

# The Montague Reporter

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THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

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## Open Selectboard Seat Attracts Two Fresh Faces

By MIKE JACKSON



Nate Card

**MONTAGUE** – Two candidates will be on the May 19 ballot for an open Montague selectboard seat, and both are newcomers to the town’s government: Nathanael Card Schiffbauer, a downtown Turners Falls resident who goes by Nate Card in professional and public life, and Chestnut Hill resident John Snyder.

Town clerk Wendy Bogusz told the *Reporter* on Wednesday that Card and Snyder are the only two candidates who turned in nomination papers and were certified as candidates for selectboard.

Though the Democratic town committee has been authorized in the past to nominate candidates for office directly onto the ballot by caucus, chair Francia Wisniewski confirmed that the committee was deactivated and is currently in the process of reestablishing itself, and will not be able to place nominees this spring.

A third candidate previously reported to

see **FACES** page A5



John Snyder

## MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD

### Senator Calls for ‘Sea Change’ At State Ed Department

By JEFF SINGLETON

The Montague selectboard meeting on Monday night was dominated by a discussion with state senator Jo Comerford of the impact of state aid on the town’s budget.

The board also recommended articles for the May annual town meeting warrant, reviewed a draft of the warrant itself, approved a policy for outdoor dining, and discussed a waiver for a law firm concerning a new “drone agreement” between Montague and Greenfield.

The discussion with Comerford began with selectboard chair Matt Lord noting that the board had developed a list of the town’s “legislative priorities,” but that he was interested in hearing where she saw “the most movement happening at this time” on Beacon Hill.

Comerford began by addressing a variety of forms of state aid whose formulas she said she felt have been inequitable to rural communities. She called the calculation of payments *in lieu* of taxes (PILOT) for

see **MONTAGUE** page A7

## High School Sports Week: Softball Time is Here Again

By MATT ROBINSON

**TURNERS FALLS** – The spring sports season got off to a rousing, but cold, start this week.

Last Friday, March 27, the Turners Falls Softball Thunder played their home opener against the Red Hawks of Frontier, and for the first

time in recent memory, Powertown was mercied. On Tuesday, however, they bounced back and came from behind to even their record to 1 – 1.

The Franklin Tech softballers, meanwhile, traveled to Wilbraham on Tuesday for their season opener against Minnechaug, and let an

see **SPORTS** page A8



DAVID HOITT PHOTO

Turners Falls High School’s multi-talented pitcher Autumn Thornton blasts a two-run homer Tuesday against the Greenfield Green Wave, putting the Thunder ahead 6-4 in the fourth inning. The Thunder stunned with an 11-6 win over their state championship rivals, only one game after a 14-2 loss to Frontier Regional.

## ERVING SELECTBOARD

### Sheriff Offers Officers After Staff Exodus

By KATIE NOLAN

On Monday night at the Erving selectboard meeting, Franklin County sheriff Lori Streeter proposed supplying the town’s police department with patrol officers. Since January, four patrol officers and the cadet officer have resigned from the Erving department, leaving chief Robert

Holst and sergeant Adam Paicos as the department’s only employees.

Neither Holst nor the selectboard members discussed the departure of all the town’s patrol officers at the meeting. Since January, the board has held eight executive sessions “to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining” regarding Erving Police Benevolent Association

Local 121. Monday’s meeting ended with another executive session regarding the union.

In a comment on the Local 121 Facebook page, retired Erving officer Laura Gordon wrote: “Strong law enforcement agencies depend on clear policies, professional standards, and accountability. Clear

see **ERVING** page A4

## SHOW OF NUMBERS



MIKE JACKSON PHOTO

Thousands of people – three and a half thousand, according to organizers – paraded down Greenfield’s Federal Street on Saturday and rallied boisterously in front of city hall in conjunction with a nationwide “No Kings” protest campaign. “Vote for Democracy, Not Brutality, Bombs, and Ballrooms!” read one of hundreds of homemade placards.

## New Salem Tax Override Aims to Save Swift River School Jobs

By SARAH ROBERTSON

**NEW SALEM** – Voters in New Salem will be asked whether to support a tax override next month in order to reduce layoffs at Swift River School and bolster other departments’ budgets amid rising costs.

The New Salem/Wendell school committee voted last week to recommend a Swift River School budget for the upcoming fiscal year that would require laying off as many as five staff members. In response, some school committee members, parents, and educators say they plan to advocate in favor of the Proposition 2½ override in order to reduce the number of staff cuts to three.

“It’s the insurance that is killing us,” school committee chair Nancy Slator said at the March 26 meeting. “We would be delighted to get

see **OVERRIDE** page A6

## WENDELL SELECTBOARD

### Meetinghouse Expansion Draws Protest, Compromise

By JOSH HEINEMANN

Thirteen Wendell residents, including selectboard members and this reporter, went to the Wendell selectboard’s March 25 meeting for what turned into a long and contentious discussion about a proposal to build an extension to the Wendell Meetinghouse with an ADA-accessible

washroom with running water and flush toilets, a warming kitchen, secure storage, and a changing room.

The agenda was short, but the meeting went late.

Citizens Mary McBride and Alison Wight were in the room as the meeting opened, offering cell phone images of proposals for the

see **WENDELL** page A6



REPORTER FILE PHOTO

The meetinghouse, owned by a non-profit, was extensively renovated in 2021 and 2022, but does not have running water or an accessible washroom.

### Still Doing the Whole Newspaper Thing

A Rousing, But Cold, Start.....A1	Savory, Rich, and Somewhat Sweet.....B1
The Nasty Wasty History of Extraction.....A2	So Much Comfort and Experience.....B2
If Their Power is Uninterrupted.....A3	Casting Such Trusty Patterns.....B3
Somewhat of a Public Safety Emergency.....A4	Feed Us, Give Us Soft Beds.....B4
The Pace of Bureaucracy.....A5	Considerados En Gran Medida Ineludibles.....B5
Elegant Interior Facilities.....A6	Snowbeasts, Hot Dirt, Pancake Breakfast.....B6
A Little Strike Among the Section Hands.....A7	Converge, Chipmunks, Earth Day Cleanup.....B7
A Foe Closer to Home.....A8	Scan the Lake’s Nooks and Crannies.....B8

