a lot with this and working with the students and having them grow their own lettuce and then they come in after. They start from the seed to harvest and then they make their own salads. So, it's really exciting to see the kids get excited about wanting to eat salad now because they grew it here and they had a part of it, so that's very exciting to see them get excited about food."

She also emphasized nutrition for the kids.

"It's important to me that they get to just see different foods they may not have at home and, lately, our food service director has been doing some different meals that are more culturally-based, so that's been nice to see the kids get excited about food that they might have at home, that they don't always get or have not gotten at school before," Barabani said.

An example of this, she added, was corn carnitas with Spanish rice. The rice was provided by her assistant cook sharing her family recipe.

"So the kids were very excited about that and so excited about that that we did it again on a Cook's Choice day so that they can enjoy the meal

again," Barabani said.

Barabani said she didn't have a favorite meal, but for the kids, they love the Walking Tacos.

"That's always a huge hit. Even yesterday we had the Chipotle bowl, which was a rice bowl with taco meat on it and then we had lettuce, tomato, salsa, sour cream, cheese. They had everything on the side. They had corn, beans, there was lots of stuff on the side for them to build their own bowls, so they were excited about that," Barabani said.

Barabani said it was exciting to represent Chicopee after receiving these awards, adding she also enjoys the regular meetings and trainings to learn what each school is doing.

"I'm very honored that I was chosen for it. I certainly was not expecting it at all," Barabani said. "It was nice to be able to read about the other managers that also had won their individual regions and there's definitely a lot of managers out there doing amazing things over the entire country and the nice thing about that was to be able to read and see what other managers are doing and the reason why they were nominated. I like taking ideas in what other people are doing, what's working well in their school and bringing it here."

Her number one nutrition tip for kids was to try anything new.

"Just take one bite," Barabani said. "Just try it and take one bite and it might surprise you."

Barabani thanked Wilk for nominating her and for supporting her ideas for the school.

"Thank you for even considering me for this award. I am definitely very grateful for everything she's done for me. I came last year. I had this idea that when I went to a workshop on the hydroponic system that I wanted to do this in my school and Melanie and our farm-to-school coordinator were fully on board with me on it and the farm-to-school coordinator wrote a grant to get this system here in our school and our science teacher was on board with it," Barabani said. "She was super excited about it as well and her and I worked together so that she does the classroom piece of it where she does the whole STEAM lessons

with them and then they get to come down here and just see the whole life cycle of the plants and then to eat of it."

Also, gratitude to her fellow staff and the principal, who helped begin a new goal of doing an outdoor garden again. She hopes the new outdoor garden can be used during the summer as Bowie is a summer meal site for the community.

The hydroponic system will also restart again, with the first harvest ready for the Summer Eats program.

Her message was this. "Thank you for the support and for the comments that I've gotten since they've posted it on the Chicopee social media page. The comments I've gotten have been amazing and I'm very thankful for the comments and the support," Barabani said. "Support the kids and support local farmers too."



Diana Barabani, nutrition manager at Bowie Elementary School, in action in the kitchen.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF EMILY SORESENSEN

CAREGIVING FOR DEMENTIA

A Night of Guidance & Support

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OPINION

in the Garden

by Roberta McQuaid

A question and an answer?

Carole, who faithfully reads the column in the Wilbraham-Hampden Times each week, wrote in with this question for the Garden Lady:



Houttuynia plant

will die.

You are smart to try and remove every little bit of root when hand digging it out; it's kind of amazing how a tiny piece will start a whole new plant. For that reason, never take the rototiller to a patch of any invasive plant, especially those that spread by rhizomes. The roots will be dispersed throughout the garden.

I also read about cutting the stems of the plants and then "painting" the open cuts with herbicide. To me that sounds like a smart plan to get the chemical right to the roots. Time consuming, but targeted.

I'll be curious to know how you make out trying to rid your landscape of this plant.

I notice they also spread under my brick walkway even though they get no sun there. It's been very frustrating. For that reason, I am considering using a herbicide, but am concerned that it might poison nearby plants or may not be effective due to the long roots. Yet, at this point, I am open to the idea. I look forward to any suggestions you may have.

Incidentally, I just learned from the internet that it is considered to be a medicinal herb, which I find quite shocking, given how much I have come to dislike them! Thank you very much for your time and assistance."

Happy to help, Carole! It's funny you mention that this plant is a medicinal herb.

Some years back I was taking extract of Japanese Knotweed, another invasive plant, in my quest to cure late stage Lyme Disease. I guess most plants have some merit although some times it's hard to want to admit it, especially in the situation you are in.

While I have never grown Houttuynia cordata, I have dealt with similar invasive plants. Not always have I been successful, but here are a few tactics you can try.

If there is a way to smother, go for it. Try black plastic, a thick tarp or cardboard covered in mulch.

Eventually, if the plant can't photosynthesize, it

Roberta McQuaid graduated from the Stockbridge School of Agriculture at the University of Massachusetts. For the last 34 years, she has held the position of staff horticulturist at Old Sturbridge Village. She enjoys growing food as well as flowers. Have a question for her? Email it to pouimette@turley.com with "Gardening Question" in the subject line.



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in my BACKYARD

By Ellenor Downer



A Green heron.

PHOTO BY JOHN KUNHARDT

John Kunhardt of Belchertown took this photo of a green heron catching a fish at Lake Wallace.

The green heron is solitary at most seasons and often somewhat secretive, living around small bodies of water or densely vegetated areas.

When seen in the open, it often flicks its tail nervously and raises and lowers its crest. The small heron is about 16 to 22 inches long. The green on this bird's back is an iridescent color and often looks dull bluish or simply dark.

They have orange yellow legs, chestnut neck, black crown feathers. Young birds are duller and brown with a striped neck.

Northern birds migrates as far as Panama and northern South American. Green herons in the most southern states do not migrate.

Green herons inhabit coasts and shorelines, forests and woodlands, freshwater wetlands, lakes, ponds, rivers and saltwater wetlands. Their call is a sharp "kyowk" or "skyow."

They nest in a wide variety of situations, including willow thickets, mangroves, dry woods and open marsh. The female lays three to five pale green or blue green eggs. Both the male and female incubate the eggs which takes 19 to 21 days.

The male chooses nest-

ing territory and calls repeatedly from prominent perch in tree or shrub. Displays of male include stretching neck forward and down and snapping bill shut, pointing bill straight upward while swaying back and forth.

Male and female may perform display flights around territory. Nest site is usually in shrub or tree 5-30 feet above ground, but sometimes on the ground.

It is often very close to water, but it can be quite distant away. The nest is a platform of sticks. The male begins construction, then female builds while male brings materials.

Both parents also feed their young by regurgitation. Young begin to climb about near nest by 16-17 days after hatching, usually make first flight at 21-23 days.

They are fed by parents for a few more weeks. Young are reportedly capable of swimming well. These herons have one to two broods per year.

These herons forage mostly by standing still or stalking very slowly at edge of shallow water, waiting for prey to approach. Sometimes they uses bait" by dropping a feather or small twig on surface of water to lure fish with in striking distance.

They eat mostly small fish, but will also eat crayfish and other crustaceans, aquatic insects, frogs and tadpoles. Other items include grasshoppers, snakes, earthworms, snails and small rodents.

Black and white warbler

My daughter, Paula, saw

a black and white warbler by the cross country trail at Quabbin Regional High School last week. As the name implies, the warbler has black and white feathers with black streaking on the breast and white wing bars, white eye line and white belly.

Red shouldered hawk

A Montgomery resident had a red shouldered hawk in her yard. She sent a photo of it in flight.

Whippoorwill

I received an email on May 15 from a Belchertown resident. She stated, "The whippoorwill is back in my yard again this year. The calls starts around dark and continue off and on till sunrise. She or he perches on the roof and calls all night. It can be very annoying as you are trying to sleep, but I still feel blessed or cursed."

Common Ravens

A Brimfield couple had common ravens in their yard last month. They stated in an email, "We mostly hear them and sometimes see them flying over a local feature called West Mountain that is about 1000' elevation and runs north/south about a half a mile east of our house."

They stated, "On a Thursday a raven was in the driveway where I throw a seed mix daily for ground feeders. I saw the bird from inside the garage, my wife saw it with binoculars from inside the house."

They stated, "We both noticed the larger size, bigger than the American Crows that often feed in the same area. I noticed the wedged shaped tail when it flew away and my wife saw larger, heavier bill and the shaggy throat feathers." A few days later they saw three ravens.

People may report a bird sighting or bird related experience by emailing mybackyard88@aol.com or edowner@turley.com or mailing to Barre Gazette, P.O. Box 448, Barre, MA 01005. The Palmer office has a new phone system and I will be getting an extension where messages may be left. I will publish the number as soon as it is set up.

Chicopee Register

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WE CARE ABOUT YOUR NEWS!

The Chicopee Register welcomes submissions of news in or related to Chicopee and its residents. Our "People News," is filled with submitted engagement announcements, wedding announcements, birth announcements, your new baby or news about your 25th or 50th anniversary celebrations. Please e-mail correspondence along with a photo to chicopeeregister@turley.com or send it to: Chicopee Register, c/o Turley Publications, 24 Water Street, Palmer, MA 01069.

Election letters to the editor

The Chicopee Register welcomes readers to participate in this year's election campaigns by writing letters to the editor for publication on these pages. Letters of up to 250 words from local residents endorsing candidates on the ballot or discussing campaign issues should be sent to Chicopee Register care of Turley Publications, 24 Water St., Palmer, MA 01069, faxed to 413-289-1977 or emailed to journalregister@turley.com. Please include a daytime telephone number for verification purposes (it will not be printed). Letters must be received by noon Monday to be considered for that Thursday's newspaper. No attack letters will be printed. No letters written by candidates supporting their own candidacy will be printed. If the volume of letters received is larger than the space available in the newspaper, or if the letters become repetitive, the newspaper reserves the right to print a representative sample. No endorsement letters will be printed in the last edition before the election.

For more information, call the editor at 413-283-8393.

Campaign news

As part of its election coverage, the newspaper plans to print stories about contested races for Congress, state Senate, state House, district attorney and Governor's Council during the weeks leading up to the election, as well as a question-and-answer voters guide. In order to ensure fairness to all candidates, no political press releases will be printed, nor will reporters cover political rallies or fundraisers.

Candidates who wish to further publicize their candidacy, beliefs and events may contact advertising, 413-283-8393 about paid advertising in Chicopee Register.

I'm being released from Incarceration. What are my Social Security options?

Dear Rusty: In a previous column, you wrote about people who filed for Social Security late in life.

I am currently incarcerated and will be filing for Social Security in the fall of 2029. I will be 74 years old in the first week of January 2029. Unless I read it wrong, could I be eligible to collect the previous six months?

If this is so, how would that work? Would I get that all at once or incrementally? According to the chart we once got in the mail, I should be collecting the maximum amount. I've worked all of my life and never collected Social Security before. Also, my ex-

wife remarried and has since passed away. Do I qualify for part of her Social Security?

Signed,
"D" in Danbury

Dear "D" in Danbury: I'm afraid you cannot receive Social Security benefits while you are incarcerated, even if you are eligible for them prior to your release.

Thus, you cannot get retroactive Social Security benefits for any period you were still incarcerated. For clarity, although most who apply at a later age (e.g., in their 70s) do



By Russell Gloor

have the option to claim retroactive benefits, you cannot get any SS benefits for any month you were still incarcerated. Further, you will not get credit for delaying your application for SS benefits while you are incarcerated (you won't earn Delayed Retirement Credits during your incarceration).

Assuming (from what you shared) that you expect to be released from incarceration

in the fall of 2029, you can apply for your SS benefits to start upon your release. Be aware, however, that it usually takes several months for your application for SS benefits to be processed and you can specify the month you wish your benefits start.

Your benefit amount will be based upon your average monthly earnings for the 35 highest earning years over your lifetime. But you cannot get retroactive SS benefits for time prior to your release from incarceration. Since Social Security does not pay

benefits for partial months, you can file for your SS benefits to start effective with the month following the month in which your incarceration ends. Be sure you have your official prison release documentation (parole or discharge papers) in hand when you apply for your Social Security benefits.

FYI, some correctional facilities have a "Prerelease Agreement" with Social Security, which may enable you to file for your SS benefits three to four months prior to your release from incarceration. Be

See **SOCIAL SECURITY** page 8

IN THE CITY

Chicopee Public Library hosts programs for kids and families

CHICOPEE - Each month the Chicopee Public Library hosts a variety of free programs for children, teens, and families. The Youth Services Department provides opportunities for entertainment and enrichment that promote literacy and explore creativity. Here is the slate of events for June 2026.

Chicopee, Did You Read Today? The annual Summer Reading Challenge is back! Read every day from June 24 - August 14. Read anything and everything, track your reading progress with Beanstack or on paper or both, and come to the library for creative activities and exciting performances!

Little Kid Dance Party will be on Wednesdays, June 17 at 10:30 a.m. Moving and grooving for kids and their caregivers. Geared toward ages 0-5, but all are welcome! 45 minutes to one hour of energetic activity including singing and dancing, action rhymes, and playing with props like scarves and shakers.

Sensory Play Saturday will be held on Saturday, June 6 at 9:30 a.m. Come let your babies socialize and explore sensory play! We will have our play area set up with some sensory activities and other play opportunities. For babies 0-24 months and their caregivers, no registration required.

Saturday Playgroup will be held on Saturdays at 1 p.m. in June. We'll put out some extra toys in the play-space. It's a great time for families with kids of all ages to meet up and play, no registration required.

Terrific Twos will be held on Tuesday, June 9 at 10:30 a.m. Terrific Twos is for two-year-olds and their caregivers. This program features about 25 minutes of structured circle time, followed by about half an hour of semi-structured playtime. During circle time, we will sing songs, do rhymes, do some big movements, and read 1 book. The book choice rotates between either a read aloud picture

book or a group read of a board book. Playtime involves a choice of craft, activity, or play. No registration required.

The library will have **Bingo for Books** on Wednesday, June 10 at 6 p.m. Play a few rounds of bingo and win the best prize: books! For kids and families of all ages, no registration required.

Storytime will be held on Thursday, June 11 at 10:30 a.m. Storytime is for children ages 3-5. This program features about 30 minutes of structured circle time, followed by 15-30 minutes of a craft or activity. Circle time will include 2-3 read aloud books, rhymes, songs, and felt boards. Children will be encouraged to ask and answer simple questions and recognize things like shapes, colors, letters, and numbers. No registration required.

The **Kids Room Sewing Club** will meet on Wednesday, June 17, from 3:30 to 5 p.m. Learn basic stitches and practice skills by making fun projects. Recommended

for ages 6 and up. Kids who are not familiar with using a needle and thread should attend with an adult. Teens are welcome, no registration required. This month we'll be learning some embroidery stitches.

The library **Homeschool Meetup** will be on Thursday June 18 at 11 a.m. This group meets once a month September - June for homeschooling families with kids of all ages to hang out, do activities and learn together. This month will be a preview of the library's summer programming.

Summer Reading Kickoff Party will be on Wednesday, June 24 from 3 to 5 p.m. Join us in the library's backyard to sign up for summer reading, meet community partners, and do fun activities. ChicopeeFRESH and friends will be there with the food truck!

Summer Storytime will be on Tuesday, June 30 at 10:30 a.m. Listen to some read-aloud books, do some rhymes and songs and en-

joy a craft or activity. This mixed-age storytime is geared towards 0-8 and should have something for everyone to enjoy.

The **ChicopeeFRESH Community Kitchen** food truck will be in the library parking lot distributing free meals to kids 18 and under every weekday from 1:30-2:00 June 29- August 14. Grab your lunch and come inside for a place to eat and maybe some activities at Lunch Club, weekdays 1:30-2ish in the Children's Room Activity Room.

Can you find the key to the library's hidden treasure? Celebrate 250 years of US history with our **National Treasure Scavenger Hunt** happening Thursday, June 25 and Friday, June 26. Learn about the library, Chicopee, and the country's history to find the answers you need! This event is designed for kids ages 8+, teens, and their adults. Please visit our website or contact the Children's Room to sign up for a

time to participate.

Teens

Join us for **Anime Club** on Wednesday, June 10 at 3:30 p.m. This will be the final one before the library's Summer Reading programs begin, so be sure to stop by for an extra fun finale!

The library will be at **Chicopee Pride Fest** in Sot Park on Saturday, June 13 from Noon to 6 p.m. You can learn more about our resources and Summer Reading programs, as well as borrow books from our Pop Up Pride-brary.

Teen's can stop by for an evening of art at our **Scribble & Sip** event with Crayon Marie on Monday, June 29 at 6:30 p.m.! Learn to create your own version of O'Keefe's Lake George while enjoying some mocktails. Space is limited and not guaranteed. Doors will close 15min after the start time.

Visit the library website www.chicopeepubliclibrary.org for more info about all of the library's events.



Melissa Fitzgerald, social worker at the Valley Opportunity Council, was amongst the organizations in attendance. She also provided information on the Chicopee-Holyoke Head Start.



Morayma Vazquez, assistant program director at Metro Care of Springfield, and Koraima Torres, also shared information about the Adult Day Health Centers, with one located in Chicopee.



Lia Morales, CBH program coordinator, and Carlyn Dejesus, administrative assistant, represented RISE Behavioral Health Services.

BABY SHOWER from page 1

the smiles from attendees and raising awareness for her foundation to help other moms.

"I think sometimes the hospital stays can be long and this is just something to just take your mind off of it, even if it's for a second. So, we call it Hats4Hearts because of the heart disease and its rarity, but it's just something that also warms the hearts. Something that creates a little individuality amongst the babies and something special you can have with you and your child while you're in those circumstances," Ogunize said.

Ward 2 City Councilor Shane Brooks, who's part of the ACT Committee, expressed excitement about the event.

"It's an honor to be part

of the ACT Committee, being able to help Chicopee in a different way than I'm accustomed to from my role as a city councilor. We definitely hit the target audience today, especially with expectant mothers. They were able to get some resource information and some products to take with them," Brooks said. "Something we certainly should do each and every year in the city of Chicopee. It's a much-needed service for those who don't oftentimes avail themselves to some services."

Liv Anna Homstead, senior manager of Coalition Building from the Public Health Institute of Western Mass, explained maternal health is one of ACT's focuses and the community wanted to learn more about the resources available to them such as doulas, family sup-

port programs and childcare agencies.

"So, this is our starting point of putting together this event to really draw in the community and show them what resources are available and how they can connect with them," Homstead said.

Homstead was grateful for the community's support of ACT and its work since launching earlier this year.

"I just have loved the momentum and the support that we've gotten from the city and our coalition members to really drive forward this type of work and that the Chicopee community shows up and they show out for events," Homstead said. "We just felt really grateful for getting to reach into the Chicopee community more in new ways and to work with really wonderful partners on this."

Kayla Chatterton, a fully-certified spectrum doula, shared that doulas are non-clinical support people "providing childbirth education, advocacy, helping you make informed decisions about your care during your pregnancy, labor and birth" along with physical and emotional support.

"I think it's amazing that we're having this Community Baby Shower. Lots of other cities and towns have done Community Baby Showers and I just think that it's amazing that we're finally doing it here in Chicopee and that residents from this area get to know what all of the resources are to help them during their pregnancy and parenting time," Chatterton said.

Chatterton explained that after having her daughter and going through the labor and birth experience, she learned more about doulas.

"I was just like, 'Man, I really wish I had a doula to help educate me more and to help me make these decisions about going to the hospital

or getting cervical exams or providing me with even more support,'" Chatterton said. "Of course, my husband was great, but he's never had a baby before. He doesn't know how to really support me or education-wise and things like that. So then I was just like, 'I really wish I had a doula' and then I was just like 'Actually, I feel like it would be great to be a doula and give these moms and people having babies the education and the support that is so desperately needed.'"

Crystal Cappas, recruitment and outreach coordinator at The Care Center in Holyoke, said her organization provides free resources for women under the age of 24 to get back into education, also providing transportation and childcare on-site for children 2.9 and under, along with enrichment programs in the arts, such as a poetry book.

"We've been around for 40 years, so we have the secret sauce. We've helped a lot

of people in the community and a lot of women that want to come back and give back. My mother went to The Care Center. A lot of our staff also went through The Care Center," Cappas said. "Just supportive women all around in the building."

For Cappas, "helping women move forward" fulfills her most and stressed events like this help get the word out; The Care Center serves Holyoke, Chicopee and Springfield.

"We want to support women, we want to continue and we'd love to see our students 10 years from now be where they wanted to be," Cappas said.

Homstead's message was this.

"I think my message is going through pregnancy and having young kids at home is a really vulnerable experience. It's really wonderful and vulnerable at the same time and not to do it alone and there are really important supports that are here for



Laura Donnelly, a certificated personal trainer, certified nutrition coach and women's coaching specialist, holds up a pair of pink dice.

them," Homstead said. To learn more about ACT, visit 413Cares.org/chicopee.



Chiquita Ogunize of Hats4Hearts showed off her baby hats.

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IN THE CITY

PRIDE MONTH 2026 Preview

By Brendan Rooney
Correspondent

CHICOPEE — An exciting and historic weekend of festivities is fast approaching for Chicopee, as next week the Sixth Annual Pride Festival kicks off, and according to officials, it's shaping up to be one that you won't forget.

Shedding light on what attendees can expect from this year's festival was Chicopee Queer Consortium (CQC) President Ray Hoess-Brooks, who, in an exclusive sit-down with The Chicopee Register, also highlighted his vision for what the event can grow into, while breaking down how the event continues to grow and evolve into something special.

Hoess-Brooks revealed that this year will see the debut of the first official 'Chicopee Pride Parade', and he couldn't be happier.

"Last year we had around 500 people in Szoat Park, and close to 55 vendors, and it feels amazing to admit this will be the first with an actual parade, and needless to say we have so many great ideas," Hoess-Brooks said. "Before we get into details, I want to acknowledge that membership and interest has skyrocketed, which allowed us to have the capacity and numbers to create two committees, one for the parade, and the other for the festival."

He then offered a small sample of what the parade will entail: it will be close to two miles in total, and step off from Dana Park at 10 a.m. and will conclude at Szoat Park. He also noted the event's theme being 'Freedom' set to coincide with



The Pride stage at the Pride Festival.

the 250th anniversary of the nation, and leading the parade will be their very own "Paula Revere", a variation and riff on the founding father Paul Revere.

"Our Paula Revere will be leading the way, letting everyone know that the queers are coming, and we're only getting started, because as you can see, we have big plans, and we're going all out," Hoess-Brooks said.

He noted that following behind Revere will feature the debut of the first-ever "Pride Parade Marshal," whose name isn't being revealed until the day of the Flag Raising on June 12.

"So, the day of the flag raising, during the ceremony, the marshal will be selected, and crowned with an official sash, and they will be second to step off," Hoess-Brooks said.

Hoess-Brooks also confirmed in terms of the parade that the structure of where each component will fit into place is still a work in progress.

"I can confirm we've got floats, and local organizations such as the Food Bank of Western Mass, Lorraine's Soup Kitchen, and countless others, all with their respective banners," Hoess-Brooks said.

He added there are other surprises still under wraps that he can't wait to share, but did cite that the Halloqueen and the Gay Valentine's Day Courts winners will also be marching as well with banners representing their coronations.

Hoess-Brooks shared that this past year was one of "growth" as he also saw the establishment of "marquee events" created by the CQC that also functioned as fundraisers that helped offset costs

for the parade, along with citing grants were instrumental just as well.

"It's truly a year-long process, from the Halloqueen Ball, which is already tracking for a record number of attendance again later this September, being a bona fide success, and the inclusion of the Prom, just proved that interest is extremely high, all in fact due to the community responding.

Meaning we continue to bring in record-breaking attendance, and we couldn't be happier," Hoess-Brooks said. "I also want to add that we are extremely thankful to the Chicopee and Massachusetts Cultural Councils who provided grants since the first festival, but since we hived off and now became a fully 501(c)(3), we were able to secure another festival grant, but we don't forget our supporters."



Mayor John Vieau and State Sen. Adam Gomez (D-Springfield) join attendees for the sashay.

Hoess-Brooks also highlighted that with interest remaining high, sponsorship continues to grow as well.

"The sponsorships are building every year. I can confirm this year we received sponsorships from BMW, Subaru and Greenfield Cooperative Bank, and I just feel the reception we garnered is just absolutely indicative of where we're going," Hoess-Brooks said. "So, we're almost at a point where sponsorship itself is almost as much money as the grants, which is what I'm hoping will take over the grants."

He then concluded by highlighting his vision, citing unlimited possibilities.

"I want to get beyond the point of fundraising to where the CQC can give back to Chicopee, by understanding we're established, so we can then give this grant money to someone else," Hoess-Brooks said.

He then floated the idea of a possible scholarship, citing, "Currently we have plans to just get bigger from here on out."

"We are trying to make Chicopee a destination for Pride, and it starts by building the foundation now," Hoess-Brooks said. "And then the hope is that once the parade continues to grow over time, then we can incorporate the rest of Western Mass in as well, because the vision I have is to see all of our towns and cities lined up in contingents with their banners, similar to the Holyoke St. Patrick's Day Parade, where hypothetically within three or four years that route will have people leaving their lawn chairs out there before and lining to join us, and that's what I see, but most importantly that's what I want it to be."

The Pride Week Festivities kick off next Friday, June 12, with the flag raising, followed by the Tea Garden Dance at the Munich Haus, and on Saturday, June 13, the Sixth Annual Pride Festival takes place at Szoat Park, which also includes the first-ever Chicopee Pride Parade, capping off the weekend.

RiverMills Senior Center upcoming events

Ladies Night Out Celebration

CHICOPEE - The Council on Aging will be hosting a "Ladies Night Out" on Thursday, June 11 from 5 to 7 p.m. at Chicopee Council on Aging's RiverMills Center, 5 West Main St.

Join your friends at RiverMills for Ladies Night Out. Enjoy craft stations, vendor

tables appetizers and a cash bar (beer, wine and non-alcoholic beverages). Tickets are on sale now for \$10 at RiverMills Center. You must register in advance.

Basic Sign Language Series

CHICOPEE - The Chicopee Council on Aging will

offer a 4-part Basic American Sign Language Series at Chicopee Council on Aging's RiverMills Center, located at 5 W. Main Street.

Join staff from the Willie Rose School for the Deaf for this 4-part series to learn basic American Sign Language. You will learn the alphabet, practice fingerspelling and will also build everyday vocabulary. Through games, activities, and lots of prac-

tice, you will learn how to introduce yourself ask simple questions and respond in basic conversation.

This is a class designed to be beginner friendly, so no experience is needed! The classes will take place May 11, May 18, June 1 and June 8 from 4 to 5 p.m. The cost of the series is \$5 and you must register in advance by stopping by RiverMills or calling 534-3698.

Devin Hammon graduates from Regis College

BOSTON - Devin Hammon, of Chicopee, graduated with a Biology degree from Regis College during its May 9, 2026 Commencement.

Hammon was among more than 1,000 students who received degrees ranging from associate to doctorate.

St. Joan of Arc Open House

CHICOPEE - The Pre-K, Three and Four and Kindergarten St. Joan of Arc School Open House will take place on Wednesday, June 10, by appointment only. The times are 9 to 11 a.m. and 1 to 5 p.m.

St. Joan of Arc School is located at 587 Grattan Street, Chicopee.

To learn more, call 413-533-1475 or visit sjachicopee.org.

SINGING BRIDGE from page 1

this beam gets put into place, it's truly a reminder of progress and that's exciting for me as mayor."

Bryan Hughes, the president of Western Builders, called this "a huge milestone for our subs and for Western," crediting the varying teams for their support.

"I've been saying it's a beacon of hope, a beacon of light for what can be done in Western Massachusetts for housing. You can think big and you can think about turning what was once unused property for decades into something really special and I commend the city of Chicopee for really being creative about that and determined about that and we're just happy to put the finishing touches on it," Hughes said. "We still have a long way to go, but this is a great moment to kind of say, see what it looks like. Starts to really feel like a building and put the pedal to the medal for the next year or so. So, thank you guys for all being here."

Hughes said this milestone was "a long time coming."

"This project is an affordable housing project. It's been a couple years in pre-made construction, getting the design together and of course, city of Chicopee has been looking at this property for several years to do—like the mayor was saying earlier—make this entire riverfront



A group photo of Mayor John Vieau with the team at Western Builders.

area into a real community," Hughes said. "So, this is just one part, but we're so happy to be part of it. In our 24 months of construction, we're about halfway through."

Hughes shared that according to a recent study done by UMass Donahue Institute, Western Mass has a "17,000 unit deficit in terms of the supply for housing and demand for housing."

"This structure is 105 units, so we're taking a very small chunk at it, but that's how you kind of have to think about it when there's that big of a problem, that big of a challenge," Hughes said. "It's a really big project, really important project and it really thought about how many units can we get that this area needs in one space and that's why it went vertical. So, we do a lot of these affordable housing projects, we've got

a few others in the Pioneer Valley now. We're just ready for what is to come in terms of meeting that 17,000 unit deficit as quickly as we can."

He said he's excited for Chicopee and Western Mass with this project.

"This is kind of a great example of what can happen in your community and in your area to kind of build everybody up and serve the community. So, I'm really excited for what's to come after this milestone of course and real excited for everything to come together and to see the Uniroyal building come to fruition as well," Hughes said.

After the ceremony, attendees signed the beam, immortalizing themselves in this milestone moment as the last beam was lifted and officially placed on the building.



The final beam for the current phase of the Singing Bridge Residents project begins its ascent.

SPORTS

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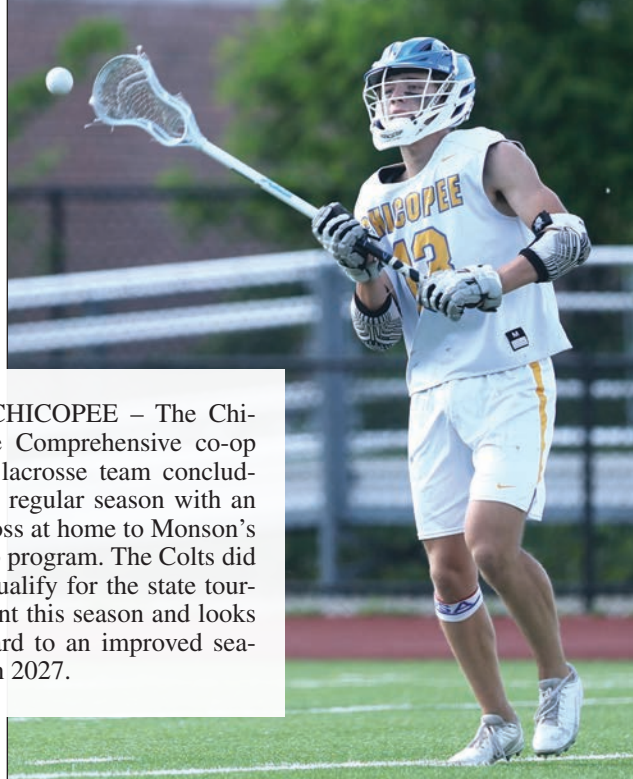
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Season concludes for Comp



TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY WWW.SWEETDOGPHOTOS.COM
Landyn Klein winds up for a long pass.



Ian LePage receives a pass.

CHICOPEE – The Chicopee Comprehensive co-op boys lacrosse team concluded its regular season with an 8-3 loss at home to Monson’s co-op program. The Colts did not qualify for the state tournament this season and looks forward to an improved season in 2027.



Griffin Stefanik makes a run.



Tyler Chartier rushes toward the goal.



Goalie Noah Messer is ready for a shot.

Mutiny battles Hartford to scoreless draw

LUDLOW – On Friday, May 22, the New England Mutiny battled the Hartford Athletic to a scoreless tie. The Mutiny is now 1-1-1 on the season. They previously de-

feated the Worcester Wanderers and had a defeat against the Hudson Valley Crusaders. More on the Mutiny and their new challenges in next week’s edition.



Kendall Bodak, of Monson, sends a free kick away.



TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY WWW.SWEETDOGPHOTOS.COM
Kayleigh Lukasik sends a pass away.



Chicopee’s Sam Breton clears the ball away..



Kursten Shade looks to shoot in traffic.



Se-Hanna Mars fights for the ball.



TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY WWW.SWEETDOGPHOTOS.COM
Ben Alexander gets ready to clear the ball.

WMass Pioneers fall to NEFC

UDLOW – On a very rainy evening, the turf was not kind to the Western Mass. Pioneers as they fell at home against NEFC 4-2. The Pioneers, which have a lot of new players on the roster this season, fell to a disappointing 1-2 on the short regular season. The Pioneers had another home game scheduled during the weekend, and were in action on the road against Black Rock FC. The Pioneers are on a lengthy road trip and are not playing at home until Friday, June 19.



Jaiden Williams makes his way up the field.



Thomas Wadas, of Ludlow, eyes a teammate up the field.



Dylan Hunston looks to clear the ball.



Pearse O'Brien seeks to settle the ball.

PUBLIC NOTICES

CHICOPEE CITY COUNCIL LICENSE COMMITTEE LEGAL NOTICE

The License Committee of the Chicopee City Council will hold a public hearing on **Monday, June 15, 2026 at 6:00 PM** in the Auditorium, 3rd floor, City Hall, 274 Front Street., Chicopee, MA 01013 to discuss the following:

Application for a Home Occupation License at 36 Montvue Street for the purpose of doing cottage food bakery – no customers on premises – sold off site. Applicant Shawntea Crudup, 36 Montvue Street, Chicopee, MA 01020.

The June 15, 2026 License Committee hearing shall be available to the public via zoom and in person. Zoom credentials are available upon request by calling (413) 594-1435 M-F 8:00 AM – 5 PM or by email at aczarniecki@chicopeema.gov.

The petition and materials related to this proposal are on file in the Office of the City Council, Chicopee City Hall, 274 Front Street, Chicopee, MA 01013. You may also call (413) 594-1435 or email aczarniecki@chicopeema.gov. 06/05, 06/12/2026

CHICOPEE CITY COUNCIL ZONING COMMITTEE LEGAL NOTICE

The Zoning Committee of the Chicopee City Council will hold a public hearing on **Wednesday, June 24, 2026 at 6:30 PM*** in the Auditorium, 3rd floor, City Hall, 274 Front Street., Chicopee, MA 01013 to discuss the following:

Special Permit application under section 275-52 B 13 for the purpose of operating a dog kennel (4) total located at 54 Chester Street. Applicant – Breanna Wilson, 54 Chester Street, Chicopee, MA 01013.

The plans/application can be viewed on the City Council website <https://www.chicopeema.gov/880/Pending-Applications>

The June 24, 2026 Zoning Committee hearing shall be available to the public via zoom and in person. Zoom credentials are available upon request by calling (413) 594-1435 M-F 8:30 AM – 5 PM or by email at aczarniecki@chicopeema.gov.

The petition and materials related to this proposal are on file in the Office of the City Council, Chicopee City Hall, 274 Front Street, (plans and applications

are also available on the City Council website <https://www.chicopeema.gov/880/Pending-Applications>.) You may also call (413) 594-1435 or email aczarniecki@chicopeema.gov. 06/05, 06/12/2026

CHICOPEE CITY COUNCIL ZONING COMMITTEE LEGAL NOTICE

The Zoning Committee of the Chicopee City Council will hold a public hearing on **Wednesday, June 24, 2026 at 6:30 PM*** in the Auditorium, 3rd floor, City Hall, 274 Front Street., Chicopee, MA 01013 to discuss the following:

Special Permit application under section 275-58 C 4 for the purpose of providing entertainment with food and drinking. This establishment will provide alcohol consumption as well, located at 300 Carew Street. Applicant – Enid V. Coleman, 125 Jarvis Avenue, Holyoke, MA 01040.

The plans/application can be viewed on the City Council website <https://www.chicopeema.gov/880/Pending-Applications>

The June 24, 2026 Zoning Committee hearing shall be available to the public via zoom and in person. Zoom credentials are available upon request by calling (413) 594-1435 M-F 8:30 AM – 5 PM or by email at aczarniecki@chicopeema.gov.

The petition and materials related to this proposal are on file in the Office of the City Council, Chicopee City Hall, 274 Front Street, (plans and applications are also available on the City Council website <https://www.chicopeema.gov/880/Pending-Applications>.) You may also call (413) 594-1435 or email aczarniecki@chicopeema.gov. 06/05, 06/12/2026

CHICOPEE CITY COUNCIL ZONING COMMITTEE LEGAL NOTICE

The Zoning Committee of the Chicopee City Council will hold a public hearing on **Wednesday, June 24, 2026 at 6:30 PM*** in the Auditorium, 3rd floor, City Hall, 274 Front Street., Chicopee, MA 01013 to discuss the following:

Zone Change application from Bus A & Res C to Res D for the entirety of the property located at 725 Memorial Drive, 745 Memorial Drive, & 0 Memorial Drive Parcel ID 0425-00038,

0425-00039, & 0426-00003 for the purpose of additional mobile home units at existing mobile home park. Applicant – Edison Yee, Trustee of the Maui Realty Nominee Trust/Betlai, LLC, c/o Edison Yee/Linda Yee, 55 Frank B Murray Street, Suite 301, Springfield, MA 01103.

The plans/application can be viewed on the City Council website <https://www.chicopeema.gov/880/Pending-Applications>

The June 24, 2026 Zoning Committee hearing shall be available to the public via zoom and in person. Zoom credentials are available upon request by calling (413) 594-1435 M-F 8:30 AM – 5 PM or by email at aczarniecki@chicopeema.gov.

The petition and materials related to this proposal are on file in the Office of the City Council, Chicopee City Hall, 274 Front Street, (plans and applications are also available on the City Council website <https://www.chicopeema.gov/880/Pending-Applications>.) You may also call (413) 594-1435 or email aczarniecki@chicopeema.gov. 06/05, 06/12/2026

SALE OF MOTOR VEHICLES UNDER G.L. c.255 Sec. 39A

Notice is hereby given by Interstate Towing, Inc. pursuant to the provisions of G.L. c. 255, section 39A, that on June 19th, 2026 at Interstate Towing, Inc the following Motor Vehicles will be sold at private sale to satisfy our garage keeper's lien thereon for storage, towing charges, care and expenses of notices and sale of said vehicles.

2005 Honda Accord
VIN: 1HGCM568X5A172180
Savannah Sanchez
89 Bonner St.
Chicopee, MA 01020

2007 Honda CRV
VIN: JHLRE38537C006655
Maria Caal Arana
17 Crosby St., Apt. 3
Lawrence, MA 01843

2012 Nissan Altima
VIN: 1N4AL2AP3CN537655
Angie Colon
90 Cochran St. #1R
Chicopee, MA 01020

1998 Suzuki
VIN: JS1GR7DAXW2104479
Jermaine Mitchell
102 Wollaston Street
Springfield, MA 01108

2012 Chevrolet Equinox

VIN: 2GNFLEE51C6234993
Geraldyn R Pereznavia
466 Lakeside Ave., Fl. 2
Ornage, NJ 07050

2004 Nissan Altima
VIN: 1N4AL1D44C153686
Stephanie Brown
17 Saab Ct., Apt. 501
Springfield, MA 01104

2007 Honda Pilot
VIN: 2HKYF18107H521849
Patricia Jones and Brian Jones
40 Avon St. #1
Wakefield, MA 01880

2014 Jeep Cherokee
VIN: 1C4PJMB50EW156531
Douglas Berton Brown
51 Meadow Brook Rd., Apt 119
Ellington, CT 06029

2008 Honda Civic
VIN: 1HGCG1654YAQ73381
Unknown Owner
06/05, 06/12, 06/19/2026

SALE OF MOTOR VEHICLES UNDER G.L. c.255 Sec. 39A

Notice is hereby given by Interstate Towing, Inc. pursuant to the provisions of G.L. c. 255, section 39A, that on June 5, 2026 at Interstate Towing, Inc the following Motor Vehicles will be sold at private sale to satisfy our garage keeper's lien thereon for storage, towing charges, care and expenses of notices and sale of said vehicles.

2017 Porsche Cayenne
VIN: WP1AB2A25HLA53067
Sarpong, Patrick Ankrh
31 Kevin Dr.
Vernon Rockville, CT 06066

2009 Pontiac G6
VIN: 1G2ZJ57B494243684
Kathleen Rogers
32 1/2 Oak St., Apt. 8
Indian Orchard, MA 01151

2009 Nissan Rogue
VIN: JN8AS58V49W177709
Carmen Sylvia Sanchez
25 Emerald St., Fl 2nd
Chicopee, MA 01013

1989 Harley XLH 883
VIN: 1HD4CAM14KY116211
Tracy Prince
100 Heritage Green Dr., Apt. 311
Fiskdale, MA 01518

2001 Chevrolet Prizm
VIN: 1Y1SK52841Z404897
Brenda Heap
174 Patricia Circle
Springfield, MA 01119

2019 Subaru Crosstrek
VIN: JF2GTAAC9KH205620
Tatyana Frid
55 Emerson St.

Wakefield, MA 01880

2005 Chrysler Sebring
VIN: 1C3EL65R95N568186
Joan Reyes Rivera
42 Waltham Ave., Bldg 415
Springfield, MA 01109

2006 Nissan Murano
VIN: JN8AZ08W86W539365
Ashley Wilson
153 Lamplighter Ln.
Springfield, MA 01119

2008 Volkswagen Jetta
VIN: 3VWRJ71K18M135815
Colby Maynard
3404 Davie Rd., Apt. 403
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33314

2005 Chevrolet Impala
VIN: 2G1WF52E559217032
Justin Foley
54 Garden St.
West Springfield, MA 01089

2006 Honda Civic
VIN: 2HGFG11816H565346
Howard Johnson
29 E Chester St.
Kingston, NY 12401

2011 Chevrolet Malibu
VIN: 1G1ZC5E18BF385300
Arielle Miner
110 Lakeshore Dr.
Winchendon, MA 01475

2019 Hyundai Translead
VIN: 3H3V532L0LR441764
Amazon Logistics Inc.
4255 Anson Blvd.
Whitestown, IN 46075

2003 Toyota Corolla
VIN: 2T1BR32E13C103270
Sarah Cruz Estrada
25 High Street, Apt. 211
Springfield, MA 01109
05/22, 05/29, 06/05/2026

SALE OF MOTOR VEHICLES UNDER G.L. c.255 Sec. 39A

Notice is hereby given by Interstate Towing, Inc. pursuant to the provisions of G.L. c. 255, section 39A, that on June 12th, 2026 at Interstate Towing, Inc the following Motor Vehicles will be sold at private sale to satisfy our garage keeper's lien thereon for storage, towing charges, care and expenses of notices and sale of said vehicles.

1999 Plymouth Voyager
VIN: 2P4GP25R6XR157329
Meghan Perrick
241 Hayward St.
Manchester, NH 03103

2009 Toyota Sienna
VIN: 5TDZK22CX9S281567
Marino Velasquez Morales
PO Box 741

Putney, VT 05346

2009 Subaru Outback
VIN: 4S4BP61C197333792
Gerardo Rios Paneto
256 Pleasant St., Apt. 307
Northampton, MA 01060

2024 Toyota Corolla
VIN: 5YFS4MCE9RP210756
Harihara Reddy Anam
7999 Leighlinbridge Way G
Dublin, OH,43016

2002 Honda Accord
VIN: 1HGCG66812A019843
Bryan Colon
153 Westminster St., Fl. 2
Springfield, MA 01109
05/29, 06/05, 06/12/2026

CHICOPEE CITY COUNCIL ZONING COMMITTEE LEGAL NOTICE

The Zoning Committee of the Chicopee City Council will hold a public hearing on **Wednesday, June 24, 2026 at 6:30 PM*** in the Auditorium, 3rd floor, City Hall, 274 Front Street., Chicopee, MA 01013 to discuss the following:

Zone Change application Bus A to Res A for 11,257 SF for property located at 799 Front Street for the purpose of single-family home. Applicant – Privilne Real Estate, LLC, Sergey Kucherenko, 83 Maple St, 1 FL, Chicopee, MA 01020.

The plans/application can be viewed on the City Council website <https://www.chicopeema.gov/880/Pending-Applications>

The June 24, 2026 Zoning Committee hearing shall be available to the public via zoom and in person. Zoom credentials are available upon request by calling (413) 594-1435 M-F 8:30 AM – 5 PM or by email at aczarniecki@chicopeema.gov.

The petition and materials related to this proposal are on file in the Office of the City Council, Chicopee City Hall, 274 Front Street, (plans and applications are also available on the City Council website <https://www.chicopeema.gov/880/Pending-Applications>.) You may also call (413) 594-1435 or email aczarniecki@chicopeema.gov. 06/05, 06/12/2026

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**SOCIAL SECURITY from page 4**

sure to check with your facility to see if they have such an agreement with Social Security and, if so, use it to apply for your benefits in advance of your release. This will facilitate your SS benefits starting more quickly upon your release.

You did not ask about healthcare coverage, but since you will be eligible for Social Security, you will also be eligible for Medicare upon your release. When you apply for your Social Security benefits, you can also apply for Medicare Part B (coverage for outpatient medical services), the premium for which will be deducted from your Social Security payment. FYI, Medicare Part A (coverage for inpatient hospitalization services) is free and automatic because you are also eligible for Social Security.

Finally, regarding survivor benefits from your ex-wife, you can only get a sur-

viving ex-spouse benefit if you were married for more than 10 years and your own SS retirement amount is less than your ex-wife was receiving at her death. In other words, you can only get one SS benefit either your own or your deceased ex-wife's amount, whichever is higher.

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CITY COUNCIL from page 1

"Who would I be submitting my doctor's notes to? Who would I be submitting my kids' doctor's notes to?" Arriaga said.

Arriaga expressed that councilors are still participating when they Zoom in. She said that residents know who their elected leaders are because of the impact they have on the community outside of City Hall.

She also interpreted Costello's order as an attempt to disrupt the council's synergy.

"I think this is just a way to attack people, and we're not here to do that," Arriaga said. "There's no reason behind doing this when, for the most part, we're all here, and when we're on Zoom, we're participating."

Ward 2 Councilor Shane Brooks jumped in next, stressing the importance of the forum that Zoom facilitates. He said there are times when the city's business can only be accomplished with remote participation from some individuals.

"The forum issue to me is the most important thing. If we can maintain a forum to do the work of the city to the benefit of the residents, that's most important. That kind of ends the argument for me," Brooks said.

The longtime board member also made it clear that it is legally extremely

difficult to do what Costello was requesting.

Brooks recalled being the council president in late 2020 when the then-Ward 3 city councilor made controversial statements about sexual assault victims. Brooks spoke about how it was impossible to remove that individual from the board.

"We couldn't remove a poorly behaving board member for putting some pretty horrific stuff on social media that was misogynistic at best and overly offensive at worst," Brooks said. "Somehow, we're going to have to check in on illnesses and emergencies?"

As the councilors took turns shooting down Costello's proposal, Ward 7 Councilor Bill Courchesne stepped to the plate.

He strongly stated that councilors take care of constituents by going to their homes, answering their messages and acting on their behalf. He said serving is about way more than being present at meetings.

"The thought that we have to show up here in person to take care of our constituents is crazy because you have to be here to vote and have your voice heard. You can do that anywhere, anyhow," Courchesne said.

City Council President/Councilor-at-Large Frank Laflamme also weighed in, noting that it's a non-issue.

"I've never gotten a phone call [about it] from

anyone. If you feel that way, come election time, do what you have to do," Laflamme said.

Laflamme relayed that councilors communicate extremely well with him regarding when they must attend a meeting virtually and that no one has been in violation of the city's policies.

"You all do a great job," Laflamme said. "That's what's great about Zoom. We want to continue working with the Mayor's Office and all the departments to keep the city moving forward."

When she finally was able to speak again, Costello acknowledged that it wasn't meant to be.

"I felt that this was a good time to have a discussion. As a matter of fact, that was my motion; to discuss it this evening, and evidently, we already have," Costello said.

Costello reiterated that some people have questioned her about the issue of Zoom participation at meetings, but she surrendered the argument.

"I'm very, very happy and appreciative of all the comments, of where people are thinking in regards to in-person attendance by city councilors and Zoom participation by city councilors," Costello said.

Costello then contributed to a unanimous vote in favor of McAuliffe's motion to defeat the order.

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Turley Publications offers two types of obituaries. One is a free, brief **Death Notice** listing the name of deceased, date of death and funeral date and place.

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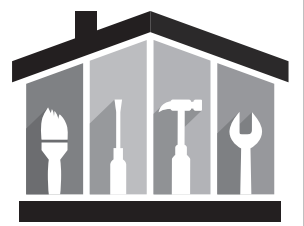


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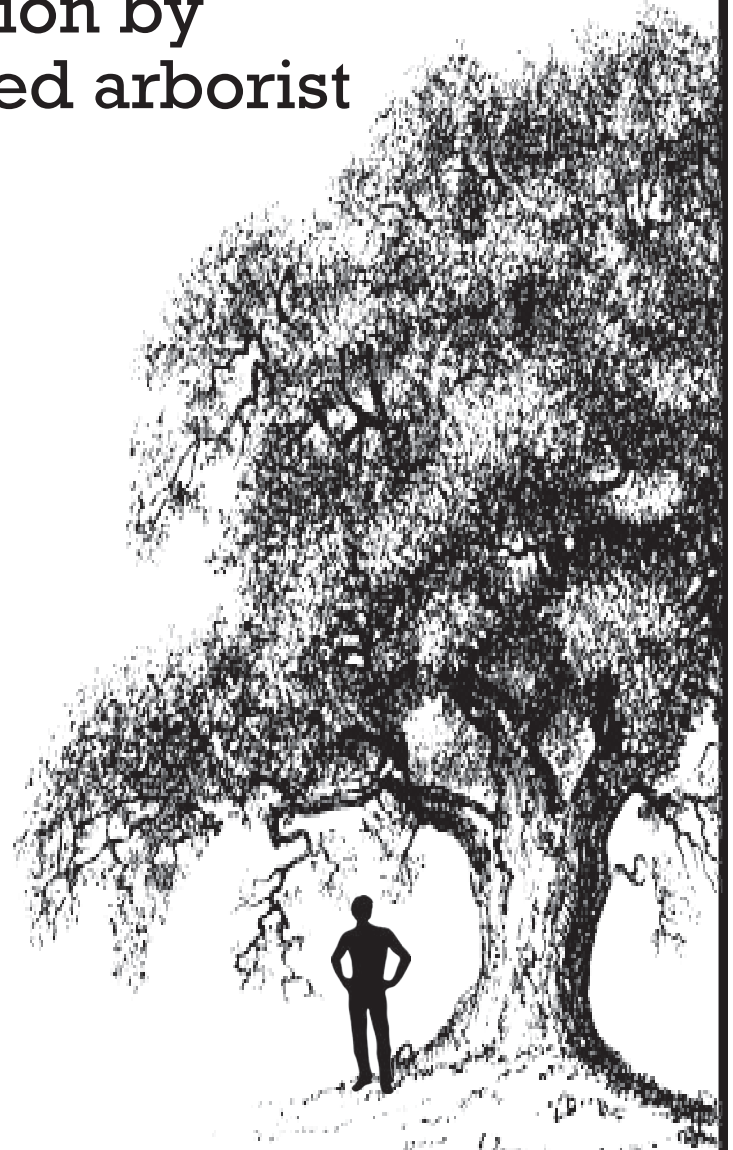


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