

NORTHVILLE

BOE will meet on Monday following budget fail

School says state aid formula does not reflect the economic needs of rural districts

BY EDEN STRATTON

Northville school officials are looking to their next steps after the 2025-2026 budget failed to pass on Tuesday.

For the second consecutive year, the budget went down to defeat when it did not receive over 60% of “yes” votes, as required due to the tax levy increase proposed by the district being above the state-mandated tax cap. Only 41.6% of voters supported the proposal Tuesday with 345 votes against and 246 in favor. Last year, when the district faced the same circumstances, 59.7% of voters approved the plan — just shy of the threshold for passage.

The \$15,483,025 budget, which would have increased spending 5.24%, had a proposed tax levy increase of 6.46% — above the district’s 2.90% state-mandated cap.

School district officials expressed concerns that taxpayers have been saddled with an unfair financial burden in Northville because of inequities in New York state’s education aid formulas.

“[State] Foundation Aid divides the district’s inflated property values by our modest enrollment,” the district said in a press release. “Our ‘Actual Valuation’ of \$1.5 million per pupil — well above the state average — does not reflect real household incomes or economic need. For small, rural districts like Northville, land values distort the numbers and shift costs onto local taxpayers.”

New York state’s school funding formulas date back to the early 2000s, when the Campaign for Fiscal Equity (CFE) won a series of legal victories on the grounds that the structure of public school funding failed to fulfill the New York State Constitution’s right to a “sound basic education.” The CFE’s legal victory resulted in the state’s adoption of a public school funding formula — known as Foundation Aid — that would ensure adequate funding for all school districts, according to the Fiscal Policy Institute. State-level school funding allocates little to the districts with the highest relative property values and income, and provides a majority of the funding to the lowest-resourced districts. Because local districts must allocate sufficient remaining funding to provide an

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PETER R. BARBER

Summer of '25

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BROADALBIN

Students sink 40 wooden fish cribs into Great Sacandaga Lake

BY PAUL WAGER

As part of Brian Henry’s science research class, students at Broadalbin-Perth Jr./Sr. High School get plenty of hands-on experience.

The latest endeavor for the class involved the construction and deployment of 40 wooden fish cribs into Great Sacandaga Lake.

Students built the cribs this winter and the structures are designed to enhance the aquatic habitat in the lake’s southern basin. The project marks the beginning of a five-year effort to build 20 artificial reefs and deploy a total of 200 cribs.

“This project has been kicked around for more than two decades, so we are excited to finally make it happen,” Henry said in a news release. “The goal of my science research class is to provide my students with meaningful, hands-on experience not found in the traditional classroom, while also helping to improve the fishery of the lake we all love.”

The class partnered with the Hudson River-Black River Regulating District to deploy the fish cribs, which were lowered into more than 30 feet of water to ensure they remain well below navigational depth. The cribs, made from rough-cut



PHOTO PROVIDED

Students in Brian Henry’s (above) science research class at Broadalbin-Perth Junior/Senior High School recently constructed and deployed 40 wooden fish cribs into Great Sacandaga Lake.

hemlock, are intended to provide shelter and a breeding habitat for a range of fish species.

With the new reef structures in place, students will use underwater drones to monitor fish behavior and population changes. Their goal is to determine whether the cribs are suc-

cessfully creating new and sustainable habitats for local fish species.

“It’s a living experiment,” Henry said in the release. “We’re not just building the structures — we’re also collecting and analyzing the data to understand their impact. It’s

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UNCREDITED

Ukrainian soldiers hug each other after returning from captivity following an exchange between Russia and Ukraine, in Chernihiv region of Ukraine, Friday.

Russia and Ukraine swap 100s of prisoners in first phase of a major exchange

BY SAMYA KULLAB AND HANNA ARHIROVA

CHERNIHIV REGION, Ukraine (AP) — Russia and Ukraine began a major prisoner exchange Friday, swapping hundreds of soldiers and civilians in the first phase of an exchange that was a moment of cooperation in otherwise failed efforts to reach a ceasefire in the 3-year-old war.

President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said the first phase brought home 390 Ukrainians, including soldiers and civilians, with further releases expected over the weekend that will make it the largest swap of the war. Russia’s Defense Ministry said it received the same number from Ukraine.

“It’s very important to

bring everyone home,” Zelenskyy wrote on Telegram, thanking all who worked to secure their return and pledging to continue diplomatic efforts to make more exchanges possible.

Dozens of relatives of prisoners cheered and chanted “Thank you!” as buses carrying the freed captives

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The Leader-Herald

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INSIDE



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WEATHER



Breezy with showers
High 57/Low 49

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Saturday	Sat. night	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
							
Breezy with a shower or two	A shower early; mostly cloudy	Breezy, warmer; a p.m. shower	Partly sunny	Mostly sunny and pleasant	Partly sunny, a shower or two	An afternoon shower or two	Cloudy with showers
High 57	Low 49	63/48	70/48	74/50	73/54	74/59	72/54
RealFeel: 50/43		RF: 61	RF: 77	RF: 83	RF: 77	RF: 77	RF: 79

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Friday's Almanac
Temperatures

High/low	51/43
Normal high/low	73/50
Last year high/low	80/56
Record high	93 in 1964
Record low	36 in 1967

Albany through 5 p.m. Friday
Precipitation

24-hour total	0.17"
Month to date	5.55"
Normal month to date	2.44"
Year to date	15.37"
Normal year to date	13.52"

Forecasts and graphics provided by AccuWeather.com ©2025

Fish

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authentic research with real ecological value.”

The findings could guide future conservation efforts across the region while giving students a rare opportunity to engage in meaningful, applied science.

For the students, the construction, deployment and monitoring of the fish cribs is a hands-on experiment that goes far beyond the classroom. For the fish and other aquatic organisms living in Great Sacandaga Lake, it may be the foundation of a healthier and safer home.

The fish crib project builds on years of fieldwork by Broadalbin-Perth’s science research program, which has also collaborated with the Great Sacandaga Lake Fisheries Federation and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) on a long-term study of the lake’s walleye population. Students have been tagging and releasing walleye to collect data on migration, growth, and survival rates — work that has earned the

class of high school students a reputation for conducting graduate-level research.

In 2023, students in Henry’s science research class at Broadalbin-Perth Jr./Sr. High School began an investigation into the walleye population of Great Sacandaga Lake. Recently, students launched the next phase of what is designed to be a multi-year study that seeks to determine why walleye in the lake tend to be shorter on average than walleye in the rest of New York state.

Last November, students traveled to Cranberry Cove Marina to tag 1,000 juvenile walleye that were then released into the lake. The students used elastomer tags to “tattoo” the hatchery-raised walleye with a harmless latex dye behind their left eye. This year’s dye was yellow; students used a pink dye in 2023. According to Henry, using different colored dyes each year will help the student researchers account for the age of the walleye when they are later caught by fishermen.

The walleye are part of a stocking campaign funded by the Great Sacandaga Lake Fisheries Federation. In 2022, the GSLFF asked the

science research class to help determine whether the federation’s stocking efforts were contributing to the population of walleye in the lake. Students designed a study to determine the genetic contribution of stocked versus wild fish in the adult (harvestable) population and worked with fishery biologists from NYSDEC to collect tissue samples of adult walleye caught in the lake. A genetics lab at West Virginia University analyzed the samples, and the resulting data showed an average of 7.6% ancestry from the hatchery population in the wild population.

For the current study, Henry’s class was granted a tagging permit by NYSDEC. Students are hoping local anglers will contribute to their research by submitting the lengths of marked walleye that they catch in the lake. This data will allow students to document how quickly or slowly the walleye are growing in the lake. Fishermen can submit the data from their catch by visiting surveymonkey.com/r/2023GSLwalleye or by contacting Henry at henryb@bpcsd.org. As an incentive, the class is offering \$25 gift certificates to local bait shops for confirmed catches.

Swap

Continued from page A1

arrived at a medical facility in Ukraine’s Chernihiv region. The men, some with expressionless faces and others unable to contain their emotions, got off the buses wrapped in Ukrainian flags for joyful reunions.

Kyiv and Moscow agreed in Istanbul last week to the exchange of 1,000 prisoners from each side in their first direct peace talks since the early weeks of Russia’s 2022 invasion. That meeting lasted only two hours and brought no breakthrough in U.S.-led efforts to stop the fighting.

The swap took place at the border with Belarus in northern Ukraine, according to a Ukrainian official who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak publicly.

The released Russians were taken to Belarus for medical treatment, the Russian Defense Ministry said.

The exchange, which would be the latest of dozens of swaps since the war began and the biggest involving Ukrainian civilians at one time, didn’t herald any halt in fighting.

Battles continued along the roughly 1,000-kilometer front line, where tens of thousands of soldiers have been killed, and neither country has relented in its deep strikes.

Russia launched two ballistic missiles at infrastructure targets in the southern Ukrainian port of Odesa, killing two workers and injuring eight others, according to regional Gov. Oleh Kiper. It was the first recorded attack on the port since March 11.

Moscow’s forces attacked settlements in the Kherson region with artillery, mortars and drones throughout the day, killing three civilians and injuring 10, according to the Kherson Regional Prosecutor’s Office.

They also shelled Kostyantynivka with artillery, killing one civilian, said Serhii Horbunov, head of the city’s military administration.

As the freed men entered the medical facility, people holding signs and photos of their relatives shouted names or brigade numbers, seeking any news of a loved one. The returning men inspected the photos, and a serviceman said he shared a cell with one of those on the sea of portraits held out toward him.

“Vanya!” cried Nataliia Mosych, among the gathered relatives, “My husband!”

Budget

Continued from page A1

adequate minimum education, local resources fill the gap between state aid and the cost of an adequate instruction, the institution said.

“Governor Hochul has

invested more funding in Northville schools than any governor in state history,” said Emma Wallner, deputy press secretary for Hochul, in a written statement. “Since taking office in 2021, this Administration has increased Foundation Aid in Northville by 8% and increased total aid

by 24%, for a total of \$5.7 million for Northville schools in the 2025-26 school year. The Governor will continue to work with local communities to improve education outcomes for our kids and make New York more affordable.”

According to state officials, this year the Foundation Aid formula would have allocated less funding for Northville schools, generally due to significant declines in student enrollment. There are 126 fewer students enrolled in Northville schools, a 24% decrease com-

pared with 18 years ago when Foundation Aid was first enacted, but funding has continued to increase, state officials said.

According to the state, the governor and the state Legislature stepped in to maintain the “hold harmless” policy that ensures districts do not get less Foundation Aid than the previous year. State officials said every district, even the ones with declining enrollment, gets an increase of at least 2%.

However, Northville Superintendent Sarah Chauncey pushed back and maintains

that the formula does not adequately allocate funding for the district, saying that the village’s land wealth skews the amount of funding the district receives.

“The budget we put before voters was lean, with no luxuries, just the funds required to run our schools and keep up with costs outside the district’s control,” the statement said. “Specifically, we left three vacated positions unfilled and reduced the hours of the BOCES cafeteria manager, utilized \$785,000 from reserves and fund balance, and trimmed programs wherever possible without harming students.”

State Assemblyman Matt Simpson, R,C-Lake George, said his team in Albany is currently trying to see if they can help the district in regard to state aid.

“We want to see all of our school districts be able to succeed in their programming,” said the lawmaker whose district includes Northville. “We want to ensure that their budgets are in line. Currently, I’ve got staff in Albany that [are] going through the numbers after I got the call from Northville after the vote to go through those numbers to see if there’s any avenue that we can pursue to help them in this situation.”

Last year, Northville policymakers made \$212,160 in budget cuts after the first proposal failed, in order to get below the district’s tax cap and only need a simple majority of the vote to pass the revised budget. This included funding adjustments for health care, legal services, equipment, substitutes and programming. The second proposal got the needed votes.


The board plans to convene Monday morning at 10 a.m., despite the Memorial Day holiday.

Residents expressed mixed feelings about the failed budget on a Leader-Herald Facebook post earlier last week reporting that the budget had failed.

“Some of you clearly don’t have kids in school,” a comment under the name Stephanie Ellsworth said. “Although I do agree with reducing some of the admin salaries, that is not the only option. Without passing the budget, programs, sports, extracurricular can and will more than likely be cut.”

Others expressed irritation with the results, citing last year’s budget issues.

“Gee I wonder what will happen,” a comment under the name Roxanne VanHusen said. “History is about to repeat itself.”



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