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November 2020

Legislature restarts FY21 budget process

By John Robertson

With first quarter revenue numbers in hand and a new forecast for the year, the House and Senate Ways and Means committees on Oct. 21 held a joint hearing on the revised fiscal 2021 budget submitted by the governor earlier in the month.

Legislative leaders have not announced a schedule for taking up a budget bill for the year that started on July 1. Gov. Charlie Baker asked that a final spending plan be sent to him by Thanksgiving.

So far this fiscal year, the state has been operating under a series of interim budgets approved by the Legislature, with the most recent providing funding through the end of November.

The governor sent a revised \$45.5 billion revenue and spending plan to the Legislature on Oct. 14. The plan updates the recommendations he had filed in January (H. 2), before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and the related recession.

The updated tax forecast of \$27.6 billion takes into account recent economic activity and state tax collection data through the first quarter of the fiscal year. The forecast was revised following a revenue hearing held by state budget officials on Oct. 7 at which the Department of Revenue, the Massachusetts Taxpayers Foundation and other fiscal experts offered up-to-date outlooks for the economy and state finances.

The governor's revised budget is based on a projection that state tax revenues will be \$3.6 billion lower than originally estimated, due to the economic slowdown caused by the pandemic. Overall, the updated budget would be balanced through a combination of increased federal assistance, use of \$1.35 billion from the state's \$3.5 billion stabilization fund, and changes to a range of appropriation recommendations.

The governor's revised budget would fully fund the <u>commitments made by the</u>

governor and legislative leaders in July to protect the two main municipal and school aid programs. The budget would fund Unrestricted General Government Aid at \$1.13 billion and allocate to individual cities and towns the same amount paid in fiscal 2020.

Chapter 70 school aid would be funded at \$5.28 billion, ensuring that all municipalities and school districts would receive at least the same amount as was paid last year. Some school districts would receive aid increases due to inflation and enrollment under the current formula. In total, Chapter 70 school aid would increase by \$107 million.

The Division of Local Services posted revised Cherry Sheet estimates for cities and towns and for regional school districts based on the new budget recommendation to help municipalities move forward with setting tax rates for fiscal 2021.

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Registration opens for 2021 MMA Annual Meeting & Trade Show

By John Ouellette

Registration is now open for the 2021 MMA Annual Meeting & Trade Show, which will be held virtually on Jan. 21 and 22.

The MMA has also launched a new Annual Meeting website with the very latest information about the dynamic, timely and engaging conference, which will use a highly interactive online platform.

The Annual Meeting will retain its many popular features:

- A range of informative and timely workshops
- Compelling and inspiring speakers
- A general business meeting and important policy discussions
- A robust Trade Show featuring the latest services and solutions for cities and towns



People can register for the 2021 virtual event on the MMA's new Annual Meeting website.

There will also be creative networking opportunities – and fun!

For this year's event, attendees will participate from their homes and offices, eliminating the need for travel

■ ANNUAL MEETING continued on 25

2020 MMA Board of Directors

The MMA Board of Directors holds regular meetings in Boston, followed by a meeting of the Local Government Advisory Commission with the administration. For information on the board's activities, call the office of MMA Executive Director Geoff Beckwith at 617-426-

Executive Committee

Cecilia Calabrese, MMA President Councillor, Agawam

Adam Chapdelaine, MMA Vice President Town Manager, Arlington

Ellen Allen, MMA Immediate Past President Selectman, Norwell

Michael Bettencourt, MSA First Vice President Select Board Member, Winchester

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Executive Director's Report

COVID-19 is more than a virus - it's a systemic threat

Over the past eight months of pandemic pressure and stress, my wife and I have tried to carve out time each weekend to hike and walk on local trails, mostly in municipal conservation lands and nearby state parks. Our explorations have brought unexpected rewards, and our new ritual has helped us experience the beauty of Massachusetts in a

rich, close-to-home kind of way. Walking in nature has provided a welcome respite and moments of peaceful quiet.

On a recent autumn afternoon, however, after strolling several miles of trails in a conservation area abutting a cemetery, we were heading back to our car, and our peaceful mood was replaced by an aching sadness. At an open end of the cemetery, we noticed a half-dozen newer headstones, each erected in recent years, and each adorned with flowers, rocks and tokens of remembrance. The names were different, yet the ages of those honored there were remarkably similar. Fifteen years old, 24 years old, 22 years old, 30 years old, 17 years old. All survived by their parents, all leaving broken-hearted friends and family members. All taken by the opioid epidemic.

This led me to reflect on how the coronavirus has eclipsed the opioid crisis as the most urgent and visible public



By Geoffrey Beckwith

health emergency confronting our communities. Less than 12 months ago, the public health statistics that were top-ofmind were the Department of Public Health reports on opioid-related overdoses and deaths. Between 2015 and 2019, opioid-related overdoses killed 9,936 people in our cities and towns. During that time,

communities and agencies mobilized and collaborated to reverse the rising numbers, but the tragic introduction of fentanyl made the challenge even greater, and as of January of this year, deaths had plateaued at about 2,000 per year. That's 2,000 headstones a year, and more heartache and suffering than can be imagined.

With COVID-19 infecting more than 150,000 Massachusetts residents, taking the lives of nearly 10,000 of our neighbors in just seven months, we can understand why the spotlight has diverted away from the opioid epidemic. But that does not make it right.

A report by the American Medical Association released last month is attempting to reignite the spotlight. The AMA issued the following warning: "[T]he opioid crisis is continuing and may even be accelerating during the pandemic. In addition to the ongoing challenges

■ DIRECTOR'S REPORT continued on 22

ne Beacon

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Bias expert Risha Grant to deliver Friday keynote

Bv John Ouellette

Motivational speaker and author Risha Grant, a renowned expert in the areas of diversity, inclusion and bias, will deliver the Friday morning keynote address during the MMA Annual Meeting & Trade Show on Jan. 22.

Her interactive session, "Get Rid of the BS (Bias Synapse)," will teach participants how to recognize and acknowledge their biases, while giving them easily applicable tools to move past those biases. Although diversity can be an uncomfortable topic, Grant's approach helps attendees understand the concept without feeling judged.

Whether implicit or conscious, bias is the number one threat to humanity and any organization's success, she says. She created the term "Bias Synapse" - or BS - as a way to explain our brain's involvement in the processing and validation of bias.

"My edgy equity training facilitates honest, authentic conversations about unconscious bias, inclusive cultures and microaggressions," she says on her website. "My goal is to lead my audience to a new place of respect, understanding, authenticity and inclusion."

Grant will share her perspectives as a woman of color and truths about unconscious bias, microaggressions and other actions that perpetuate discrimination and inequality. She'll also offer practical advice for finding respect, understanding and inclusion.

"Dancing around a topic is not my forte," she says on her website. "I like to wade right into your BS (and mine) to explain how bias is a roadblock to acceptance and inclusion."

She calls sexual harassment, racism and bias "the dire consequences of a dearth of diversity in the workforce."

Grant's presentation will give attendees:

- · An understanding of diversity and inclusion
- · A thorough awareness of their biases
- · A realization of how their biases originated
- · A recognition of the symptoms and results of bias

- · Tools to address bias internally and externally
- Tips to navigate the "hot spots" of workplace diversity

She asks difficult but necessary questions, such as:

- · How do we address the present social unrest and racial injustice, and what are some steps we can take now to promote inclusion?
- What are the next steps that we need to take as individuals to help to repair the rifts and move toward a society that's both diverse and inclusive?

"My edgy equity training facilitates honest. authentic conversations about unconscious bias, inclusive cultures and microaggressions," Grant says on her website. "My goal is to lead my audience to a new place of respect, understanding, authenticity and inclusion."

Motivated by her passion to recognize her own BS and correct societal "isms" like racism, sexism, classism and "plain old stupidism" - Grant says her mission is to expose the value of diversity and inclusion while shining a light on the economic impact it creates.

Grant is the CEO and founder of Risha Grant LLC, an award-winning, full-service diversity communications, recruitment, training and consulting firm. She has nearly 20 years of experience working in "one of the reddest states in the nation," Oklahoma, where she covers diversity, inclusion and bias as community correspondent and host of the "Risha Talks" series on KJRH in Tulsa. Through her Tulsa World column, "Risha Talks" and as a contributor to Black Enterprise magazine, she has motivated and educated numerous corporations,



Risha Grant

associations and universities. Her clients include the NBA's Oklahoma City Thunder and the University of Oklahoma.

In her book, "That's BS! How Bias Synapse Disrupts Inclusive Cultures and the Power to Attract Diverse Markets," and her corresponding "BS" video series, Grant has led audiences to new places of respect and understanding.

Grant earned degrees from Kansas State University (broadcast journalism) and Northern Oklahoma College (mass communications), both of which she attended on basketball scholarships.

She has been named a 2019 Top 100 HR Influencer by Engagedly, a 2018 Inclusive Leadership Award Winner, and Entrepreneur of the Year in 2017.

Short videos of Grant speaking can be found on her YouTube channel.

Framingham Mayor Spicer to address WEMO event

By Jennifer Kavanaugh

Framingham Mayor Yvonne Spicer, who has transcended racial and gender barriers throughout her career, will discuss how women leaders can promote diversity, equity and inclusion during the 2021 Women Elected Municipal Officials Leadership Symposium, which will be part of the MMA Annual Meeting & Trade Show.

Spicer will lead a discussion and question-and-answer session on Jan. 21 starting at 3 p.m., during the Annual Meeting's only ticketed event. She will reflect on her unconventional political path, her experiences as a woman of color, lessons she has learned as a science educator, Framingham's efforts to become a more equitable and inclusive city, and what women leaders can do to advance racial justice in their own communities.

"I look at ways in which I inspire other women, particularly young women, and that's something that I don't take lightly," Spicer told the MMA in a recent interview. "I have not only the responsibility of doing my very best in this job, but I also carry generations with me on my shoulders. I carry women and women of color."

Spicer has achieved many firsts. She was the first African-American woman to graduate from the State University of New York at Oswego. She became Framingham's first mayor in 2018, after the town switched to a city form of government. And she is the state's first African-American woman to be popularly elected as mayor.

Before entering politics, Spicer had an education career in science, technology and engineering. A native of Brooklyn, New York, Spicer spent 16 years working for the Framingham public schools as a teacher and administrator, and then



Framingham Mayor Yvonne Spicer

as a school administrator in Newton. In 2007, she began her decade-long tenure as vice president for advocacy and educational partnerships at the Museum of Science. She has a bachelor's degree in industrial arts and technology and a master's degree in technology education, both from SUNY Oswego, and a doctorate in educational leadership from UMass Boston.

In 2010, former Gov. Deval Patrick appointed Spicer to the Massachusetts STEM Advisory Council, and Gov. Charlie Baker reappointed her in 2017. She has served as an advisor to the National Governors Association and as president of the International Technology and Engineering Educators Association. With a focus on economic issues, Spicer has also served on the Massachusetts Business Roundtable and the state's Economic Empowerment Trust Fund.

"I bring so many different lenses to this work, and I'm actually quite grateful for that," Spicer said.

She was recently recognized with one of five Women of Courage and Conviction Awards given by the Greater Boston Section of the National Council of Negro Women (see related story, page 26).

Spicer has lived in Framingham for 35 years and, before becoming mayor, she had served as a Town Meeting member and as a member of the Standing Committee on Ways and Means and the Framingham Human Relations Commission.

As mayor, Spicer said she derives energy from networking with other city leaders, ranging from the state's dozen or so women mayors to big-city leaders across the country, including prominent mayors of color, such as Atlanta Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms, Washington, D.C., Mayor Muriel Bowser and New Orleans Mayor LaToya Cantrell.

"We are all trying to do the same thing, which is run our cities in a way that is honoring who we are as women, and as women of color, but also against adversity," Spicer said. "And sometimes, there's quite a bit of adversity."

Though people of color make up more than 30% of Framingham's population, Spicer said, the municipal government's workforce was 91% white when she arrived. She has since required officials to document efforts to attract and retain diverse candidates with each hiring request. She has also gotten City Council approval to fund a diversity, equity and inclusion officer, and the city is now advertising for that senior-level position.

Spicer has signed an executive order with her Health Department to declare racism a public health crisis, and signed a similar resolution with many other mayors across the state.

"If we're going to make systemic and sustainable change, then we really need to be consciously focused on strategies that we're doing to hire new people, things that we're doing within purchasing and all of the practices that we have," Spicer said.

Applications open for spring MMA-Suffolk Finance Seminar

The application period opened in October for the fifth MMA-Suffolk Municipal Finance Management Seminar, set to take place either virtually or in a location north of Boston in March 2021.

The five-week program, held on Fridays, is designed for municipal employees looking to deepen their understanding

and knowledge of municipal finance. Topics include accounting, property assessment, financial management, and costing out labor contracts.

The application, instructions and details are available on the MMA website as a fillable PDF. The application deadline is Jan. 15 at 5 p.m.

The fourth Municipal Finance Management Seminar, scheduled to be held in Southborough, will begin virtually on Nov. 6.

Questions about the MMA-Suffolk Certificate programs can be directed to Katie McCue at kmccue@mma.org.

MMA comments on Ch. 70 required local contribution

By John Robertson

The MMA and dozens of municipal and school officials from across the state responded to a request for comments as two key state agencies – the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and the Division of Local Services – work on a report that will evaluate how the state calculates the required local contribution to schools under Chapter 70.

The report is required under the Student Opportunity Act that became law last year. The deadline for comments was Oct. 16, and the DESE-DLS report is due to be filed with the Legislature by Dec. 1.

The Student Opportunity Act did not change how the local contribution is calculated for the purpose of determining what share of the foundation spending standard is paid from the local property tax and other local revenues and what share is paid from state revenues. The DLS-DESE study was designed to take a

look at that part of the formula that has been increasingly problematic for many municipalities and school districts.

In its comments to the DLS and DESE, the MMA noted that the Student Opportunity Act includes important statutory provisions to ensure that municipal and regional districts are shielded from annual school aid reductions and are provided with a minimum increase in aid each year. These provisions are necessary to ensure that all districts can maintain adequate education programs over time, without unsustainable overreliance on the property tax, which is capped by Proposition 2½. These provisions also improve the predictability of school funding and educational programming for districts.

The MMA urged the DLS and DESE to take into consideration the following when preparing the report and recommendations:

1. The hold harmless and minimum aid

provisions in the Student Opportunity Act are critical to the adequacy and sustainability of local school funding and education programming across the Commonwealth and should be maintained.

- 2. The high reliance on the property tax to fund schools in many districts should be mitigated, and special attention must be given to cities and towns approaching their levy ceiling and with limited local tax capacity. This is a special concern in western and central Massachusetts and other rural parts of the state. The total local contribution to the statewide foundation budget should be reduced to provide a more equitable split between state and local contributions.
- 3. The minimum state school aid contribution toward the local foundation budget should be maintained to preserve predictability.

The DESE is posting comments submitted on this issue on its website. ●

Select Boards discuss best practices for hiring town manager

On Oct. 27, the <u>Massachusetts Select</u> <u>Board Association hosted a free virtual training covering best practices in hiring a town manager</u>, one of the most important jobs for select boards across the state.

The session covered the implications that the public hiring process has for town manager candidates, the importance of using professional recruiters in the hiring process, developing interview questions, setting a salary range, and negotiating and drafting a contract.

The panelists were:

- Norwell Selectman Ellen Allen, second vice president of the Massachusetts Select Board Association and immediate past president of the MMA
- Auburn Town Manager Julie Jacobson, president of the Massachusetts Municipal Management Association
- Danvers Town Manager Steve Bartha, second vice president of the Management Association

Attorney
 John Clifford,
 a partner at
 Clifford &
 Kenny, LLP

The panelists shared a number of resources available to select boards, including the ICMA's Recruitment Guidelines and the Management Association's Massachusetts Recruitment Guidelines Handbook.

They also responded to a range of questions on issues like residency requirements for town managers, best practices for engaging recruitment firms, the impact of COVID-19 on manager recruitment, and annual reviews for town managers.



The Massachusetts Select Board Association hosted an Oct. 27 webinar covering best practices in hiring a town manager, with panelists (clockwise from top left) Attorney John Clifford, Norwell Selectman Ellen Allen, Danvers Town Manager Steve Bartha and Auburn Town Manager Julie Jacobson.

More than 80 select board members attended the webinar.

Contact: MMA Member Services Coordinator Isabelle Nichols at inichols@mma.org

CCC adds hearing on proposed cannabis delivery

By Brittney Franklin

The Cannabis Control Commission announced on Oct. 27 that it would hold a second public hearing, on Nov. 13, focused on proposed delivery regulations.

The CCC postponed its final vote on the matter from Oct. 29 to Nov. 30.

Those interested in participating in the Nov. 13 hearing must complete an online request form by Nov. 10 at 5 p.m. Speaking opportunities will be available to the first 90 submissions received, and any additional speakers will be placed on a waiting list due to time constraints.

The proposed changes to the state's Adult Use of Marijuana regulations (935 CMR 500.000) would create two different license types authorized to deliver to consumers.

A Marijuana Courier License is a new iteration of the previously named Delivery-Only License that is currently within the commission's regulations.

The commission's draft regulations would add a new Marijuana Delivery Operator License, which would allow businesses to purchase marijuana and finished marijuana products at wholesale from cultivators, craft marijuana cooperatives, product manufacturers, and microbusinesses and sell orders directly to consumers.

The proposal would specifically differentiate these license types from the license for marijuana retailers.

The commission has already considered comments submitted from more than 80 individuals and organizations on delivery alone during a public comment period that ended on Oct. 15.

The MMA submitted comments to the CCC on Oct. 15, and urged the commission not to adopt the new marijuana delivery operator license (wholesale delivery license).

"According to the enabling legislation, a marijuana retailer is the only marijuana establishment that was contemplated to deliver marijuana or marijuana products directly to consumers," the MMA stated.

"The expansion of the wholesale delivery license within the newest iteration of regulations is not in line with existing regulatory definitions and is seemingly in direct conflict with the statutory framework.

"Although the wholesale delivery licensee could sell directly to con-

sumers acting essentially as a retailer, municipalities would not be able to count those licensees against their retail cap if they have one."

In an Oct. 15 letter to the CCC, a group of 19 legislators wrote, "While we deeply appreciate your diligent work as individual commissioners and as a regulatory authority, we believe that the wholesale delivery license category proposed in the draft regulations was not contemplated, nor supported, by the enabling legislation. We are also concerned that the enormity of this change and its potential disruption to the nascent retail marketplace and to local communities has not been fully vetted or realized given the abbreviated period for public comment, and we would ask that you revisit your timeline to allow for additional public hearings and acceptance of written testimony."

At an Oct. 20 commission meeting to discuss delivery policy, Commissioner Jennifer Flanagan moved to postpone consideration of the delivery license regulations until January 2023, citing concerns about 23 distinct discussion points and noting that there were still too many questions surrounding delivery, but her motion was defeated, 3-1.



The Cannabis Control Commission will vote Nov. 30 on proposed delivery regulations.

Although the wholesale delivery licensee could sell directly to consumers acting essentially as a retailer, municipalities would not be able to count those licensees against their retail cap if they have one.

Commissioner Britte McBride said the new delivery framework is a way to fulfill the commission's mandate to promote an equitable industry, as both delivery licenses would be available exclusively to Certified Economic Empowerment Applicants and Social Equity Program Participants for a minimum of three years.

Administration announces Partnerships for Recovery

On Oct. 22, the Baker-Polito <u>administration announced a \$774 million Partnerships for Recovery plan</u> to stabilize and grow the Massachusetts economy.

The administration says the plan uses both existing and proposed funding sources to support five key recovery efforts: getting Massachusetts back to work; supporting small businesses; revitalizing downtowns; supporting housing equity and stability; and fostering innovation.

"This plan represents a comprehensive strategy to get people back to work and to support the small businesses hit the hardest by the pandemic, putting the Commonwealth on a path to recovery," said Gov. Charlie Baker. "By leveraging existing tools and programs and implementing new ones, this plan will allow us to make critical resources and assistance to those who need it most available now."

Some \$115 million in new funding will be directed to small businesses and downtowns hit hardest by the pandemic, including more than \$25 million to get people back to work, according to the administration.

The following are highlights of this Small Business and Main Street component:

- \$50.8 million in Small Business Grants to help the hardest-hit businesses
- \$10 million to continue funding the <u>Shared Streets and Spaces</u> program
- \$10 million for local recovery planning grants to support cities and towns

- \$10 million to support cultural facilities such as museums and theaters
- \$8.3 million in small business technical assistance to help businesses access grant programs and loans, and to help build business management skills, resilience and other support in navigating pandemic impacts
- \$2.3 million to provide personalized technical assistance to woman- and minority-owned businesses

Another \$25 million to get people back to work includes:

- \$10.4 million to engage Massachusetts employers by expanding workforce partnerships with large employers in target sectors to create aligned statewide training-employment pathways
- \$9.2 million to subsidize internet for low-income populations and to expand hot spots in unserved and underserved communities
- \$3.2 million to modernize MassHire virtual pathways to assess and connect unemployment insurance claimants to appropriate services and supports
- \$2 million to bolster manufacturing training by purchasing a standardized virtual training program to increase workforce for the manufacturing sector
- \$300,000 to supplement \$8.4 million for Career Technical Institutes included in the governor's fiscal 2021 budget bill to help close the skills gap for skilled technician jobs and align training to industry needs



At a State House press conference on Oct. 22, Housing and Economic Development Secretary Mike Kennealy discusses a \$774 million plan to stabilize and grow the Massachusetts economy. (Photo courtesy Joshua Qualls/Governor's Press Office)

In addition, the plan would:

- Direct \$323 million in existing capital programs as part of the response "to continue doing more of what works"
- File for \$122 million through the revised state budget recommendation to supplement existing funding in support of struggling main street businesses and skill-building for residents
- Steer \$43 million in federal, trust and other state funding toward the state economy's most critical needs
- Commit \$171 million to keep people safely housed during the pandemic

Litigation continues regarding Census 2020 end date

By Brittney Franklin

The 2020 U.S. Census will likely be remembered as the most controversial count in history, as litigation over census end dates has been ceaseless over the past month.

The U.S. Census Bureau lost 47 days of field operations between March 18 and May 4 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, the bureau announced in April that it would extend field operations through Oct 31.

The bureau also asked Congress to delay



William Galvin

its deadline – from Dec. 31 to next April 30 – for the statutorily mandated report of population data used for congressional reapportionment and redistricting. The House of Representatives passed such a bill, and a Senate committee held a

hearing in July to do so as well.

In August, however, the bureau abruptly changed course, stating that field operations would end on Sept. 30 so that its report could be delivered by Dec. 31. In response, numerous advocacy organizations, local governments, counties and Native tribes filed lawsuits.

The move by the Census Bureau came after President Donald Trump announced his intention to exclude undocumeted immigrants from the population base for reapportionment. The latest change

■ CENSUS continued on 27

Administration announces Eviction Diversion plan

Five days before the Commonwealth's pause on evictions and foreclosures was due to expire, the Baker-Polito administration has announced a comprehensive set of resources, known as the Eviction Diversion Initiative, to support tenants and landlords during the financial challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

At a press event on Oct. 12, the administration said the goal of the initiative is to keep tenants in their homes and to support the ongoing expenses of landlords.

The administration is committing \$171 million during the current fiscal year, with \$112 million in new funding to support new and expanded housing stability programs during the remainder of the year.

The funding includes:

- \$100 million to expand the capacity of the Residential Assistance for Families in Transition program to provide relief to renters and landlords impacted by COVID-19
- \$48.7 million to HomeBASE and other rapid rehousing programs for when tenants are evicted and are at risk of homelessness
- \$12.3 million to provide tenants and landlords with access to legal representation and related services prior to and during the eviction process, as well as community mediation to help tenants and landlords resolve cases outside of court
- \$6.5 million for Housing Consumer Education Centers, the "front door" for those facing a housing emergency
- \$3.8 million for the Tenancy
 Preservation Program, to provide case
 management support and to act as
 a neutral party to help tenants and
 landlords come to agreement

In order to ensure that tenants are aware of available resources, the administration kicked off a public information campaign, including a new option to call the Massachusetts 2-1-1 information hotline, where operators trained to answer questions and connect residents to the agencies that administer RAFT and the Emergency Rental and Mortgage Assistance program.

Information is available online at <u>www.</u> <u>mass.gov/CovidHousingHelp</u>.

The administration said the eviction diversion strategy was developed by a cross-agency team assembled in coordination with the Massachusetts Trial Court and reflects input from a range of stakeholders.

Gov. Charlie Baker said the strategy "has been designed to be user-friendly and easily accessible for tenants and landlords in need." He said the program "would not be possible without the Legislature's foresight in granting flexibility for the RAFT authorization."

Trial Court Chief Justice Paula Carey said the court "has modified its procedures to provide for a two-tier process that will enable tenants and landlords to access resources and mediate their disputes in order to preserve tenancies."

Gov. Charlie Baker said the strategy "has been designed to be userfriendly and easily accessible for tenants and landlords in need."

"The Trial Court has worked to increase its technological capacity to handle these cases safely when parties come into court and to provide those without assistance with information and access to technology where needed," Carey said.

New investments will expand the capacity of the RAFT program and increase the maximum benefit available through RAFT from \$4,000 to \$10,000 per household, with a goal of helping more families stabilize their housing for six months, or until the end of June if there are school-age children in the household.

New funding will also expand capacity at the nine regional Housing Consumer Education Centers to provide housing counseling and coordinate with community mediators, legal services and caseworkers. Income-eligible tenants and landlords will also be able to access legal representation and related services

as they navigate the eviction process.

The administration said the RAFT program is being updated to improve the turnaround time on applications.

In coordination with the Trial Court, the administration is working to launch a new Community Mediation program that will be available prior to a court filing, and supplement court-provided mediation that is generally available after a filing has been made. The administration will also provide funding to the Trial Courts to support bringing back judges to help handle caseload once the moratorium ends and to add additional housing specialists to help mediate agreements.

The existing Tenancy Preservation Program will be expanded to serve a broader population of vulnerable households.

Massachusetts will also provide additional funding for post-eviction diversion, helping households to find new housing quickly and prevent a longer period of homelessness. HomeBASE, the Commonwealth's rapid rehousing benefit, and the Strategic Prevention Initiative will be expanded and continue to offer financial assistance and stabilization case management services to families as they are in the process of securing stable housing. A new temporary emergency program will also provide funds to households for periods of up to 12 months to assist with moving expenses, rent, including first or last month's, or security deposit, while transitioning into a stable housing situation.

When the state moratorium expired, a moratorium established by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention became effective in Massachusetts. Through December, the CDC moratorium prevents evictions for non-payment for qualified tenants who submit a written declaration to their landlord. Courts will accept filings and process cases, and may enter judgments, but will not issue an order of execution (the court order that allows a landlord to evict a tenant) until after the CDC order expires. Protection is limited to households who meet certain income and vulnerability criteria.

Local officials get briefing on Eviction Diversion plan

Housing and Economic Development Secretary Mike Kennealy and representatives from the Department of Housing and Community Development briefed municipal officials on Oct. 14 on the governor's new Eviction Diversion Initiative.

The webinar identified resources to support tenants and landlords during the financial challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

For the <u>webinar</u>, Kennealy was joined by Housing and Community Development Undersecretary Jennifer Maddox; Roberta Rubin, chief counsel for the Department of Housing and Community Development; and Amy Stitely, chief of programs for the Department of Housing and Community Development.

The program was moderated by Ryan Ambrose, policy development manager and legislative liaison at the DHCD.

Panelists responded to numerous questions from nearly 100 local officials from across the state.

The administration announced the Eviction Diversion Initiative on Oct. 12 and has launched a web portal for the program.



Housing and Economic Development Secretary Mike Kennealy discusses efforts to help renters and landlords weather the ongoing economic crisis during an MMA-sponsored webinar with local officials on Oct. 14.

DHCD urges communities to conduct hearings, process permits

By Brittney Franklin

The Department of Housing and Community Development issued an advisory to all municipalities on Oct. 5 urging them to "conduct remote hearings on all applications for permits or approvals related to housing production."

The advisory, from Undersecretary Jennifer Maddox, cites "the critical need for housing production in the Commonwealth" and points out that Chapter 53 of the Acts of 2020, enacted in April, allows permit-granting authorities to conduct meetings and public hearings remotely, consistent with the governor's March 12 order suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law during the COVID-19 state of emergency.

Chapter 53, enacted at a time when only essential businesses were allowed

to be open, suspended requirements that municipal boards conduct public hearings on permit applications within a specific time and tolled any constructive approvals.

The advisory comes on the heels of Gov. Charlie Baker filing a fiscal 2020 supplemental budget bill (H. 5014) on Sept. 30 with sections (19-24) that would recommence hearing timelines and constructive approvals as of Dec. 1, 2020. Permit-granting authorities that are unable to conduct meetings and public hearings remotely, due to lack of broadband or other technical limitations, would be able to apply for a waiver from the secretary of Housing and Economic Development.

Municipal officials and planning departments report that they have

been working diligently under difficult circumstances to create new processes and procedures in order to hold remote meetings and hearings. Many communities have been able to successfully conduct meetings and hearings and continue to process permit applications.

Any communities with a backlog of permit applications or hearings are advised to start working through pending applications before Dec. 1 if possible.

The MMA will keep members apprised of legislative action on H. 5014 and the language regarding hearing timelines and the tolling of constructive approvals. ●

MMA seeks responses to biennial Chapter 90 survey

By Alandra Champion

The MMA's biennial Chapter 90 Local Road Funding Survey has been sent out to chief municipal officials and public works and highway department officials in all 351 Massachusetts cities and towns.

The survey asks communities what it would cost to keep their local roads in a state of good repair.

Securing adequate funding for the Chapter 90 local road and bridge program is a top priority for the MMA and municipal leaders across the Commonwealth. As the MMA looks to a new legislative

session beginning in January, it is preparing a campaign to increase annual Chapter 90 authorizations in fiscal 2022 and beyond to help cities and towns maintain safe local roads and build strong local economies.

As the MMA makes its case to legislators and the public, accurate and up-to-date information is essential to demonstrate the resources needed to maintain local road infrastructure. Responses to previous Chapter 90 surveys have been crucial in highlighting the condition of local roads and how much funding is needed to properly maintain them. The survey has allowed the MMA and local

officials to have a concrete figure to use when advocating for more funding.

More than 70% of communities responded to the 2018 survey, and the MMA hopes to hear back from even more municipalities this year.

Local officials are urged to return completed surveys as soon as possible. The MMA has emailed a link to the survey to chief municipal officials and public works and highway department officials.

Contact: MMA Legislative and Research Assistant Alandra Champion at 617-426-7272, ext. 121, or achampion@mma.org

COVID, budgets, housing are priorities during briefing

By John Ouellette

Local budgets, the increase in COVID-19 cases in Massachusetts and across the country, and the urgent need for housing for individuals and families affected by the current recession were the key topics of an MMA-convened conference call on Oct. 20 with nearly 200 municipal CEOs and high-level state officials.

Sean Cronin, senior deputy commissioner at the Division of Local Services, outlined the governor's proposed revisions to his original state budget recommendation for fiscal 2021, which he had filed in January (H. 2). The recommendation would uphold a July agreement by legislative leaders and the administration to at least level-fund the two primary local aid accounts: Unrestricted General Government Aid and Chapter 70 education aid.

The amended budget proposal would hold UGGA at \$1.13 billion and allocate to individual cities and towns the same amount paid in fiscal 2020. In total, Chapter 70 would increase by \$107 million, to \$5.28 billion, and ensure that all school districts receive at least the same amount paid last year.

The budget process is now in the hands of the Legislature, where House and Senate leaders are working to set a schedule for approval in November.

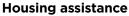
Cronin noted that the revised budget would change some charter school amounts because it is based on updated enrollment numbers, rather than the preliminary numbers the governor used in the budget bill he filed in January, before the COVID-19 pandemic.

On Oct. 14, the same day the governor amended his budget plan, the DLS released new municipal Cherry Sheets based on his recommendations, identifying all local aid components and assessments by type. Cronin said cities and towns can use these numbers to make any necessary adjustments to their budgets, finalize those budgets if necessary (by town meeting or city/town council), and submit their property tax rates to DLS for approval.

"We feel strongly that you should be able to move forward and set a tax rate almost as you normally would," he said. He said the DLS typically processes about half the local tax rates in December – and could do so again this year – but does not have the capacity to significantly increase the number that gets processed so late in the year.

Asked if it's OK for communities to use previously released local aid numbers, in order to avoid the process of making relatively small budget adjustments, Cronin said doing so is fine so long as the local aid amounts are no higher than

those in the updated Cherry Sheets.



Jennifer Maddox, undersecretary at the Department of Housing and Community Development, reviewed the administration's Eviction Diversion Initiative, a new program announced on Oct. 12 intended to support tenants and landlords during the financial challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic following the Oct. 17 expiration of the Commonwealth's pause on evictions and foreclosures.

"We had a housing crisis before the pandemic," she said. "The pandemic exacerbated the issue."

The administration is committing \$171 million during the current fiscal year to the Eviction Diversion Initiative to help keep tenants in their homes and to support the ongoing expenses of landlords, she said.

Program funding will expand the capacity of the Residential Assistance for Families in Transition program as well as HomeBASE, which can offer financial assistance, and other rapid rehousing programs. It will also provide tenants and landlords with access to legal representation and related services, fund Housing



State leaders and municipal CEOs from across the state convened on Zoom to discuss continuing challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. Pictured are (top row, l-r) Sean Cronin, senior deputy commissioner at the Division of Local Services; MMA Executive Director Geoff Beckwith; Jana Ferguson, assistant commissioner at the Department of Public Health; (middle row, l-r) Dr. Larry Madoff, medical director at the Department of Public Health; Roberta Rubin, chief counsel at the Department of Housing and Community Development; Housing and Community Development Undersecretary Jennifer Maddox; and (bottom row) Lt. Gov. Karyn Polito.

Consumer Education Centers, and provide case management support.

The administration has kicked off a public information campaign to make tenants and landlords aware of available resources, including a new option to call the Massachusetts 2-1-1 information hotline. Details are also available online at www.mass.gov/covidHousingHelp.

Maddox urged local officials to help spread the word about the Eviction Diversion Initiative, particularly through social media. She said the DHCD is working on an online dashboard to provide data about the extent of the eviction and foreclosure problem.

One local official said as many as half of evictions trigger a board of health response, at a time when local health departments are already overwhelmed, and asked if emergency funding is available to bring on additional housing inspectors. Cronin said such COVID-related costs would be reimbursable through the federal Coronavirus Relief Fund, through Dec. 30 (unless extended), and that the state has lifted the cap on hours that can be worked by retirees (960) for the duration of 2020.

■ CEO BRIEFING continued on 32

MassDEP proposes changes to waste ban regulations

By Ariela Lovett

The Department of Environmental Protection last month announced proposed regulatory changes that would add mattresses and textiles to the list of materials banned from disposal, incineration or transfer for disposal at a solid waste facility in Massachusetts.

The amendments to 310 CMR 19.000 would also lower the threshold for the existing ban on disposal of commercial organic (food) materials so that it applies to facilities that generate one-half a ton per week or more of these materials for disposal. Entities that exceed the threshold would be required to arrange for composting of the excess material.

The proposed regulatory changes would go into effect on Oct. 1, 2021.

The regulatory text, draft revised guidance, background document and public hearing notice are available on the DEP website. The background document includes anticipated impacts on municipalities.

In its fiscal impact analysis, the DEP determined that municipalities may experience increased costs due to the proposed mattress ban, but, in most cases, the cost of recycling mattresses would be minimal on a net basis, and might be less than disposal.

Some local officials are expressing concerns that the mattress ban is premature and should not be finalized before statewide mattress recycling infrastructure is in place.

Virtual public hearings on the proposed regulatory changes are scheduled for Nov. 9 at 6 p.m. and Nov. 12 at 10 a.m. The public hearing notice includes Zoom registration information.

Testimony may be presented orally at the public hearings, or in writing, by Dec. 4 at 5 p.m., to dep.swmp@mass.gov or to John Fischer, MassDEP, 1 Winter St.. Boston 02108.

The MMA will be submitting comments about municipal implications and concerns.

The DEP is also working on finalizing the 2020-2030 Solid Waste Master Plan, and is reviewing comments received on the draft plan during the public comment period that closed on Sept. 15. ■

MMA Annual Meeting to feature tailor-made virtual exhibit hall

Though the MMA's virtual Annual Meeting & Trade Show will look different this year, it will still feature your favorite exhibitors offering the latest products and services of interest to the cities and towns of Massachusetts.

This dynamic, interactive event will offer many opportunities to connect with companies, associations and government agencies in a tailor-made virtual exhibit hall. Local officials can meet virtually with friends and make new contacts while learning about a wide range of products and services available to help solve municipal challenges.

The Trade Show experience will enable visitors to easily schedule live, one-on-one conversations with exhibitors, watch videos about companies and products offered, click on links to company websites, or just browse.

The MMA will have two types of Trade Show "booths" available to exhibitors for the 2021 MMA Annual Meeting: corporate booths and government agency/nonprofit booths.

For more information about becoming an Annual Meeting sponsor or signing up for an exhibit booth, contact Karen LaPointe at klapointe@mma.org or 800-884-1498, ext. 154.

T4MA hosts Transportation and Climate Initiative forum

By Ariela Lovett

Transportation for Massachusetts, a statewide transportation advocacy organization, is hosting a Zoom meeting on the Transportation and Climate Initiative for rural communities on Nov. 10.

The TCI is a multi-state compact intended to reduce carbon emissions from transportation and to invest fees on these emissions to create better, cleaner and more equitable transportation systems across the region.

Massachusetts is part of the leadership team moving the initiative forward, with representatives from the Baker-Polito administration helping to shape a pending memorandum of understanding between the states as well as other program specifics.

The MMA is a co-sponsor of the T4MA event, which will focus on what TCI means for rural communities in Massachusetts and their multifaceted transportation needs. The agenda includes an overview of the TCI, remarks from Sen. Adams Hinds of Pittsfield and a Baker-Polito administration official, and rural context-setting from the Franklin Regional Council of Governments.

Participants will engage in moderated breakout sessions and will be polled to identify the clean transportation investments that would most benefit their communities.

The event will run from 7 to 8:30 p.m., and registration and details are available online.

At the MMA Annual Business Meeting in January, MMA members adopted a



The MMA is a co-sponsor of the Nov. 10 event, which will focus on how the Transportation and Climate Initiative will benefit rural communities.

policy resolution on transportation that supports TCI as part of broader climate change mitigation and transportation reform goals.

Nearly a third of municipalities have used Shared Streets

By Ariela Lovett

Cities and towns across the Commonwealth are continuing to benefit from grants awarded through the Baker-Polito administration's <u>Shared Streets and Spaces</u> emergency grant program.

The program, which was launched on June 10 and is administered through the Department of Transportation, provides technical and funding assistance to help Massachusetts cities and towns conceive, design and implement changes to curbs, streets, on-street parking spaces, and off-street parking lots in support of public health, safe mobility and renewed commerce. The grants have played a role in local efforts to help local businesses expand outdoor spaces and weather the COVID-19 pandemic.

On Oct. 6, MassDOT announced the final round of funding for the program, in the amount of \$1.2 million. With the final awards, the program totalled \$10.2 million in grants to fund 124 projects in 103 municipalities across the Commonwealth, of which 60% are designated Environmental Justice communities.

Gov. Charlie Baker, Lt. Gov. Karyn Polito, and Secretary of Transportation Stephanie Pollack visited Essex Street in Salem, one of the award recipients, to announce the final round of funding.

Their visit highlighted two projects the city completed with funding it received in earlier rounds of the program: expanded sidewalks and safety measures on Essex Street, and a shared streets and safe routes to school project including new protected bicycle lanes and signage.

Pollack said the program has had "an overwhelming response" from cities and towns, "and has really stretched our thinking about how all of us can work together to make our streets, sidewalks and parking areas serve as many diverse purposes as possible for as many different kinds of needs as possible."

Putting it to work

The city of Gardner received \$48,000 to create outdoor dining spaces and waiting areas for downtown restaurants, barbers and salons, which have diminished service capacity under the COVID-19 state of emergency.

In a prepared statement, Community Development Director Trevor Beauregard said, "Our hope is the additional outdoor seating will assist the restaurants and other businesses in our downtown with expanding their capacity this fall and throughout next year."

Mayor Michael Nicholson emphasized the economic development potential of Shared Streets grants.



Natick Public Works employees install the first phase of a traffic calming trial in the town center on Sept. 25 after receiving a \$25,000 Shared Streets grant. (Photo courtesy Joshua Ostroff)

"This funding will not only help us in the immediate future as we deal with the current pandemic, but can also help us start to grow our outdoor opportunities in our downtown area and allow us to see how we can expand on programs like this in the future to bring people into our downtown."

The town of Billerica received two Shared Streets grants. The first was for \$7,000 to purchase tents for use by local restaurants, free of charge, to expand outdoor seating. After the outdoor dining season concludes, the tents will be used by the Recreation Department and Council on Aging.

Billerica's other grant, for \$20,000, is being used to upgrade signage and crosswalks around Billerica schools.

"Working collaboratively, the School Department and Highway Department identified areas where repainting existing crosswalks and purchasing new signs would make it easier for children to get to school," said Billerica Community Development Director Rob Anderson.

Natick's \$25,000 Shared Streets grant is being used to conduct a traffic calming trial in Natick Center. Feedback and results from the trial will help inform future designs for Natick Center streets.

The benefits envisioned by the test include shorter crossing distances, improved sight lines, and safer vehicle movements, according to former Natick Select Board Member and former MMA President Josh Ostroff.

"Our hope is the additional outdoor seating will assist the restaurants and other businesses in our downtown with expanding their capacity this fall and throughout next year."

Gardner Community
 Development Director
 Trevor Beauregard

Applications for the Shared Streets and Spaces program were accepted on a rolling basis from June 10 through Sept. 22, with projects to be mostly or completely implemented by Oct. 9. ●

How to reach us

We encourage readers to send their comments, story ideas, news items, and notices of upcoming events to The Beacon, attn: Beacon Editor, 1 Winthrop Square, Boston, MA 02110, or editor@mma.org.

Revere survivors' stories address COVID skeptics

By Lisa Capone

Even after more than 200,000 deaths in the U.S. over six months, some continue to wonder aloud if COVID-19 is really as bad as public health officials make it out to be

The city of Revere – among the state's hardest-hit communities – decided to address these questions head on, launching a video project this fall called "Revere COVID-19 Stories," featuring the sometimes-harrowing real-life experiences of survivors.

Elayna O'Neil, 66, shares the emotional and physical impacts she still experiences following a 45-day hospital stay in May. Marvin Pena, a 35-year-old marathon runner who spent five weeks in intensive care and 23 days in a coma, talks about the impacts of the illness on his small business. Sara Restrepo, a professional singer, talks about her three trips to the hospital to be put on oxygen and how her husband also got the virus. Britney Sao, 19, who contracted the virus along with her parents, talks about the 45 days her father spent in the ICU.

The growing collection of four- to 16-minute vignettes – with one in Spanish – is designed to combat skepticism and curb the spread. The stories, told to and aired by Revere TV, the city's cable access channel, are aimed at ending debate about the disease's virulence and encouraging people to adhere to public health protocols.

A densely populated city of 54,000 just north of Boston, Revere led the state in late July, with a COVID testing positivity rate of 6.25%, and remains a hot spot. "Earlier this spring, I was driving down Revere Beach Boulevard with a bullhorn," Mayor Brian Arrigo said. "We're really just trying to use every resource we have to get the point across that this is real, it's impacting our city, and it's probably not going away anytime soon."

"My feeling through all of this is that I know people are tired of hearing from me," he said. "They want to hear from people who are their neighbors."

Arrigo and Revere TV Executive Director Robert Dunbar said feedback on social media and around town has been positive since the first four stories went live in September.

"The people who ended up showcasing their stories were cultivated through relationships in the community and our contract tracing team," Arrigo said, noting that credit for the storytelling platform idea and efforts to recruit participants goes to Revere's Emergency Response Team. "I'm really grateful to people being willing to share their stories."

Efforts are underway to spotlight additional survivors' stories in the weeks ahead.

"As long as we have to tell these stories, we're going to continue to do them," Arrigo said. "With colder weather approaching ... it's really important for people to hear these stories, especially if we see cases starting to swipe back up again."

Revere is still designated as high-risk, but is making some progress, with an average positivity rate of 3.82% over the last two weeks of September.



Elayna O'Neil, 66, shares the emotional and physical impacts she still experiences following a 45-day hospital stay in May due to COVID-19.

The four residents' stories are posted on Revere TV's YouTube channel and air daily on community TV channels. The station and city are also sharing links to the video clips on social media.

Dunbar said he's not aware of other local cable access stations doing similar projects, but he knows others in the region are considering it.

"Hopefully, there's a growing interest to collect more of these throughout the region," he said, noting that the project also has "historical value – a time capsule aspect to it."

In tandem with the storytelling project, Revere TV has been working since the summer with a group of Revere High School students who interviewed people in the community about COVID-19.

"Even if it has an effect on two people or one person, that can have a larger effect on more people," he said. ●

Human Services Council to discuss emergency housing on Nov. 12

The economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic have resulted in many people being unable to cover their housing costs, and the need for emergency housing solutions is growing more urgent as the weather gets colder.

In response to this need, the MMA Human Services Council will host a free Zoom webinar to discuss emergency housing on Nov. 12 from noon to 1 p.m.

Participants will hear about statewide emergency shelter programs and eviction prevents efforts, including the Baker-Polito



Elizabeth Valenta

administration's new Eviction Diversion Initiative to support tenants and landlords during the financial challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Panelists will also cover regional emergency rental assistance efforts.

Speakers will include Elisa Bresnahan from

the Department of Housing and Community Development discussing state-level efforts, and Elizabeth Valenta with the Regional Housing Services Office discussing regional efforts.

The program will also feature a legislative update from MMA Senior Legislative Analyst Brittney Franklin.

This webinar is free to attend, but advance registration is required.

Contact: MMA Member Services Coordinator Isabelle Nichols at inichols@mma.org

Municipalities reassign staff to aid in remote meetings

By Lisa Capone

As COVID-19 gripped Massachusetts late last spring and Amherst officials began making decisions to cancel summer camps and sports activities, Town Manager Paul Bockelman said municipal recreation staff would likely be reassigned to other duties. A few months later, some are undertaking tasks far removed from engaging children through sports and craft projects.

While idled staff might be likely candidates for layoffs in times of tight budgets, Amherst recreation staffers are instead working alongside colleagues in IT, learning technical skills needed to run virtual Town Council meetings. It's an arrangement that keeps them productively employed and adds to the cadre of trained staff Amherst needs to run the 45 to 50 hours of meetings the town now conducts via the online platform Zoom each week.

"That department, because of declines in programming and enrollment, may have seen some layoffs," said Amherst Communications Manager and Community Participation Officer Brianna Sunryd. "Why not take these team members already onboard and develop them to take on IT roles?"

She added that about a dozen additional town employees have taken on new Zoom responsibilities in their home departments during the pandemic.

As municipalities across Massachusetts moved meetings online last spring, a worrisome reality quickly set in. The territory was not only unfamiliar, but it relied on technology vulnerable to mischief by a new brand of vandals. "Zoombombing" is among several words coined during the pandemic, and municipal meetings in Leominster, Milford and Salem have been among the victims.

"We had a couple of early incidences that were only visible to internal staff," Sunryd said. "Because of our awareness of Zoombombing, we had set up most of our security protocols in test environments prior to going live, luckily."

Sunryd, who has a background in IT, and the town's IT Department conducted about 15 group and one-on-one training sessions in security issues and other best practices with key town staff – people who became "power users of

Zoom" in various departments. The town broadened the reach of this training by recording and sharing it throughout municipal government and developing "quick reference guides" that include user tips and Zoom platform updates, Sunryd said.

"We had some folks who had never used the technology at all

and some who were very fluent," she said, adding that all "have really risen to the occasion."

Managing the Zoom boom

There appears to be something of a statewide trend to rely on non-IT staff to take on Zoom support roles. Brookline Deputy Town Administrator Melissa Goff said the Select Board there "flipped to the virtual world pretty quickly after the governor made his executive order that allowed us to have remote meetings."

"We had some board members who were good at it and some board members who had never done it before," she said, adding that, with weekly Select Board meetings routinely lasting five or six hours, "being able to provide the public engagement that citizens are expecting has been important."

Goff cited Administrative Services Director Devon Williams' willingness to dive into a new role as "the main way we have been able to continue these meetings." Previously, Williams would support the Select Board with agenda-setting and other administrative duties. "Now, she is in the thick of the meetings," and thus far has managed to keep the Select Board Zoombomb-free.

Like other municipalities, Brookline adopted the webinar version of Zoom early on for enhanced security. In addition, the town's IT Department trained staff in various departments in aspects such as setting up secure Zoom meetings and managing possible problems.

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Communications Manager Brianna Sunryd (bottom left) plays a central role in Amherst's efforts to shift its meetings online over the past eight months.

In Medfield, senior officials such as the town administrator, assistant town administrator and town planner are wearing new hats as Zoom support staff.

Pre-pandemic, "the town planner would never attend the [Conservation Commission] meetings," said Medfield Town Administrator Kristine Trierweiler. "Now, she sets up the Zooms, posts the meetings, and stays on in case there are any technical issues."

With sometimes more than three Zoom meetings scheduled the same evening, Trierweiler foresees a potential need for more help.

Acton Town Manager John Mangiaratti said the number of meetings each night compelled his town to go a different route. After the town moved to Zoom in the spring, Mangiaratti said IT Department staff were soon working 12-hour days between supporting an entirely remote workforce by day and staffing two to three meetings for Acton's nearly 40 boards and committees each night. The town decided to use federal Coronavirus Relief Fund funding to hire someone dedicated to Zoom.

"This virtual meeting organizer helped take the burden off our IT staff, and it really opened up access to public participation," said Mangiaratti, adding that, while CARES Act funding ends Dec. 30, "we're evaluating options of how we may be able to continue that resource into the spring."

Tapping outside help is a strategy else-

continued on next page

\$5.9M in grants announced to address food insecurity

Continuing its ongoing efforts to support a resilient, secure local food supply chain in Massachusetts, the Baker-Polito administration on Oct. 28 announced \$5.9 million in grants to address urgent food insecurity for residents across the state as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The funding is being awarded as part of the fourth round of the \$36 million Food Security Infrastructure Grant Program, created following recommendations from the COVID-19 Command Center's Food Security Task Force.

With this fourth round of grants, the program will have awarded a total of \$17.7 million.

The goal of the Food Security Infrastructure Grant Program is to ensure that

individuals and families throughout the Commonwealth have equitable access to food, especially local food. The program also seeks to ensure that farmers, fishermen and other local food producers are better connected to a strong, resilient food system to help mitigate future food supply and distribution disruption.

The fourth round of the grant program includes 47 awards for a total of \$5,895,554 to fund investments in technology, equipment, capacity and other assistance to help local food producers, especially in the distribution of food insecure communities. When evaluating the applications, considerations included equity, economic impact and need, sustainability and scalability of efforts, and ability to support producer read-

iness to accept federal <u>Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program</u> and <u>Healthy Incentives Program</u> benefits.

Eligible grantees include entities that are part of the Massachusetts local food system, including production, processing and distribution, the emergency food distribution network, Buy Local, community and food organizations, school meal programming, urban farms and community gardens, nonprofits, and organizations that provide business planning, technical assistance and information technology services.

The Request for Responses for project proposals closed on Sept. 15. Applications submitted before the proposal deadline will continue to be evaluated for future rounds of funding.

MMA to publish Massachusetts Municipal Directory this fall

The MMA's 2020-2021 Massachusetts Municipal Directory, a comprehensive resource for municipal data and for connecting with colleagues, will be published online late this month.

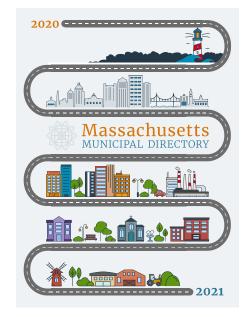
The MMA has adopted the new electronic format for the first time this year due to the COVID-19 emergency. The directory is being published later than usual in order to provide the most up-to-date information from the many postponed municipal elections this year.

This year's directory will include all of the customary information, including contact information for local officials and demographic and financial data for each of the state's cities and towns. There are also sections devoted to regional school districts, state and federal government agencies, and relevant professional organizations, as well as a guide to products and services for municipalities. The MMA greatly appreciates the help of local officials across the state who have used the MMA's online tool to update the information for their communities over the past couple of months.

When published, the directory will be made available online as a password-protected PDF to members and others who receive the publication. The MMA will send emails with login information and instructions for accessing the document.

The directory is included in the subscription to the Municipal Advocate and is automatically made available to Advocate and Beacon recipients. For members, MMA dues cover the cost of that subscription. Others interested in the Massachusetts Municipal Directory may visit www.mma.org/about-mma/publications to purchase online access.

- Jennifer Kavanaugh



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where, as well. Boston University's IT Department, for example, volunteered to assist with Brookline's six-session, 250-member Town Meeting on Zoom in June.

The town of Nantucket used an "additional services" clause in its public access TV contract to provide technical setup and staffing of Zoom meetings

for 10 permit-granting and regulatory boards. Nantucket Operations Administrator Erika Mooney said the town has an additional 20 non-regulatory bodies, and she manages calendars and schedules Zoom for all 30 (six to seven meetings per day). Mooney also provides one-on-one Zoom training for those who need it. It's a new role on top of her pre-pandemic work, and one she'll likely

keep for a while.

"I know there are a lot of people who are anxious to meet in person again," she said. "They aren't comfortable with the technology, or they miss the in-person meetings. But I don't see us stopping the Zoom meetings any time soon.

Nantucket has meetings booked on Zoom through next June.

WEMO leadership conference features AG Healey

By Isabelle Nichols

A keynote from Attorney General Maura Healey kicked off the second annual Women Elected Municipal Officials leadership conference – "Rising to the Challenge Together" – on Oct. 16.

Via Zoom, Healey spoke to nearly 100 women elected leaders about racial equity and opportunities for communities to receive civil rights training through her office.

She also discussed the importance of protecting election activities and the right to vote ahead of the November election, and the need to build greater equity around access to technology in the Commonwealth.

Healey was joined by a number of her staff members to respond to questions on topics including conducting remote public meetings, the potential for permanent changes to the open meeting law to allow for virtual meetings, trainings available through Healey's office, housing equity, and addressing issues of racial bias in predominantly white

communities.

The keynote was followed by a series of group discussions facilitated by the WEMO committee using Zoom's breakout rooms feature. Topics included using technology to govern and build community, and promoting race, equity and inclusion in your community.

In the breakout sessions, participants were able to discuss challenges they face in their communities and share resources with one another.

Resources

- For questions about the open meeting law, contact the Division of Open Government at OpenMeeting@mass. gov.
- For assistance with civil rights training, contact Alicia Rebello-Pradas at alicia.rebello-pradas@mass.gov.
- <u>Link to the Attorney General's Office</u> <u>of Community Engagement</u>
- Link to information about trainings offered through the Community Engagement Office



Attorney General Maura Healey discusses racial equity and civil rights during an Oct. 16 Zoom meeting with nearly 100 women elected leaders.

- <u>Groton Select Board Statement on Diversity</u>
- Town of Milton Proposal for Establishment of Advisory Committee on Equity and Justice for All (PDF)
- Town of Milton Proclamation of Day of Reflection and Witness For Seeking Equity and Justice for All
- <u>Town of Amherst Community Safety</u> <u>Working Group</u> ●

Kayyem to speak at Management Association Fall Conference

Juliette Kayyem will be the featured speaker at the Massachusetts Municipal Management Association's Fall Conference on Nov. 19.

Kayyem is the senior Belfer lecturer in international security at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, where she is faculty director of the Homeland Security Project and

Security and Global Health Project. She was President Barack Obama's assistant secretary for intergovernmental affairs at the Department of Homeland Security and has more than a decade of experience organizing government response to major crises.

Town managers and assistants, along with their staff and elected officials, have been leading the way through the COVID-19 public health crisis since



Juliette Kayyem



Jim Malloy

Christopher Coleman

March, and they face new challenges every day.

Kayyem will focus on the resiliency needed to keep performing this important job. She'll talk about how to maintain hope and optimism, and why it's so important for town managers to continue to lead during this evolving crisis.

Also at the meeting, Lexington Town Manager Jim Malloy, newly installed as president of the International City/County Management Association, will give an update on ICMA's ongoing response and support during the ongoing pandemic and the upheaval following the murder of George Floyd. He'll be joined by ICMA Vice President Christopher Coleman, the town administrator in Westwood. Malloy is the first Massachusetts manager to

serve as president of the ICMA.

The meeting will run from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Information and a registration link has been sent to Management Association members.

Contact: MMA Senior Member Services Coordinator Denise Baker at dbaker@mma. org

MMHR Labor Relations webinar features bias expert

By Isabelle Nichols

Risha Grant, an author and renowned expert in the areas of diversity, inclusion and bias, was the keynote speaker for the Massachusetts Municipal Human Resources association's annual Labor Relations seminar on Oct. 29.

Grant's interactive keynote, "Get Rid of the BS (Bias Synapse)," addressed issues such as unconscious bias, inclusive cultures, and microaggressions, and taught participants how to recognize, acknowledge and move past their biases.

Grant responded to questions about how to start conversations with peers about white privilege, attracting diverse employment candidates to largely white communities, effectively challenging microaggressions, and encouraging people to speak up and act against instances of bias.

Following the keynote, attorneys Katherine Hesse, Mike Maccaro and Paul King of Murphy, Hesse, Toomey & Lehane gave a labor law update, covering recent court cases, and statutory and regulatory changes. Topics included the Families First Coronavirus Response Act and Gov. Charlie Baker's Executive Order (No. 45) establishing out-of-state travel rules.

Maccaro, Hesse and King responded to questions such as how to handle the deluge of unemployment fraud cases, and how to properly manage employee leave under the FFCRA.

The three-hour Zoom webinar concluded with a legislative update from MMA Legislative Director John Roberston, who provided an update on the state budget for fiscal 2021, the status of COVID-related personnel and labor bills, the status of police reform bills, and the MMA's response to the significant number of unemployment fraud claims affecting municipalities.

Robertson responded to questions about the projected decline in state revenue, setting local property tax rates without a state budget, fall town meetings, and



Risha Grant discusses unconscious bias during the Massachusetts Municipal Human Resources association's annual Labor Relations seminar on Oct. 29.

civil service reform.

Nearly 100 human resources professionals and members of the labor community registered for the Labor Relations Seminar. The registration fee includes access to the webinar recordings and any followup materials. The recordings are available only to those who paid for the meeting.

ATFC Annual Meeting begins with focus on successful budget practices

By Denise Baker

The Association of Town Finance Committees kicked off its Annual Meeting on Oct. 22 with the first webinar of a three-part series.

Northborough Town Administrator John Coderre gave the featured presentation, "Best Practices for a Successful Budget Process." Coderre, who presents at the meeting each year, began by explaining the "three-legged stool' approach to sound budgeting practices, with the key factors being finance policies, a financial trend monitoring system and forecasting, and a capital improvement plan.

Coderre stressed the importance of drafting and approving a set of financial policies and getting buy-in from all stakeholders: select board, finance committee, capital planning committee and school committee. The agreed-upon policies make challenging budget discussions more manageable.

Financial trend monitoring is key, Coderre explained, because you have to know where you've been before you can look forward. He suggested a 10-year financial review, reflecting the time period that ratings agencies look at when determining a town's credit rating.

Crafting and adopting a capital improvement plan rounds out a solid budget process, he said. Coderre emphasized the importance of working with all of the stakeholders on a CIP, including the school committee and superintendent.

Coderre discussed the difference between fiscal distress and a fiscal crisis. Fiscal distress is normal, he said, but a fiscal crisis is the result of not reacting to distress by making budget corrections

Also at the meeting, which was held via Zoom with about 100 members in attendance, MMA Legislative Director John Robertson provided a budget and legislative update.

The evening began with the association's business meeting and election of the Governing Board for the coming year (see related story, page 26). Bolton Advisory Committee member and ATFC President Brian Boyle thanked the board for their work throughout the year and provided updates to the membership.

FISCAL DISTRESS VS. CRISIS

* FISCAL DISTRESS IS THE TEMPORARY IMBALANCE BETWEEN THE LEVEL OF FINANCIAL RESOURCES THE TOWN HAS COMMITTED AND ITS POTENTIAL AVAILABLE RESOURCES

* FISCAL CRISIS OCCURS WHEN A LOCAL GOVERNMENT FAILS TO MAKE APPROPRIATE AND TIMELY ADJUSTMENTS AND CAN NO LONGER PAY ITS BILLS OR PROVIDE EXISTING LEVELS OF SERVICE

The Association of Town Finance Committees members learned about the differences between fiscal distress and a fiscal crisis during an Oct. 22 webinar presentation by Northborough Town Administrator John Coderre.

The ATFC Annual Meeting series continued on Oct. 29 with a session with Division of Local Services Senior Deputy Commissioner Sean Cronin and several DLS bureau chiefs presenting an overview of their functions and offering best practices for finance committee members.

The third webinar, "Keeping Schools Safe" on Nov. 12, will focus on school issues with Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Senior Associate Commissioner Russell Johnston.



Strategies for addressing symptoms of SAD

By Jayne Schmitz

It's that time of year when we turn back the clocks and seemingly turn off the lights. And while Dec. 21 – the winter solstice and the shortest day of the year – is not too far off, it will be mid-March before we get back to an even split of daylight and darkness.

For some, the lack of daylight leads to Seasonal Affective Disorder, or SAD. This year, the shorter, darker days come at a time when many are already struggling with the challenges of life during a pandemic. A June <u>survey published by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control</u> and Prevention found that the COVID-19 pandemic has caused a surge in mental health issues across the country, with at least 40% of Americans reporting that they are struggling with mental health or substance use.

In an Aug. 21 article published by the

Cleveland Clinic, psychologist Scott Bea says the upcoming months might be even tougher for those who have been experiencing SAD year after year, which he attributes to spending less time outdoors or not having as many occasions to get out of the house.

"People are already experiencing lowgrade depression – we're already feeling some helplessness, hopelessness, irritability, confinement and soon, the winter months will be added to all of it," he says in the article. "With shorter daylight hours and limited exposure to daylight, those who experience seasonal affective disorder are going to really be challenged."

SAD is diagnosed four times more often in women than men, and it is far more prevalent in people who live far north or south of the equator, according to the National Institute of Mental Health's

Information Resource Center. Just 1% of those who live in Florida suffer with SAD, but the number increases to 9% of those who live in New England or Alaska.

Other risk factors for SAD include having depression or bipolar disorder, or a family history of SAD or other types of depression.

According to the National Institute of Mental Health, SAD is a type of depression displaying a recurring seasonal pattern, not a separate disorder.

Symptoms include a lack of energy, excessive daytime sleepiness, overeating, weight gain, craving carbohydrates, and social withdrawal (feeling like "hibernating"), according to the Johns Hopkins Health System.

Staff members experiencing the symp-

■ MIIA continued on 25

8 best practices for protecting facilities in winter

By Stephen Batchelder

The cold weather has returned, and many municipal and school buildings remain closed. While it is easy to focus on more pressing matters, these buildings need continued vigilance to avoid costly repairs and property claims.

Typical sources of property-related losses during winter closures are frozen and burst pipes; unit ventilators that are not working properly; mechanical failure of circulator pumps, boilers and sump pumps; and corrosion or other failure of water feed connections. Unfortunately, these risks of loss are heightened during periods of extended closure as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

MIIA has identified the following eight best practices to prevent property damage during winter facility

closures:

Cleaning and sanitizing: Develop a plan for proper cleaning and sanitizing of buildings to prevent the spread of viruses. This will be dependent on the occupancy and frequency of use of each building.

Staff walk-throughs: Prepare a plan to have staff perform regular walk-throughs during any closure period. These checks should go through every part of the building, looking for signs of security vulnerabilities, water leakage or intrusion or other physical damage, cold areas, or pest or vermin intrusion. Staff should have a list or map of key shut-offs, such as water lines and gas, as well as copies of building response plans, with key vendors and contacts.

Heat setbacks: Set heat setbacks to an appropriate level to prevent freezing. This could vary by zone, depending on

the building, insulation levels, air circulation, number of heating vents/radiators, etc. Generally, 55-58 degrees would be acceptable. Vestibules and cold spots may need to be set higher or have supplemental (and safe) heat sources brought in. Do not add additional tripping or electrical hazards with supplemental heat.

Doors and windows: Properly close and secure all doors and windows, particularly exterior doors and windows and fire doors. Some interior doors may be left open if it helps to circulate heat into unheated areas. These areas should be documented on a building closure plan to ensure that everyone is aware of which doors are to remain open and which are required to be closed.

Water line inspections: While

■ FACILITIES continued on 27

Mass Innovations

Tufts partners with 2 cities to launch COVID testing

Tufts University and the cities of Medford and Somerville on Oct. 29 announced they have entered into a novel partnership that will bring COVID-19 surveillance testing to the cities' public school systems.

The program will use a new, more efficient pooled testing method developed by Tufts in collaboration with Broad Institute of MIT and Harvard University. Program leaders say the new method could improve and expedite the communities' ability to return to and maintain in-person education.

The program, developed and validated by Tufts, will enable the Medford and Somerville school districts to administer tests to students, faculty and staff for approximately one-third of the cost of individual testing.

The program is currently scheduled to begin in January; details are being finalized between Tufts and both cities.

For the month of December, the university has agreed to support individual testing of Medford and Somerville teachers, custodial and administrative staff, health professionals, and other student-facing essential personnel working in person in the schools, as well as students learning onsite. The university will split the cost with the cities.

In a statement, Tufts University President Anthony Monaco, a renowned geneticist who designed the strategy, said, "This cost-effective solution provides a way for local school districts to hold in-person instruction while confidently knowing they will be able to identify and control potential spread of the virus."

The frequent and systemwide testing of school staff and students will increase identification of carriers – particularly those who are asymptomatic – thereby allowing the schools to intervene early and take steps to stem the virus from spreading as widely as it might otherwise.

"It is not enough to simply reopen our schools. We must open them as safely as possible and create the conditions that will help keep them open," said Somerville Mayor Joseph Curtatone. "No



Mayor Joseph Curtatone



Mayor Breanna Lungo-Koehn

student or family benefits when new virus outbreaks cause schools to see-saw from open to closed and back again. This universal testing plan plus the robust contact tracing we are putting in place is designed to break that cycle and better protect student and staff health."

Medford Mayor Breanna Lungo-Koehn added, "Our school staff testing partnership with Tufts has allowed us to get our teachers and students back into the classroom with the added safety of knowing about a potential staff exposure in our schools, and with the ability to be proactive in our efforts at containing the spread of COVID-19."

Booth mayors expressed their appreciation to Tufts.

"It is not enough to simply reopen our schools. We must open them as safely as possible and create the conditions that will help keep them open."

 Somerville Mayor Joseph Curtatone

Here's how the new program will work:

 Under the direction of school staff and/or EMTs, teachers and high school students will sample the front part of their noses with a noninvasive swab; PK-8 students will be swabbed by a nurse or EMT.

- Eight swabs will be packaged into a single tube and sent to Broad Institute, which will analyze the group of swabs together.
- If the pool of samples comes back positive, all the people in that pool will be retested individually, which will enable health authorities to isolate the positive case(s) in the pool.

The cities' health directors will manage follow-up, which will include contact tracing and isolation for positive cases, and quarantine support for close contacts according to state and federal guidelines.

Even with the retesting required after a pool tests positive, the program is less expensive than large-scale individual testing because it requires only a fraction of the analysis, according to the university and local officials.

Medford public schools reopened in a hybrid model, while Somerville schools are currently virtual, with a plan to phase in in-person classes through a hybrid model starting in early December.

Tufts will make available to each city a scalable technology platform it has developed to support the scheduling, order submission, labeling and monitoring of near real-time results from large-scale testing operations. This software platform is presently in use at Tufts and three other colleges in Massachusetts.

To develop the pooled testing program, Tufts officials said they took what they learned from the university's own COVID-19 testing program, which has completed more than 120,000 individual tests since it began in August.

This monthly column highlights some of the innovative approaches and strategies Massachusetts municipalities are using to deliver services and solve problems. If you know of a Mass Innovation that could be featured in this column, email us at innovations@mma.org.

Around the Commonwealth

Lawrence

City offers scholarships to address child care gaps

As parents struggle to afford child care during the pandemic, the city of Lawrence has established a scholarship fund to help lower-income families access safe, affordable options.

On Sept. 30, Mayor Daniel Rivera announced a new \$400,000 fund to subsidize day care services for 200 children through the end of the year. The city is working with local organizations and licensed child care providers to select and help enroll the families.

"We have to do things to make sure people's lives don't slide backwards and aren't being put in pain," Rivera said. "For us in Lawrence, having so many people who are essential workers – or who, if they want to work, they can't work from home – child care is essential to them."

In August, the city of 80,000 received media attention after closing an unlicensed 25-child daycare in a home. The mayor said the city needed to shut down the operation and emphasize the importance of licensed care, but he didn't want to engage in the public finger pointing that occurred. Families were simply making the best of a bad situation, he said.

"We weren't going to criminalize poverty," Rivera said.

The demands of remote and hybrid learning have only exacerbated the stresses on families this year. Financially struggling families don't have the option to pay for private schools or neighborhood learning pods, Rivera said.

"It underscores the inequity in the crisis," Rivera said. "If you're poor in this emergency, and you've got to work, there's nothing. And especially if your child's got to go in front of Zoom, it's a problem."

The city's program aims to bridge the child-care gap for what Rivera called "cliff families" – households that make too much money to receive a state



Mayor Daniel Rivera

subsidy but who can't afford market rates without help.

Families making up to 100% of the state median income can qualify for the city's scholarship fund, while, in order to receive a state subsidy, many families may make no more than

50% of the median. According to data from the U.S. Census Bureau, the state's median household income in 2018 was \$77,378. The median household income in Lawrence for that same time period was \$41,583.

The program offers a sliding-scale copay – \$12 a day on average – and families receive an average scholarship subsidy of \$44 per day, according to Maria Gonzalez Moeller, CEO of The Community Group, a Lawrence-based nonprofit. Her organization manages the scholarship program along with its child care resource and referral program, Child Care Circuit.

The effort has been placing children in licensed settings around the city, ones that feature trained staff familiar with remote learning plans, reliable internet access, socially distanced interactions with peers, nutritious food, physical activity and opportunities for outdoor playtime.

By Oct. 22, the program had distributed more than 300 applications and enrolled 81 children, and had received an additional 30 applications for processing, Moeller said.

"Overall, families and providers are very grateful for this funding and grateful for the mayor's commitment to child care as an essential service for working families in our city," Moeller said. "We think this is a great model for other communities in the state."

The mayor said he hopes to use federal Coronavirus Relief Funds to cover the cost of the scholarship program, and he would consider approaching the City Council for additional funds to continue the program into next year.

While each level of government has a role to play in COVID recovery, Rivera said, local governments must help residents solve the problems that hinder their daily lives.

"In the end, we're the closest to the people, and we have a responsibility to be helpful," Rivera said. "And we can't pass that responsibility on. We have to act on it."

- Jennifer Kavanaugh

Cambridge

Municipal parking lot transformed into community space

Starlight Square, a collaboration between the city of Cambridge, the Central Square Business Improvement District, Flagg Street Studio and a number of community partners is wrapping up a successful inaugural season.

Using scaffolding and scrim, the project this summer transformed a municipal parking lot in Central Square into a vibrant public space, a Cultural District and, during the pandemic, a place for economic recovery and community healing.

Matt Nelson, assistant to the city manager in Cambridge, said that the city got involved in the spring and had a multi-department team working on the project, referring to it as a "six-week sprint."

Michael Monestime, executive director of Central Square BID, said turning a parking lot for cars into a place for people would not have been possible without the support of City Manager Louis DePasquale and the collaboration of city departments, including Traffic, Parking and Transportation, Community Development, Finance, Public Works, Inspectional Services, and the License Commission, as well as the design and installation teams.

The Central Square BID proposed Starlight to the city on March 9, the day before the governor declared a state of emergency in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The project quickly evolved

Around the Commonwealth



Starlight Square in Cambridge (Photo courtesy Samara Vise)

to meet the needs of the community during an uncertain time.

"We knew that to give the arts organizations a fighting chance to make it to the latter phases of the Commonwealth's Reopening Plan, they needed to transition outside," Monestime said. "The community centers needed a place for summer learning and community meetings. We prioritized them early on in the design process, but, as we expected, Starlight has created space for many more organizations and services."

The square consists of four main elements: a home for the arts, outdoor dining, summer learning, and a canvas for public art. The square included an outdoor performance venue for dance, theater and other cultural programming. On Sunday mornings, the stage hosted interfaith leaders for services. The space also hosted the weekly Central Square Farmers Market and food pantries.

Monestime said numerous community organizations and businesses took part in the project and brought vital services into the space, including an outdoor youth center that helped meet child care and food security needs.

"Our summer youth employment program worked on Starlight," he said. "We hosted church, drag shows, open mics, voter registration, theater, film, dance, and music. We created Popportunity at Starlight, an outdoor retail market that ran on Saturdays. We just partnered with the city to host a flu clinic for residents. The entire

structure is wrapped in powerful public art. In a short time, it has held space for an amazing amount of community services."

Nelson highlighted how "COVID-conscious" Starlight Square has been, with strict protocols.

The Central Square BID used online crowdfunding efforts to raise funds to build and operate the project, with a matching donation from MassDevelopment. All of the performances at Starlight were free of charge, but donations were welcome.

Starlight closed its inaugural outdoor performance season on Oct. 31, but the BID and the city are working to extend their licensing agreement so that the space can be maintained as an outdoor winter market.

"Starlight was designed as a temporary installation with simple, flexible materials on purpose," Monestime said.

The team at Flagg calls it a "demonstration project" because it is reversible.

"This was as much about modeling an idea and learning about the needs of our community in this moment, as it was creating something to solve a problem," Monestime said.

- Meredith Gabrilska

Amherst

Bylaw requires large town projects to allot funds for public art

On Sept. 21, the Amherst Town Council unanimously approved a new "percent for art" bylaw that will require all municipal construction projects costing at least \$1 million to put 0.5% of their budget toward the creation and installation of public art.

The bylaw, proposed by the Amherst Public Art Commission, is intended to increase the amount of visual art, including murals, sculptures, statues and mosaics, that is publicly accessible in municipal and government buildings. The bylaw will apply to four upcoming projects in Amherst: a library expansion, a new elementary school, a fire station



Pam Acosta, a participant in Electrify Amherst!, stands in front of the electrical box she painted in 2019. Her artwork is an example of the art that the Amherst Public Art Commission was encouraging before adoption of a new public art bylaw. (Photo courtesy Amherst Public Art Commission)

renovation and a new public works building.

"It's about creative placemaking," said Amherst Public Art Commission Chair William Kaizen. "It makes places nicer spaces to live and work, and it can attract visitors and new residents."

Public art is especially important to Amherst due to its unique history.

"Amherst is a town famous for the artists it has produced, from Emily Dickinson to Robert Frost," said Kaizen.

But the town hadn't taken steps to fund the arts since the turn of the century, he said, which made the bylaw even more important in the eyes of the commission.

"It's a great thing for Amherst to do for its residents, visitors and people who work here," Kaizen said. "This is just one way for towns to contribute to the liveliness of the community."

First proposed in 2016, the original version of the "percent for art" bylaw included provision for performing arts as well as visual arts. Funding performers rather than installations proved to be too complex, however.

"Performers need a separate funding source than what is set aside for the process of building," said Councillor

■ **COMMONWEALTH** continued on 23

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Continued from page 2

presented by the COVID-19 global pandemic, the nation's opioid epidemic has grown into a much more complicated and deadly drug overdose epidemic. [There are] an increasing number of reports from national, state and local media suggesting increases in opioidand other drug-related mortality - particularly from illicitly manufactured fentanyl and fentanyl analogs. The media reports below cite data from multiple and varied sources, including national, state and local public health agencies, law enforcement, emergency medical services, hospitals, treatment centers, research journals and others. More than 40 states have reported increases in opioid-related mortality as well as ongoing concerns for those with a mental illness or substance use disorder."

The AMA is calling for the removal of barriers to evidence-based treatment for those with a substance use disorder, as well as for harm reduction services, including sterile needle and syringe services and naloxone. These are vitally important actions that must be taken to save lives. Whether they will occur in time is an open question.

The tragedy is that COVID-19 is eclipsing the opioid crisis, diverting essential health resources away from needed prevention and treatment efforts, and is amplifying our vulnerability to substance use disorders due to increased isolation, separation and mental health impacts.

COVID's broad reach

But COVID's impact on the opioid crisis is just the tip of the iceberg. The pandemic's impact on our lives and society extends far beyond the virus itself. The coronavirus is obscuring and amplifying other social crises and challenges,

inevitably delaying and detracting from public policy decisions and investments that must be made to move our communities forward.

With the U.S. and so many countries in the midst of a second or third wave, vital long-term priorities have been obscured and pushed to the side.

Transportation gridlock and crumbling road infrastructure is no longer visible to the naked eye, and with far fewer cars on the road, driving is not as miserable, and public support for immediate action and investment is waning, even though our economic future depends on it.

Global pressure for action on climate change has also waned, as communities and countries deal with the immediate threat of illness, and defer acting on the environmental dangers that will manifest themselves in 20 or 30 years.

The virus has amplified the underlying problems facing our society, too.

Here at home and across the nation, Black and Latinx residents are dying of COVID-19 in disproportionately high numbers, unmasking the health disparities caused by systemic racial inequity.

Here at home and across the nation, a privileged class of workers has been able to transition to remote work and has maintained income status and stability. Meanwhile, millions of lower-paid workers in jobs that require a physical presence must continue to use public transportation and travel to jobs that have higher exposure risks for themselves and their families. The vast majority of lost jobs belonged to the working class.

Here at home and across the nation, our political polarization has widened. Mask wearing and economic shutdowns have ignited violence and separated us further from each other. The pandemic has amplified the rhetoric and locked us in our own corners.

If you spend five minutes making a list of the priorities that have been obscured by the pandemic, and the inequities that have been amplified, you'll easily come up with a dozen or more.

And so, in the hours after our walk by the cemetery, as I reflected on these things, my perspective on the pandemic changed radically.

The pandemic is much more than a virus that can infect our bodies. It has already infected and attacked our entire system. It has slowed down our response to vital public priorities. It has accelerated deep-seated problems and injustices that were pre-existing conditions. It has created a national political crisis that is undermining federalism and intergovernmental collaboration, making it harder to defeat the epidemic.

I am deeply proud that local and state officials in Massachusetts have recognized the pandemic as a systemic threat, and have cooperated, collaborated and united to confront the crisis head-on.

We need every leader at every level throughout the nation to follow this example – your example – from the White House to all offices in the U.S. Capitol, from every governor's office to every state legislative chamber, and yes, in every city, town and village hall across the country.

With the national election soon behind us, it's time to demand unity. Without unity, the attack will continue unabated, and all aspects of our public health and society will struggle.

It's quite simple: unity against the virus is the only option. Our national leaders need to say this. Now.

The health of our entire American system depends on it. ●

MMA and Suffolk set locations for 2021 certificate program

The MMA and Suffolk University will launch their 10th year of MMA-Suffolk Certificate in Local Government Leadership and Management programs in the fall of 2021 in Barnstable and Marlborough.

This will be the fifth program in Barnstable, and the 17th and 18th programs overall.

The Certificate in Local Government Leadership and Management is a graduate-level program designed to give students a practical understanding of local government. Courses include finance, human resources management, and strategic leadership. The program is held over the course of 25 Fridays, from September through May.

The application period for the 2021 certificate programs will open on Feb. 1, and the application deadline is April 30.

For more information about the MMA-Suffolk Certificate program, contact Katie McCue at kmccue@mma.org.

MMHR's Fall Conference covers diversity, equity

By Isabelle Nichols

The Massachusetts Municipal Human Resources association held its annual Fall Conference virtually this fall as a three-session webinar series on Oct. 15, 22 and 29.

The series kicked off with a "cultural humility and dexterity" training led by Lakisha Coppedge, founder and principal of Coppedge Consulting, who gave an overview of the concepts of cultural humility and dexterity and how they can be incorporated into the workplace to recognize and redress power imbalances.

Coppedge discussed connections between historic and current racism in the United States and strategies for building stronger communities and strengthening relationships. She also covered the key role of allies in advocating for and maintaining institutional accountability.

Following the training, Coppedge was joined by Springfield Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer Talia Gee and Meghan Sullivan, managing partner of Sullivan, Hayes & Quinn, for a panel discussion about diversity, equity and inclusion in the workplace. The panelists addressed how to kick off diversity, equity and inclusion work in municipalities, changes that can be made immediately to improve inclusive spaces, and developing a diverse candidate pool in hiring. They recommended training resources, including books, articles and podcasts.

In the second webinar, Jackie Kugell, a partner with Morgan, Brown & Joy, discussed the intersection of the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Family and Medical Leave Act. She gave an overview

of FMLA eligibility and usage, and how FMLA leave comes into play in the context of reasonable accommodations under the ADA.

Kugell also covered ADA and FMLA legal decisions that municipal employers should be aware of, and responded to questions on using the FMLA for COVID-related leave requests and designating FMLA for employees without medical paperwork.

The third webinar of the series cov-

ered pay equity, with Cheryl Pinarchick and Jennifer Scully from Fisher Phillips, who gave an overview of the federal and state laws that govern compensation practices. They reviewed what constitutes compensation, legal justifications for pay disparities, and best practices for conducting a self-audit of compensation practices. They answered questions about the use of seniority systems in determining pay, frequency of compensation self-evaluations, and contractual versus statutory leave requirements.

About 130 human resources profession-

THE SECOND STATE OF THE SE

The first session of the three-part Massachusetts Municipal Human Resources annual Fall Conference on Oct. 15 included a panel discussion about diversity, equity and inclusion in the workplace involving (clockwise from top left) Lakisha Coppedge, founder and principal of Coppedge Consulting; Evelyn Rivera-Riffenburg, human resources director for Chicopee Public Schools; Springfield Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer Talia Gee; and attorney Meghan Sullivan, managing partner of Sullivan, Hayes & Quinn.

als registered for the Fall Conference. The registration fee includes access to the webinar recordings and any followup materials. The recordings are available only to those who paid for the series.

COMMONWEALTH

Continued from page 21

Andrew Steinberg, who was a Selectboard member at the time of the original proposal. "The problem was that it was so unusual that it could not be done without special legislation."

The Public Art Commission had to revisit the bylaw and then work to have it passed again, once Amherst changed its form of government to councilmanager in 2018. The rewritten bylaw was about to go to a vote when the COVID-19 pandemic forced town hall to

close to the public for several months.

"We got to a great place for this and then COVID-19 happened," Kaizen said. "I was particularly worried about it passing council because of the financial impact of COVID. But once we brought it forward it passed unanimously."

Kaizen and Steinberg both recommend that other towns look into similar bylaws.

"Where the funding is in a 20- or 30-year bond, the annual additional expense for paying back that debt is really only a few dollars a year," Steinberg said. "The best place to start is to look at some of the art pieces that have been built across the country as part of 'percent for art' projects. I think that really makes the case for it."

– Elisa Sturkie

This monthly column features regional and local news briefs related to local government in Massachusetts. To suggest a news item for this column, email editor@mma.org.

MMA continues #MaskUpMA campaign on Twitter

As we approach the holiday season with rising COVID-19 case numbers and a continuing battle against the pandemic, the MMA remains engaged in a social media campaign promoting the use of face coverings to prevent the spread of the coronavirus.

The campaign involves MMA and MIIA staff and members sharing photos of themselves with masks on and using the hashtags #MaskUpMA and #WearAMask.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that everyone over the age of 2 wear a mask in public settings, especially when other social distancing measures cannot be maintained, or when around people outside of your household. Masks can help prevent the spread of respiratory droplets that carry the coronavirus.

The MMA will be retweeting mask photos and content from members and state agencies. Please share images with MMA Digital Communications Coordinator Meredith Gabrilska at mgabrilska@mma.org.









MMA staff and their families share mask selfies as a part of the #MaskUpMA campaign. (Clockwise from top left: Public Health Liaison D.J. Wilson with his husband David, MIIA Wellness/Health Promotion Manager Wendy Gammons, Legislative Analyst Ariela Lovett, and Knox, son of Information Systems/Network Services Administrator Scott Anderson)

Managers discuss budgeting in uncertain times

"Budgeting in the Unknown" was the topic of the <u>Massachusetts Municipal Man-</u> <u>agement Association's virtual meeting on</u> <u>Oct. 14</u>, attended by nearly 100 members.

Amherst Town Manager Paul Bockelman kicked off the discussion by saying, "Don't freak out!"

A stable local government, he said, is of high value to each community. He discussed ways that he and his team in Amherst are achieving stability, such as establishing a capital reserve fund and working with the school department on multiyear forecasting.

Brookline Deputy Town Administrator Melissa Goff said she and her team have



Bedford Town Manager Sarah Stanton discusses difficult town budget decisions during an online Massachusetts Municipal Management Association meeting Oct. 14.

made use of the well-established Town-School Partnership, which includes members of the Select Board, School Committee and Advisory Committee. Goff credited this group with making some of the difficult budget discussions easier to manage while looking at both fiscal 2021 and 2022.

Bedford Town Manager Sarah Stanton focused on the tough decisions the town has made in the current fiscal year, with the intention of making future budget years less difficult. She said it was hard to see projects that have been in the works for years, such as a new police and fire station, be put on hold. A bright spot, she said, was a new online permitting system that launched during the pandemic.

Contact: MMA Senior Member Services Coordinator Denise Baker at dbaker@mma.org

MIIA

Continued from page 18

toms of SAD or other mental health issues related to dealing with the pandemic may be more irritable, lack motivation, be unable to concentrate, and be less productive.

Easing the symptoms

The good news is that there are several ways to help ease the symptoms of SAD:

- Get more sunlight. Spending time outside or near a window can help.
- Try light therapy. With a 10,000-lux light box, light therapy typically involves daily sessions of about 20 to 30 minutes, according to the Mayo Clinic. For most people, light therapy is most effective when it's done early in the morning, right after waking up. Check with your doctor for what might work best for you.
- Get regular exercise. If the weather permits, try to head outdoors during mid-day.
- · Eat healthy, well-balanced meals,

- particularly those rich in fruits and vegetables, whole grains and legumes and favoring plant fats over animal fats.
- Refrain from using alcohol and other drugs, which can worsen depression.
- Take Vitamin D. Ask a registered dietitian or your doctor about the appropriate dose.
- Try mindfulness practice. There are many books, apps, and YouTube videos to help you get started, such as "Wherever You Go, There You Are" and "Full Catastrophe Living" by Jon Kabat Zinn, "Peace Is Every Step" by Thich Nhat Hanh and "10% Happier" by Dan Harris
- Maintain social connections. Even with social distancing you can remain connected with family and friends through video chats, telephone calls, and socially distanced outdoor visits.
- Get help. If you think you may be depressed, reach out to your employee assistance program or see a health care provider as soon as possible. He or

she may prescribe antidepressants or therapy.

Once you start working on your symptoms, expect your mood to get better slowly, not right away. Feeling better takes time.

Employers can also help by taking the following actions:

- Raise awareness among employees about the symptoms of SAD.
- Encourage employees to get outside mid-day for some sunshine and exercise.
- Allow employees who have come back to the office to use their special light boxes if their doctor prescribes it.
- Remind employees of current wellbeing offerings.
- Encourage staff to take breaks and unplug.
- Promote work-life balance.

(For more, see "<u>9 Ways to Help Alleviate</u> <u>Seasonal Affective Disorder in the Work-place</u>," published by OneDigital.)

Jayne Schmitz, MPH, is MIIA's Wellness Project Manager.

ANNUAL MEETING

 ${\it Continued from page 1}$

and accommodations. And the two-day meeting will be held on a Thursday and Friday, rather than the typical Friday and Saturday.

The registration rate is also more affordable, at just \$85 per person.

Westwood Town Administrator Chris Coleman is among those who say they can't wait for the event.

"Since the beginning of the pandemic, the MMA has been providing several virtual meetings each week and continues to find new ways to improve members' experience and knowledge," he said. "I am confident that this experience will lead to a well thought out and planned virtual Annual Meeting."

Brianna Sunryd, communications manager and community participation officer in Amherst, noted several advantages of a virtual meeting.

"The online format will allow me to attend more sessions than I normally would be able to in-person, and provides easy access to the content, speakers and recordings, even after the conference has ended. Not having to travel or pay for accommodations provides flexibility and cost savings that will make the event more accessible than ever."

Weston Town Manager Leon Gaumond said, "The MMA Annual Meeting is one of the events I look forward to every year. It gives me an opportunity to hear best practices from around the state and even gives us some needed facetime with our colleagues (even if it's virtual facetime)."

The MMA Annual Meeting is a forum for learning, networking, product and services information, and a celebration of the efforts and innovations in community governance. As always, program information about the 2021 MMA Annual Meeting & Trade Show is posted on the MMA website as soon as it becomes available.

The 2021 event theme is "Leading Through Challenge and Change."

Online registration is available at www.mma.org/am-registration. Reservations will also be accepted for the Women

Elected Municipal Officials Leadership Session, which will be held on Thursday, Jan. 21 and costs \$15.

Only online registrations will be accepted this year. MMA staff are happy to help anyone who needs assistance. Attendees may use their unique username and password to register. Those who don't have a username and password, or who have forgotten them, may email amregistrations@mma.org.

MMA Partnership Program members qualify for member rates. All Partnership Program members must renew membership with payment by Jan. 1 in order to register for and attend the MMA Annual Meeting & Trade Show. Partnership Program renewals or applications will not be accepted during the Annual Meeting.

For more information on the Annual Meeting, contact Timmery Kuck at 617-426-7272, ext. 106. For Trade Show and Partnership Program information, contact Karen LaPointe at 617-426-7272, ext. 154. ●

People



Mallory Aronstein

Mallory Aronstein became the town

became the town administrator in Swansea on Nov. 2.

Aronstein most recently had been the town administrator in Dighton, where she had worked since

December 2017. Before that, she had been the assistant town administrator in West Bridgewater from 2008 to 2017, the recording secretary for the West Bridgewater Finance Committee from 2013 to 2015, and a legislative staff director from 2007 to 2008.

She has a master's degree in public administration from Northwestern University, and a bachelor's degree in political science and communication from Stonehill College.

John McAuliffe, Aronstein's predecessor, had held the Swansea role for five years before retiring due to health issues. He died on Aug. 12.



Adam Lamontagne

Adam Lamontagne

became the town administrator in Templeton on Nov. 1. He replaces **Carter Terenzini**, who retired and is currently serving as the interim town administrator in Grafton.

Lamontagne has been with the town of Templeton for just over two years, serving as the assistant town administrator for the past year, and as a municipal management fellow before that.

Lamontagne served as a city councillor in Chicopee from 2014 to 2017, and as a member of the city's School Committee from 2008 to 2014. He had also served on the city's Conservation Commission and Mobile Home Rent Control Board.

Lamontagne has a bachelor's degree in political science and a master's

degree in public administration, both from Westfield State University.



Yvonne Spicer

Framingham Mayor

Yvonne Spicer
received one of five
Women of Courage
and Conviction
Awards given on
Oct. 24 by the
Greater Boston
Section of the
National Council of
Negro Women.

The awards recognize women's leadership and volunteerism, and the five recipients were honored for their contributions in areas such as medicine, public health, community activism and community service. Spicer received the Liberating Vision Award, and the organization noted her efforts in education and advocacy.

Spicer became the state's first African-American woman to be popularly elected as mayor when she was elected as Framingham's first mayor in 2017. She is also recognized as a trailblazer in science and technology education, having started her career as a teacher in Framingham public schools in the 1980s, and emerging as an educational leader when fewer women of color were represented in the science and technology fields.

The Greater Boston Section of the National Council of Negro Women started in 1992 as one of more than 200 local sections of the national organization, which was formed to lead, advocate for, and empower women of African descent, their families and communities.



Tanya Shallop

Middleton
Assistant Town
Administrator/HR
Director **Tanya Shallop** was the first person to register for the MMA's 42nd
Annual Meeting & Trade Show, which will be held on Jan.

21 and 22. Shallop registered on Oct. 22, moments after registration opened. Shallop has been working for the town of Middleton for the past two years.

The 2021 MMA Annual Meeting will be held as a virtual event due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Colette Aufranc recently joined the Wellesley Board of Selectmen after winning a Sept. 1 special election to fill a vacant seat on the board. Jack Morgan had resigned from the board earlier this year because he was moving out of town. Aufranc had served as a representative Town Meeting member and on the town's Audit Committee. Her term on the Board of Selectmen will expire in March, when the town holds its next town election.

This monthly column highlights transitions, accomplishments and awards, and life events of municipal officials. To submit information for People, contact MMA Associate Editor Jennifer Kavanaugh at 800-882-1498 or jkavanaugh@mma.org.

ATFC elects new Governing Board



Brian Boyle

At its Annual Meeting on Oct. 22, the membership of the Association of Town Finance Committees elected its new Governing Board.

Bolton Advisory Committee Member Brian Boyle was re-elected as ATFC

President, along with the following:

- First vice president: John Trickey, Pelham
- Second vice president: Melinda Tarsi, Halifax
- Treasurer: Allan Tosti, Arlington
- Directors: Mary McBride, Billerica;
 Mary Jane Mastrangelo, Bourne;
 Kevin Sullivan, Hanson; Bernard
 Pigeon, Wareham; Mary Ellen Fletcher,
 Swampscott

People

MMHR presents Skop Award to Mary Beth Bernard

Massachusetts Municipal Human Resources presented the 35th Emil Skop Award to former MMHR Chair and Wrentham Human Resources Director Mary Beth Bernard during its annual Fall Conference on Oct. 22.

The annual award recognizes outstanding contributions to the field of municipal human resources management and a

positive impact on the association and its members.



Mary Beth Bernard

Bernard started her municipal career as the human resources director in Westwood, where she spent 11 years before becoming Foxborough's assistant town manager in 2014. Last year, she moved to her current role in Wrentham.

Throughout her career, Bernard has developed a reputation for always being willing to help, providing mentorship to

numerous peers in the field.

Bernard has been an active and loyal member of the MMHR, serving on the Board for many years and championing many new initiatives. She led the charge to change the association's name to the Massachusetts Municipal Human Resources association in 2019 and played a key role in launching the association's annual Fall Conference.

MMHR began as the Massachusetts Municipal Personnel Association in 1956, and the name was changed in 2019 to reflect the evolution of the field.

CENSUS

Continued from page 7

in dates would ensure that the Trump administration would control the reapportionment data, regardless of who wins the Nov. 3 presidential election.

On Sept. 24, a federal district court issued a preliminary injunction preventing the Census Bureau from implementing an end date of Sept. 30, and on Oct. 7 the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit stayed the lower court's ruling pending the administration's appeal.

On Oct. 13, the U.S. Supreme Court overturned that preliminary injunction, allowing the count to stop while appeals are being argued and decided in the Ninth Circuit.

In an Oct. 13 press release, the Census Bureau announced that self-response and field data collection operations for the 2020 Census would end on Oct. 16 at 6 a.m., and that more than 99.9% of housing units had been accounted for. (The bureau's 99.9% claim is being contested in a lawsuit, however, asserting that census takers were pressured to falsify data, lower standards and prema-

turely close cases.)

In an interview with Politico, Secretary of the Commonwealth William Galvin said the Supreme Court decision to stop the census count early "is going to short-change Massachusetts."

"Allowing the Trump administration to stop the count now will leave those residents uncounted for the next 10 years," he said, adding that the phrase "stop the count" is "a chilling one."

The Supreme Court is set to hear oral arguments in New York v. Trump on Nov. 30. ●

FACILITIES

Continued from page 18

conducting walk-throughs, pay attention to water connections: sinks, toilets, water heaters, refrigerator lines, water fountain lines, and washing machines. Consider shutting water down from non-essential areas if feasible until normal activities resume. (Some water lines must be drained after being shut down.) Look for loose, corroded, frayed, cracked, or otherwise damaged connections and replace prior to shutdown. Periodically run water in sinks and flush toilets.

Sump pumps: Test sump pumps at least monthly during shutdowns. Pour approximately five gallons of water into the pump and watch the float valve rise. As the float valve rises, the pump should turn on, and the water should discharge through the outlet pipe. Go outside and inspect the outlet pipe; water should be flowing from the pipe and away from the building.

Boilers and other HVAC systems:

Check unit ventilators to make sure they are properly closing and opening. Check boilers, circulator pumps, furnaces, and HVAC systems to verify they are properly working.

Remote sensor technology: Make sure that any remote detection devices (burglar, temperature, water sensors) have a full battery charge, and that alert numbers and emails are up-to-date and people on the lists understand their duties should they receive an alert.

Implementing these eight simple steps now and during the winter months can save both time and valuable dollars.

Stephen Batchelder is MIIA's Vice President for Claims and Risk Management.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Building Commissioner Town of Foxborough

Starting salary commensurate with experience. Full salary range is \$93,125-\$113,525 annually. Requires four-year undergraduate degree; or at least five years' experience in the supervision of building construction or design, or a combination thereof. Must hold certification by the BBRS as an Inspector of Buildings/Building Commissioner and must possess a valid motor vehicle operator's license. For complete job posting see: www.foxboroughma.gov/departments/human-resources/current-employment-opportunities. Please submit cover letter and resume to hr@foxboroughma.gov. Position open until filled; applications reviewed on rolling basis.

Director of Public Health City of Chelsea

The city of Chelsea seeks qualified and experienced applicants for the position of Director of Public Health. Responsible for all administrative, technical, managerial and supervisory duties related to the city's Public Health Department. The ideal candidate shall possess a master's degree in public health or related field. Five years of experience in public health or comparable private sector work. Three years of supervisory experience. Municipal and supervisory experience preferred. Detailed job description available at www.chelseama.gov. Starting salary range is \$74,483.18 \$93,674.65/yr. Send a cover letter and resume via email jobs@chelseama.gov.

Director of Public Works City of Westfield

The city of Westfield seeks qualified applicants for the position of Director of Public Works. This position applies administrative, supervisory and overall management that is responsible for all aspects relating to the operations and maintenance of several Public Works divisions, systems and staff. Oversees the physical facilities of the community and services that enable it to function. Salary range is \$102,000-\$116,828. A complete job description is available at www.cityofwestfield.org. Email resume and letter of interest to Richard.merchant@cityofwestfield.org. State in the email subject line "Public Works Director Interest." The city of Westfield is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer (M/F/H/V).

IT Director

Town of Tyngsborough

The town of Tyngsborough seeks qualified and experienced applicants for the position of IT Director to oversee the maintenance and administration of the town of Tyngsborough's information systems, including servers, computers, software applications, website, and network. The ideal candidate shall possess a bachelor's degree in information technology or computer science, or a bachelor's degree and threeplus years of experience in information technology, with progressively responsible experience in the public sector; working knowledge of Windows Server 2012-2019; Windows 8.1 and 10; Microsoft Office; CAMA systems; GIS; G Suite; networking protocols and command line procedures. Detailed job description available at www.tyngsboroughma.gov. Starting salary range is \$80-\$100k/yr DOQ. Send a cover letter

and resume to Matt Hanson, Town Administrator, via email mhanson@tyngsboroughma.gov.

Assistant City Solicitor City of Methuen

General Duties: Assistant City Solicitor assists in drafting and reviewing legal documents, advising municipal officials and representing the city's interests in a variety of legal forums, including public sector labor forums. Employee is required to perform all similar or related duties at the direction of the Mayor. Qualifications: Candidate must be a member in good standing of the Massachusetts Bar, possess a valid driver's license and thorough knowledge of Massachusetts General Law, municipal ordinances, City Council rules and regulations, case decisions, appropriate federal law and regulations. Candidates must have the ability to research and analyze legal issues in a fast-paced environment and advise how to effectively apply said advice on a practical level. Candidates must have excellent organizational skills; excellent data processing skills in the use of personal computers and office software including word processing, database, internet and spreadsheet applications. Candidates must have independent research skills and superb written and oral communication skills. Salary range: \$81,272-\$97,526. Preliminary deadline: open until filled. Submit city of Methuen employment application and resume to: City of Methuen, Human Resources Department, Room 206, 41 Pleasant St., Methuen, MA 01844. Applications are accepted by mail or via email to HumanResources@CityofMethuen.net. City of Methuen is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

Public Health Nurse Town of North Reading

Summary: Provides professional public health nursing functions to the public. Work includes developing, implementing and conducting a variety of programs and clinics based on policies and guidelines established by the Board of Health, serving as a resources and referral source for the public, providing information

and education to the public and assessing the needs of persons at risk. Part-time/benefited, \$40 hourly. The town of North Reading is an equal opportunity employer. Candidates should submit a cover letter and resume to Human Resources, jobs2@northreadingma. gov or to Town Hall, 235 North St., North Reading, MA 01864. For more information, visit the town of North Reading's Job Opportunities webpage at www.northreadingma.gov/human-resources/pages/jobopportunities.

Assistant Business Manager Tewksbury Public Schools

Manages the transportation function of the school system including route design, student assignments, daily issues, validation and efficiency assessments, and relationships with transportation vendors. Functions as the District's Principal Procurement Officer. Must possess a working knowledge of public procurement rules and regulations. MCPPO preferred. Assists with staff payroll and accounts payable, ensuring the timely payment of bills, posting of general accounting items, and the accuracy and timely disbursement of wages and benefits to district employees. Assists the Business Manager in several areas including budgets/ forecasting, budget analysis, end of year reporting, and preparing for local, state, and federal audits on business records. For more information, visit www. tewksbury.k12.ma.us/resources/quick-links/ employment-opportunities.

Assistant Finance Director and Budget Manager

City of Medford

Under the Direction of the Finance Director/ Auditor/CFO, reconcile accounts, prepare journal entries, and analyze controls. Analyze financial and economic data trends and changes in federal, state, and local laws and regulations that have an impact on the city. Assists with the annual audit performed by our independent auditors. Performs analytical, technical, and administrative work on financial and budget related matters, and conducting research as

Classified advertising rates and information

The Beacon publishes classified ads from units of government, public agencies, and companies.

Classified advertising categories are: Employment Opportunities, Requests for Proposals, and Services. Only one job opening or RFP can be listed per ad. The MMA cannot assume responsibility for information or claims made in any advertisement.

Classified advertising rates

Classified ad rates include publication in The

Beacon and on www.mma.org, though a discount is available for those who request placement of an ad only in The Beacon or on the website.

Member rates

- \$100 for first 100 words; \$100 for each additional block of up to 100 words
- Rate for one format only (print or website): \$75 for first 100 words, \$75 for each additional block of up to 100 words

Nonmember rates

- \$150 for first 100 words; \$150 for each additional block of up to 100 words
- Rate for one format only (print or website): \$125 for first 100 words, \$125 for each additional block of up to 100 words

Beacon deadlines and publication dates

The Beacon is published on the first business day of each month, except in the summer, when a combined July-August issue is printed in mid-July.

December Beacon

Deadline: November 19 Publication: December 1

January Beacon

Deadline: December 17 Publication: January 4

Placing an ad

You may use our convenient online form at

www.mma.org.

For more information, call Meredith Gabrilska at the MMA at 617-426-7272.

Missed the Beacon deadline for an employment ad? You can still get the word out – right away.

See <u>www.mma.org</u> for details.

directed. Analysis of trends of future revenues and expenditures, appropriation analysis required by the city, state, and federal governments. Assists the Finance Director/Auditor with the coordination of the city's budget process. To apply and review the complete job description www.medfordma.org/departments/personnel/jobs.

Assistant Treasurer/Collector City of Medford

Under the direct supervision of the Treasurer/Collector, performs accounting and financial duties related to the collection, custody and control of city funds. Maintains and reconciles cash book including breakdown of all receipts and disbursements. Reconciles bank accounts for all receipts and disbursements. Salary range: \$1,312.57-\$1,533.96 weekly. To apply and review the complete job description, visit www.medfordma.org/departments/personnel/jobs.

Town Administrator Town of Yarmouth

The town of Yarmouth (population: 23,793) is seeking qualified applicants for the position of Town Administrator to serve as Chief Administrative Officer of the town starting in January 2021. The successful candidate will have excellent leadership qualities. exceptional oral and written communication skills including successful grant-writing record, experience with municipal finances, budgets, procurement, Massachusetts general laws, personnel management, and planning. The candidate should be forwardthinking and innovative, with a strong commitment and motivation to work collaboratively with local boards, town department heads, employees, and citizens. The Town Administrator plays a crucial role in the town's overall planning, management, organization, stability, and growth of the community. The Town Administrator works under the direction of a five-member Board of Selectmen. The duties are outlined in the Yarmouth Town Charter and in a Yarmouth Town Administrator job description. Both are posted on the town's website: www.yarmouth. ma.us. Job requirements include: Bachelor's degree, master's degree in public administration, business administration, or a related field preferred, and at least three years of municipal management, preferably in Massachusetts, or related experience required. Salary will be commensurate with experience. All replies will be kept confidential until finalists are identified. Please send a cover letter and resume to: Jason R. Talerman, Mead, Talerman & Costa, LLC, 730 Main St., Suite 1F, Millis, MA 02054; jay@mtclawyers.com.

Payroll Coordinator Town of Amherst

The town of Amherst seeks a full-time Payroll Coordinator to perform a variety of technical, accounting and administrative work by maintaining the town's payroll system, processing of employee benefits for both the town and school and providing general administrative support to the Accounting Department. For more information and to apply online please visit our website at www.amherstma.gov/jobs. Amherst seeks a workforce that reflects the diversity of its Community. AA/EEO

Truck Driver/Laborer Town of Whitman

The Whitman Department of Public Works is currently accepting applications to fill two Truck Driver/Laborer positions, qualified candidates must have a Class B

-CDL license. Interested candidates should fill out a town of Whitman job application which can be found on www.whitman-ma.gov and send it along with your resume to bmartin@whitman-ma.gov or you can drop it in the mail slot at our office located at 100 Essex St.

Board of Health Agent Town of Freetown

Notice is hereby given that the Freetown Board of Selectmen are seeking applications for the position of Board of Health Agent. This is a full-time position (36 hours) and may require occasional evening meetings. Salary is depending on qualifications. Application can be found at www.freetownma.gov/jobs. See full job posting for qualifications and more information. Resume, cover letter and application may be mailed (address below) or emailed (tmcintosh@freetownma.gov). Position will remain open until filled, but priority will be given to applications received by Thursday, Nov. 5. Town of Freetown, Attn: Timm McIntosh, Executive Assistant, P.O. Box 438, Assonet, MA 02702.

Finance Director/Town Accountant Town of Tyngsborough

The town of Tyngsborough seeks qualified and experienced applicants for the position of Finance Director/Town Accountant to plan, provide accounting services, coordinate and supervise all operations of the Finance Department, consisting of all accounting and procurement in conformance with M.G.L. The ideal candidate shall possess at a bachelor's degree in finance, accounting, or a directly related field; eight years of progressively responsible experience in public sector financial management with budgets of at least \$20 million; strong working knowledge of state and municipal finance laws under GAAP and GASB standards; excellent oral, written and interpersonal communication skills. SoftRight software experience and Mass. Municipal Accountants & Auditors Association (MMAAA) certification are preferred. Detailed job description available at www. tyngsboroughma.gov. Starting salary range is +/-\$100,000/yr DOQ. Send cover letter and resume to Matt Hanson, Town Administrator, via email mhanson@tyngsboroughma.gov.

SERVICES

Municipal Energy Services

Through the MMA's MunEnergy program, MMA members have access to an energy contract designed exclusively for Massachusetts cities and towns. The MunEnergy program offers access to energy experts at Constellation, a vetted municipal energy contract, and options for sustainability programs. Energy professionals at Constellation, the MMA-endorsed supplier for MunEnergy, work with municipalities to manage electricity costs for the long-term. Constellation is also on the forefront of sustainability programs and provides financial support to the MMA for its promotional and marketing efforts. To learn more, visit www.mma.org/about-mma/services/ munenergy. To be notified about MunEnergy events, send contact information for the person on your team who handles energy for your city or town to energy@

Public Management Consultants

MMA Consulting Group Inc. provides consulting services to cities, towns, and other public agencies. We

specialize in public safety/emergency response (police, fire, EMS) issues, the design and administration of assessment centers, structured oral panels, and recruitment of police and fire executives. For information, contact Mark Morse, President, MMA Consulting Group Inc., 101 Court St. #7, Plymouth, MA 02360; 508-746-3653; mmacginc@gmail.com.

Municipal Accounting Services

Melanson is one of the largest non-national Certified Public Accounting firms in New England and has been a leader in the accounting and auditing profession for over 42 years. Our Governmental Services Department includes eight principals and 65 professionals who work exclusively on governmental services. Among them are our outsourcing professionals, who are here for you and have the experience and knowledge to help solve your internal accounting challenges. We provide both long- and short-term services as well as flexible access, either remotely or on-site without adding to your long-term employee benefit costs. Contact us today! contactus@melansoncpas.com

Executive Recruiting, Management and Governance Consulting Services

Community Paradigm Associates provides comprehensive professional services to public sector, private sector, and not-for-profit clients, including organizational and management studies, executive recruiting, operational analyses, personnel studies, compensation and classification plans, charter development, strategic planning, leadership training, and facilitation services. Community Paradigm Associates has a team of seasoned associates with expertise in all aspects of municipal government. For more information, contact Principal Bernard Lynch at 978-621-6733 or BLynch@CommunityParadigm.com; www.communityparadigm.com.

Executive Recruiting, Interim Staffing, Human Resources and Management Consulting

GovHR USA/GovTempsUSA provides executive recruiting and interim staffing solutions, management and human resource consulting to local government and nonprofit clients across the country. Seasoned local government professionals provide five-star quality services including: Classification and Compensation Studies; Temporary and Outsourced staffing; Performance Evaluation System and Training. Visit our website at www.GovHRusa.com or contact us at 847-380-3240 or info@govhrusa.com to discuss how we may serve your organization. Post to our job board at www.govhriobs.com.

Management, Human Resources and Executive Search

Rutherford Advisors Inc., DBA The Executive Suite, with more than 40 years' experience, is an expert in providing comprehensive, detailed and effective classification and compensation plans; human resource, performance evaluation, and management efficiency studies; interim management; and executive and senior staff recruitment for public, nonprofit and private organizations. We emphasize innovative solutions to commonly encountered management challenges. For discussion on your needs, please contact Warren J. Rutherford at 508-778-7700 or wjr@theexecutivesuite.com, or visit www.theexecutivesuite.com.

■ CLASSIFIEDS continued on 30

CLASSIFIEDS

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GIS Consulting Services

As a local government, does your community expect more from you? Geospatial technology is a great tool to use to meet these expectations and build trust. Spatial Relationships is a GIS consulting firm in Boston that specializes in on-demand personalized GIS services for local government. Need extra GIS support for an important project, but don't want to deal with the overhead of a large firm? Don't have GIS staff, but have a one-time need? Indispensable GIS staff going out on leave? We're here to help. To learn more about us, please visit www.spatial-relationships.com.

Town Counsel Services

KP | Law is a municipal law firm. With offices in Boston, Hyannis, Lenox, Northampton and Worcester, we serve as town counsel to more than 125 towns throughout Massachusetts, from Provincetown to Williamstown, and as special counsel to another 90. For more than 30 years, we have devoted ourselves to municipal law and have become experts in the defense of all areas of municipal trial matters. We have specialists in all areas of municipal law and maintain an environmental and land use law department that is on the cutting edge of planning, zoning and conservation. KP | Law is highly sensitive to the limited legal services budgets of Massachusetts communities and thus has highly competitive billing rates to give your town the best quality legal counsel in the most cost-efficient manner. There is never a need for special counsel. Our breadth and depth of experience helps keep our cost per opinion to a minimum and enables us to service our clients quickly and efficiently, and is consistent with our commitment to excellence. For additional information on the legal services that KP | Law provides, please visit www.k-plaw.com or contact Lauren Goldberg, Esq., at 617-556-0007, or toll-free at 800-548-3522, or at lgoldberg@k-plaw.com.

General Consultant, Recruiting and Special Studies

Municipal Resources Inc. has been providing management solutions to New England municipalities since 1989. MRI is able to provide expertise when and where it's needed. Our services include executive recruitments, assessment centers and promotional testing; public safety organizational studies; finance operations; interim staffing; internal investigations; efficiency and regionalization studies. MRI has an extensive group of experienced subject experts that are able to provide the technical and management expertise that can help communities deliver quality services and resolve complex problems with real-world solutions. Contact us at 866-501-0352 or info@mrigov.com.

Legal Services

Brooks & DeRensis, P.C., is available to provide services to government entities at the state, county, city, town or regional district level. Legal services available include procurement law, contracts, eminent domain, labor relations and civil rights. Contact Peter Berry for labor matters, employment matters, civil rights matters and retirement matters, or Paul DeRensis for all other public law issues, at 857-259-5200.

Organizational Development and Conflict Resolution

The Mediation Group is New England's one-stop shopping for conflict resolution and organizational development. With 30-plus years of experience, our multi-disciplinary team provides individuals and organizations with support to move forward constructively and improve functionality. Our services include: facilitation, mediation, training and coaching, leadership development, cultural competency, independent workplace investigations, stakeholder assessments, public engagement and process design. For more information, visit www.themediationgroup.org, email info@ themediationgroup.org or call 617-277-9232.

Town Counsel Services

Miyares and Harrington LLP provides Town and Special Counsel services to help build and implement local programs that serve community needs. We have the expertise you require, based on decades of real-world experience. We take the time to understand your situation. We inquire, listen, and respond. We provide options that will work for you. We are committed to the values of democracy, to preservation and enhancement of natural resources and the built environment, and to excellence and care in support of municipal objectives. We offer competitive rates, personal service, diligent attention to our clients' needs, and good humor. Please contact us at contact@miyares-harrington.com or 617-489-1600.

Tax Title Legal Services

KP | Law has been providing a full range of legal services to municipal treasurers and collectors for more than 30 years. Our experienced tax title attorneys draft collection letters and payment agreements; prepare all instruments relative to tax takings and tax sales; draft pleadings for Land Court foreclosures; and provide full representation of municipalities in Land Court actions. We also provide assistance with disposition or reuse of tax parcels. The breadth of our experience, volume, use of experienced paralegals, state-of-the-art computer and informational services, and close proximity to the Land Court enables us to provide prompt, costeffective services. For additional information, please visit www.k-plaw.com or contact Lauren Goldberg, Esq. at 617-556-0007, or toll-free at 800-548-3522, or at lgoldberg@k-plaw.com.

OPEB Funding via Tax Title Sale

Tallage, a real estate investment company in Boston, assists cities and towns at no charge to execute tax title sales under M.G.L. Ch. 60, Sect. 52, for strategic purposes, such as using a percentage of the revenue to set up an OPEB Funding Trust. Using a small initial funding amount from tax title sales with a long-term strategy can dramatically reduce the OPEB number on the balance sheet. Other benefits of a tax title sale include payment of 100 percent of the principal, interest and fees owed per tax title; significant reduction in the expense of managing tax titles; and valuable due diligence provided by private investors on the validity and economics of the tax titles. To schedule a free meeting to discuss the tax title sale process that 45-plus municipalities across the state have recently experienced, and how the tool can be used in conjunction with an OPEB or other funding strategy, please contact Bill Cowin at Tallage at 617-543-7214 or Bill.Cowin@TallageLLC.com.

Municipal Financial Management Software: Accounting, Cloud, Utility and Collections

VADAR Systems provides financial management software to more than 100 Massachusetts municipalities. Our accounting, cloud, utility and collections applications are designed exclusively for Massachusetts municipalities by Massachusetts end users. The VADAR Cloud maximizes efficiency with 24/7 secure, remote access to all your applications from any device. Our user support offers unparalleled expertise. Proudly serving Massachusetts for 20-plus years. For a free on-site demonstration, please contact us at 877-823-2700 or sales@vadarsystems.com. Learn more at www.VADARsystems.com. Locally owned and operated at 20 Main St., Suite G1, Acton, MA 01701.

Management Consulting Services

The Matrix Consulting Group is a management consulting firm that provides detailed analysis of public-sector agencies in New England. The firm's services include management, staffing, organizational and operations studies of every local government function, as well as feasibility studies, fleet management and facilities needs. Our staff expertise encompasses police, fire, public works, utilities, planning and building, recreation, finance and administrative functions. For more information, please contact Robin Haley, 17A Steele St., Worcester, MA 01607; 508-887-6564.

Labor Counsel Services/Municipal Human Resources Specialists

Clifford and Kenny, LLP provides quality representation to cities, towns and school districts in the area of labor and employment. Attorneys John Clifford and Jaime Kenny have many years of experience in representing clients for collective bargaining and personnel-related matters including discipline and discharge of unionized employees. We have extensive experience in the area of police and fire injured-on-duty cases, and have worked extensively with municipalities and insurers to resolve costly longterm claims. We offer training in sexual harassment, social media and the "just cause analysis" to municipal managers. We also serve as appointed hearing officers on a case-by-case basis. Many of our clients take advantage of a flat monthly rate for unlimited phone calls and emails, which encourages key managers to work with counsel prior to making critical personnel decisions. Check our website at CliffordKennyLaw. com to see a complete list of our satisfied clients or call John Clifford or Jaime Kenny at 781-924-5796 for more information.

Municipal Financial Management Services

Eric A. Kinsherf, CPA, has been involved in municipal finance since 1994 in various capacities, ranging from Finance Director to an auditor of municipalities as a Certified Public Accountant. Cities and towns in need of a CPA specializing in municipal auditing and consulting are offered services such as municipal audits, assistance in year-end closing, interim treasurer, collector and town accountant services, revenue forecasting, and capital financing plan assistance. If you are in need of a municipal audit or a financial consultant, please contact Eric Kinsherf at eric@erickinsherfcpa.com or at 508-833-8508. Learn more at www.erickinsherfcpa.com.

Human Resources Consulting

Human Resources Services Inc. provides a full range of human resource management consulting services to Massachusetts' local governments and other public agencies. Specialization includes compensation/ classification, performance appraisal, job analysis and evaluation, job descriptions, salary/benefits and total compensation surveys and analytics, personnel policies/handbooks, staffing and organizational management studies, HR audits and assessments, HR training services, recruitment and selection

services, web-based HR services, and special projects. Please contact Sandy Stapczynski, President, Human Resources Services Inc., 9 Bartlet St., Suite 186, Andover, MA 01810; 978-474-0200; hrsconsulting@comcast.net; or visit www.hrsconsultinginc.com. WBE certified.

Executive Recruitment and Municipal Management

Groux-White Consulting, LLC, is a full-service municipal management consulting firm specializing in executive recruitment, interim management, form of government studies, organizational effectiveness evaluations, strategic and financial planning and conflict resolution. Tom Groux and Rick White, One Pelham Road, Lexington, MA 02421; rickwhite58@verizon.net; 781-572-6332; www.grouxwhiteconsulting.com.

Library Land Project begins new chapter as nonprofit organization

The <u>Library Land Project</u> announced on Oct. 22 that it has received its 501(c)(3) designation from the IRS and formed a board of directors.

These two developments will help further the project's mission to explore, document and promote public libraries in order to educate people about the important role these institutions play in our communities.

Founders Adam Zand and Greg Peverill-Conti met at the Newton Free Library and launched the first Library Legislative Day in March 2019.

"We came to appreciate what incredible 'opportunity engines' libraries are in our communities," said Peverill-Conti, the project's executive director. "Sadly, many people have wildly outdated perceptions of these institutions. We want to update and expand the way people think of public libraries."

Joining Peverill-Conti and Zand on the Board of Directors are Monique Byrne, Eric Davies, Sandy Ho and Debra Spratt, director of the Lawrence Library in Pepperell.

"Since late 2017, the Library Land Project has visited almost 300 libraries across Massachusetts ... and traveled around the country to visit, learn and document," said Zand, the project's president. "The common thread is the energy and innovation we see in these public 'palaces' of knowledge, service and inspiration."

Peverill-Conti and Zand said libraries have an important role to play in strengthening and supporting communities during the COVID-19 pandemic and amid calls for racial justice. Davies said libraries play a key role in "championing facts and science [and] serving as a glue that can

bond together diverse communities."

The Library Land Project's objectives include:

- Visit, evaluate and meet with library directors, workers and patrons on an ongoing basis
- Document these experiences, conversations, research, library lore and more in reports, photographs, articles and other media
- Educate the public through its <u>website</u>, social media channels (<u>Instagram</u>, <u>Facebook</u>), media relations, partnerships, and public appearances

The Library Land Project has met with members of the Legislative Library Caucus, MassHire, Massachusetts Board of Library Commissions, Massachusetts



Leominster Public Library (Photo courtesy Library Land Project)

Library System, the Massachusetts Library Association and other organizations.

The project hopes its efforts will result in greater financial support for public libraries. The project offers a range of services intended to help public libraries engage more successfully with their patrons and communities, including consulting, strategic planning, custom content development, original research, grant writing and speaking.

The Library Land Project is starting fundraising efforts to expand its work.

CEO BRIEFING

Continued from page 10

COVID updates

Asked about the increase in COVID cases over the past month, Dr. Larry Madoff, medical director at the Department of Public Health, said state officials are keeping a close eye on a range of COVID metrics, but "there's no single factor" to be cited as the cause of the increase. He said part of it may be attributable to surges seen in other parts of the country.

"Massachusetts is not an island," he said.

He added that it's important to remember the progress that has been made in Massachusetts, and that the state is now much better positioned than it was in the spring to address a potential surge.

Jana Ferguson, assistant commissioner at the Department of Public Health, discussed recent changes to the <u>state's travel</u> <u>order</u>, which requires all visitors entering Massachusetts, including returning residents, who do not meet an exemption,

to complete the Massachusetts Travel Form prior to arrival and to quarantine unless or until they can produce a negative test result – unless they are visiting from a lower-risk state as designated by the DPH. The threshold of daily cases per 100,000 residents for a state to be considered lower-risk was increased from six to 10, to bring the Massachusetts standard more in line with other states. For this purpose, she said, the DPH is using data for all 50 states reported at www.covidexitstrategy.org.

Dr. Madoff said the state has not seen any significant COVID outbreaks in K-12 public schools, and Ferguson said the <u>Department of Elementary and Secondary Education posts data about COVID cases in schools</u> each Thursday.

Moments after visiting a new drivethrough testing site at Suffolk Downs in Revere, Lt. Gov. Karyn Polito said Massachusetts currently has the lab capacity to process 100,000 COVID tests per day. As winter approaches and people begin spending more time indoors, she said the state is well-prepared with stockpiles of ventilators, masks, gowns and other essential health care equipment. She added that Massachusetts hospitals have adequate capacity to withstand an influx of cases.

Polito said "it's really good news to be talking about a Vaccine Advisory Group," which was announced on Oct. 7 to advance efforts to prepare to distribute a safe and effective COVID-19 vaccine once it becomes available. She said the formation of the 17-member committee, which includes Lawrence Mayor Dan Rivera, represents a "light at the end of the tunnel."

The next regular administration briefing being convened by the MMA for municipal CEOs will be held on Thursday, Nov. 5. The Oct. 20 call was the 23rd such briefing since the beginning of the pandemic.

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Calendar

NOVEMBER

Small Town Administrators of Massachusetts, Annual Meeting, remote, 1-3:30 p.m. Contact: STAM Chair Andrea Llamas at allamas@northfieldma.

MMA Board of Directors, remote meeting, 10-11 a.m.
Contact: MMA Executive Director's office

Massachusetts Select Board
Association, Board of Directors,
2-3:30 p.m., remote meeting. Contact:
MMA Member Services Coordinator
Isabelle Nichols

Association of Town Finance Committees, Annual Meeting webinar #3, "Keeping Schools Safe," 7-8:15 p.m. Contact: MMA Senior Member Services Coordinator Denise Baker

MMA Human Services Council, webinar on emergency housing, 12-1 p.m. Contact: MMA Member Services Coordinator Isabelle Nichols

Massachusetts Municipal Councillors' Association,

webinar, 5:45-7 p.m. Contact: MMA Senior Member Services Coordinator Denise Baker

Massachusetts Municipal Management Association,

fall conference webinar, 11 a.m.-1 p.m. Contact: MMA Senior Member Services Coordinator Denise Baker

DECEMBER

Massachusetts Municipal Human Resources, holiday meeting, 11 a.m.-12 p.m. Contact: MMA Member Services Coordinator Isabelle Nichols

Women Leading Government, holiday and networking meeting. Contact: MMA Senior Member Services Coordinator Denise Baker

For more information, visit www.mma.org.

* The Beacon

Massachusetts Municipal Association

One Winthrop Square, Boston, MA 02110

If any part of the address on this issue is incorrect, please email the correct information to database@mma.org.

Due to the COVID emergency, the MMA has suspended in-person meetings until further notice and is hosting meetings remotely. Meeting details may be subject to change.

JANUARY

Massachusetts Select Board
Association, business meeting,
remote. Contact: MMA Member
Services Coordinator Isabelle Nichols

Massachusetts Municipal Councillors' Association,

business meeting, remote. Contact: MMA Senior Member Services Coordinator Denise Baker

21-22 42nd MMA Annual Meeting & Trade Show,

using a highly interactive online platform. Contact: MMA Conference and Meeting Planner Timmery Kuck

FEBRUARY

9 MMA Board of Directors, remote meeting, 10-11 a.m. Contact: MMA Executive Director's office

Massachusetts Mayors'
Association, monthly meeting.
Contact: MMA Communications and
Membership Director Candace Pierce

MARCH

4 Massachusetts Municipal Human Resources, program meeting. Contact: MMA Member Services Coordinator Isabelle Nichols

Massachusetts Select Board Association, remote meeting. Contact: MMA Member Services Coordinator Isabelle Nichols

Online registration is available for most of these events.



PERIODICALS

To list an event of interest to municipal officials in The Beacon, send information about the event, including date, location, sponsorship, cost, and whom to call for more information, to editor@mma.org.

MMA contacts

Denise Baker can be reached at dbaker@mma.org

Isabelle Nichols can be reached at inichols@mma.org

Timmery Kuck can be reached at tkuck@mma.org