# The Beacon

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January 2021

# Annual Meeting will be timely, engaging

By John Ouellette

There's just a *little* bit of time left to grab the early registration rate of just \$85 per person for the MMA Annual Meeting & Trade Show, to be held on Jan. 21 and 22. The early deadline is at midnight on Jan. 6.

The MMA's 42nd Annual Meeting is the first to be held virtually, but it is definitely not another Zoom meeting. The dynamic, timely and engaging two-day conference will offer broadcast-quality production values on a highly interactive online platform called Chime.

"I'm really impressed with the platform the MMA is using for the Annual Meeting this year," says Auburn Town Manager Julie Jacobson, president of the Massachusetts Municipal Management Association. "It's quite a high-quality production, and they've incorporated all the bells and whistles to help the members connect virtually and get the training we need."

New Bedford Mayor Jon Mitchell, president of the Massachusetts Mayors' Association, adds, "The MMA's Annual Meeting will be an especially valuable, high-quality experience this year, and there's been much work to ensure plenty of opportunities for face-toface conversations with our colleagues. I'd encourage mayors - and all MMA members - to sign up."

As always, the conference will feature:

 A range of informative and timely workshops



Attendees of the virtual MMA Annual Meeting & Trade Show will use the convenient online Chime platform for access to informative workshops, networking opportunities and inspiring speakers.

- Compelling and inspiring speakers
- A robust <u>Trade Show</u> featuring the latest services and solutions for cities

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# Gov. Baker and Lt. Gov. Polito to speak at MMA Annual Meeting

By John Ouellette

Gov. Charlie Baker and Lt. Gov. Karyn Polito will be among the <u>featured speakers</u> during the MMA's <u>42nd Annual</u> <u>Meeting & Trade Show</u> on Jan. 21 and 22.

Both state leaders are former local officials who have had particularly high profiles during the ongoing COVID-19 state of emergency. Polito has held nearly 30 regularly scheduled briefings with municipal CEOs since the pandemic began in March, and Baker has had a number of conference calls with local leaders.

Gov. Baker has been a frequent speaker at MMA Annual Meetings since he first took office in 2015, often offering a preview of his state budget plan, which this year is due on Jan. 27. He will be the featured speaker at the MMA Annual



Gov. Baker



Lt. Gov. Polito

Business Meeting on Jan. 22 at 1 p.m.

Lt. Gov. Polito will give opening remarks on Jan. 21, when she plans to announce a new state initiative to assist cities and towns.

Baker's "get stuff done," bipartisan approach to state government has made

■ SPEAKERS continued on 21

### **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**

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# **Executive Director's Report**

**By Geoffrey** 

Beckwith

### **Leading Through Challenge and Change**

Thank goodness 2021 is finally here. So

far, the best part of this year is that we can rip the 2020 calendar off the wall (which is easier than trying to delete it from a smartphone) and toss the pages in a recycling bin.

We don't want to throw 2020 away completely, which is why a recycling bin is better than the trash can. There are plenty of good lessons we can learn from

the past 10 months by studying what went well, what didn't, what we want to keep going forward, and where we need to improve for the future. These insights can help us in our public and personal lives, as leaders and as practitioners.

To start this process of reflection, we look forward to seeing you at the MMA Annual Meeting & Trade Show later this month, on Jan. 21 and 22. This will be MMA's 42nd annual conference, but it's the first one that is all virtual - all of our members will be attending from their living rooms, kitchens, basements or municipal offices. If you haven't registered yet, you can learn more and register at www.mma.org/annual-meeting.

Our theme is "Leading Through Challenge and Change," which is an apt focus, due to the remarkable challenges and changes that you and your fellow municipal leaders are facing, during a time of worldwide pandemic, widespread economic downturn, heightened awareness of deep-seated social and

racial justice issues, and major disruptions in the delivery of essential public services.

We hope to see you there. We'll have fantastic keynote speakers, including Gov. Charlie Baker, Lt. Gov. Karyn Polito, leadership expert Wes Moore, diversity and inclusion guru Risha Grant, and a fantastic WEMO session with the Rev.

Liz Walker and Framingham Mayor Yvonne Spicer. On top of that, the MMA will be offering 15 timely and informative workshops on issues of critical importance to local government.

When you attend a workshop, or the keynote sessions with Wes Moore and Risha Grant, you'll be able to ask questions of our presenters. And one of the extra benefits of this virtual annual meeting is that everything is being recorded, so eventually those of you who register for Annual Meeting will be able to view all the workshops on your own schedule, and get the best seat in the

We have built in plenty of time to do what many of you enjoy most: networking. You can join our Zoom networking sessions on each day of the conference. We'll also have an awesome interactive Trade Show, with more than 70 vendors covering the full range of municipal

■ DIRECTOR'S REPORT continued on 22



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# State, local leaders focus on vaccine in call

By John Ouellette

The distribution and administration of COVID-19 vaccines was the central topic of a regular conference call with state officials and 200 municipal CEOs convened by the MMA on Jan. 5.

While initial doses are being administered to health care workers and residents and staff of long-term care facilities, with emergency first responders next in line beginning on Jan. 11, state officials acknowledged that the vaccine plan is continually being adjusted and that they'll use the early rounds to help solidify plans for larger populations.

"We're sharing information as quickly as it's developed and can be shared," said Jana Ferguson, assistant commissioner at the Department of Public Health. "It's just moving very fast. Why people haven't been hearing a lot is because things are rolling out as we go."

Ferguson and Lt. Gov. Karyn Polito urged local officials to monitor several key online resources:

- When Can I Get the COVID-19 Vaccine?
- COVID-19 Vaccine Details and Locations for First Responders
- <u>COVID-19 Vaccine Frequently Asked</u> <u>Questions</u>
- <u>COVID-19 Vaccine Plan for</u> Massachusetts
- Weekly COVID-19 Vaccination Report (updated each Thursday by 5 p.m.)

Ferguson stressed that the situation is evolving and the DPH is updating these websites on a rolling basis. The When Can I Get the Vaccine website lists a wide range of population groups, from COVID-facing health care workers to EMS personnel to the general public.

The DPH has set up a designated and staffed email address – covid-19-vaccine-plan-ma@mass.gov – for vaccine-related questions, particularly to address questions about groups that aren't specified in the "When Can I Get" listing.

Due to complicated storage and handling requirements, Ferguson said the vaccine is being allocated in manageable amounts on a rolling basis to ensure that no doses are wasted. She assured local officials that all needs will be met –

for first responders, for example – though perhaps not in an initial batch.

Polito outlined three options for the state's 45,000 first responders to receive the vaccine:

- Qualifying departments may request to administer the vaccine at their sites (provided they have the equipment to safely store doses).
- First responders may schedule an appointment at one of more than 60 sites around the state.
- First responders may use one of the sites the state will be setting up over the next two weeks.

Polito said nearly 117,000 doses of the vaccine had been administered as of Jan. 3, and a total of 287,000 doses had been shipped to health care providers. She said 74 of the state's 76 hospitals had begun administering vaccines to COVID-facing staff.

She said the Vaccine Advisory Group continues to make adjustments to its plans, "and there's a process for that." For example, the group this week moved up individuals age 75 and older and individuals of any age with two or more comorbidities.

Polito stressed the transparent nature of the process and said the weekly report offers a broad range of data, such as vaccine distribution by county and age and ethnicity of those vaccinated.

She also discussed the DPH's revamped COVID Daily Dashboard, which is now more user-friendly and enables visitors to filter data.



State and local leaders convened on Zoom to discuss vaccine distribution, federal aid and ongoing challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. Pictured are (top row, l-r) MMA Executive Director Geoff Beckwith; Sean Cronin, senior deputy commissioner at the Division of Local Services; (middle row, l-r) Heath Fahle, special director for federal funds at the Executive Office of Administration and Finance; Dr. Larry Madoff, medical director at the Department of Public Health; (bottom row, l-r) Lt. Gov. Karyn Polito; and Jana Ferguson, assistant commissioner at the Department of Public Health.

On the gathering and capacity rollbacks that took effect on Dec. 26 and were expected to last until at least Jan. 10, Polito said there would be more information coming this week.

Polito recognized that the COVID restrictions create a hardship for businesses, and cited the <u>administration's new</u> \$668 million business relief package, to be administered by Massachusetts Growth Capital Corporation, as an effort to lessen the impact. A \$50 million grant round was awarded in December, and another \$67 million was awarded on Dec. 31.

The business relief package consists of two programs: a recapitalization of the first small business relief program, which launched in October, and additional funding for businesses that fall into specific industry sectors. A program overview for the sector-specific program is available online.

■ **VACCINE** continued on 22

# Gov. Baker signs police reform legislation

On New Year's Eve, Gov. Charlie Baker signed legislation that creates a mandatory certification process for police officers, increases accountability and transparency in law enforcement, and gives police departments a greater ability to hire or promote only qualified applicants.

The new law creates a new civilian-led police oversight board - the Massachusetts Peace Officer Standards and Training Commission – with subpoena power and decertification authority. The nine-member independent state entity will have the authority to establish policing standards, certify law enforcement officers, investigate allegations of misconduct, and suspend or revoke the certification of officers who are found by clear and convincing evidence to have violated its standards.

The duties of the state's existing municipal police training committee will remain under the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security.

The reform law also bans chokeholds and limits "no-knock" warrants; creates a duty-to-intervene for police officers and a duty to de-escalate; bans racial profiling and puts enforcement powers behind the ban; and will end the requirement of police officers in schools.

The Massachusetts Peace Officer Standards and Training Commission will include six individuals from outside of law enforcement, and will also be responsible for investigating and adjudicating claims of misconduct, maintaining databases of training, certification, employment, and internal affairs records for all officers, and certifying law enforcement agencies. By creating a central entity to oversee officer certification, the commission will ensure that those officers' training and misconduct records are available both to the commission and to those officers' current and future employers, improving accountability.

Gov. Baker said Massachusetts now has "one of the best laws in the nation" on this "hugely important issue."

"Police officers have enormously difficult jobs and we are grateful they put their lives on the line every time they go to work," he said in a prepared statement. "Thanks to final negotiations on this bill,



A new law will bring numerous reforms to policing in Massachusetts, including the creation of a civilian-led police oversight board, a ban on chokeholds, and limits on "no-knock" warrants.

police officers will have a system they can trust and our communities will be safer for it."

The much-anticipated law was developed with and endorsed by the Black and Latino Caucus and has the support of the Massachusetts Chiefs of Police Association.

Former House Speaker Robert DeLeo, who resigned from the Legislature on Dec. 29, called the law "one of the most comprehensive approaches to police reform in the United States since the tragic murder of George Floyd," whose killing at the hands of police officers in Minneapolis in May sparked nationwide protests.

Senate President Karen Spilka called the law "a necessary first step towards achieving systemic change."

Gov. Baker amended the bill to strengthen its due process protections for law enforcement, add police labor representation on the commission, and strengthen the bill's facial recognition provisions.

The new law identifies the general circumstances under which police officers can use physical force, and specifically bans the use of chokeholds and prohibits firing into a fleeing vehicle unless

doing so is both necessary to prevent imminent harm and proportionate to that risk of harm. The law generally precludes officers from using rubber pellets, chemical weapons or canine units against a crowd. Violations of any of these provisions may provide grounds for an officer to have their certification suspended or revoked.

The law places strict limits on the use of so-called "no-knock" warrants, requiring such warrants to be issued by a judge and only in situations where an officer's safety would be at risk if they announced their presence and only where there are no children or adults over the age of 65 in the home. The legislation provides for an exception when those children or older adults are themselves at risk of harm. The law requires law enforcement to seek a court order when conducting a facial recognition search except in emergency situations.

The legislation includes key provisions of the State Police reform legislation that the administration filed in January, providing new tools to improve accountability and discipline within the department and to enhance diversity in the department's recruitment and promotional practices.

# **Budget outlook for FY22 remains challenging**

### By John Robertson

The enduring economic hardships caused by the COVID-19 pandemic will pose both revenue and spending challenges to state and local budget writers next year, but may be less dire than first expected.

The Department of Revenue and other fiscal experts and economists offered outlooks for the economy and state revenues over the second half of fiscal 2021 and for fiscal 2022 during the annual "consensus" revenue hearing convened on Dec. 15 by the House and Senate Ways and Means committees and the governor's budget office.

Legislative leaders and the administration are expected to reach agreement on a tax revenue forecast for fiscal 2022 sometime this month. The forecast would be used in the governor's budget recommendation, due to be filed by Jan. 27, and the House and Senate budget plans that are customarily released in April and May, respectively.

The annual revenue hearing marks the start of the budget season and is important for municipal officials because it provides insights into the direction of the economy and anticipated state revenues available to fund municipal and school aid programs next year, particularly Unrestricted General Government Aid, which in recent years (with the exception of fiscal 2021) has increased at the same rate as the "consensus" projection for the growth of state tax collections.





The House and Senate Ways and Means committees, chaired by Rep. Aaron Michlewitz (right) and Sen. Michael Rodrigues, respectively, met jointly on Dec. 15 to discuss the fiscal 2022 revenue forecast.

For the current fiscal year, the Department of Revenue projects a drop in tax collections of about 6%, which is a bit steeper than the 5% forecast provided by the Massachusetts Taxpayers Foundation. Both outlooks are more favorable than they were earlier in the year, when taxes were expected to drop by more than 10% – billions of dollars below the final number for last year.

For fiscal 2022, the mid-range tax number offered by the Department of Revenue is almost 4% above the expected fiscal 2021 level. The Taxpayers Foundation projects growth of 5.5%.

The outlooks for next year were all heavily qualified with an expectation of control of the coronavirus and help from the federal government.

"While the FY22 forecast represents an improved fiscal outlook from the dark,

early days of the pandemic that influenced our FY21 revenue projections, we are still not out of the woods," warned Taxpayers Foundation President Eileen McAnneny. "All the optimistic assumptions concerning vaccine distribution, efficacy and inoculation rates and the ensuing speedy economic recovery upon which this forecast is based must materialize for the fiscal 2022 revenue projection to be realized.

"Given the unprecedented level of uncertainty the pandemic has prompted," she said, "we would still urge a conservative approach to budgeting."

Longer term, McAnneny noted, "Law-makers need to be paying close attention to fundamental shifts in the economy that could have significant budgetary implications. Zoom meetings, telework, telehealth, remote learning, food delivery services – all have changed the way people communicate and socialize. Whether or not these potentially seismic changes persist post-pandemic will dictate how the state's economy evolves and their future impact on tax revenues."

Pandemic-related disruption to local schools and the impact on enrollment numbers could significantly affect school aid allocations next year.

# MMA Annual Meeting features timely, informative workshops

### By John Ouellette

The MMA has been working hard to plan the lively, informative Annual Meeting & Trade Show that you've come to expect, and a central feature is the range of informative and interactive workshops on timely topics.

While it's disappointing that we can't be together in person this year, the virtual format will enable all registrants to attend as many workshops as they'd like, because the high-quality, online Annual Meeting platform will be available for a full month. Attendees may take in the workshops whenever it's convenient.

The meeting will feature <u>15</u>, <u>45-minute</u> <u>workshops</u> on these important topics:

- Governing Remotely
- Helping Local Businesses
- Leading the Way to Net Zero
- Workforce Diversity
- Thriving in a Virtual Reality
- Setting and Achieving Cybersecurity Goals
- Public Health Lessons Learned From the Pandemic
- Municipal Law Update

- Economic and Fiscal Outlook
- · Mutual Aid in Public Works
- Cultivating Equity
- Labor Law Update
- Managing Bias in Police Departments
- Pandemic Permitting
- Water Quality

During the live sessions, there will be opportunities to ask questions of the expert presenters.

Click here for complete information about the Annual Meeting, including workshops and speakers. ●

# **New coronavirus relief law has CARES extension**

### By John Robertson

After delays, President Donald Trump on Dec. 27, signed a law that includes coronavirus relief and stimulus, a government spending plan for fiscal 2021, and a mix of proposed changes to tax and other federal laws.

Included in the \$900 billion coronavirus response and relief part of the omnibus bill (H.R. 133) is a one-year extension of the deadline for use of Coronavirus Relief Fund allocations provided through the CARES Act.

Section 1001 extends the date by which state and local governments must make expenditures with CARES Act Coronavirus Relief Fund awards from Dec. 30, 2020, to Dec. 31, 2021.

The bill did not provide any new direct aid to state and local governments, which has been a top priority for municipal officials and organizations across the country, and did not change the rules governing allowable use of funds.

On Dec. 29, the <u>Federal Funds Office in</u> the administration's Executive Office for <u>Administration and Finance sent notice</u> to cities and towns about the new stimu-

lus law, including the extension of the CARES Act Coronavirus Relief Fund "covered period."

The coronavirus relief parts of the law include \$286 billion for enhanced unemployment insurance and direct payments to individuals and families and \$325 billion for small business relief. The law also has

\$69 billion for vaccine procurement and distribution, contact tracing and related health care services.

The law includes \$82 billion for education, with \$54 billion set aside for the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund.

According to reports, an estimated \$1.3 billion has been allocated to Massachusetts to aid K-12 schools and higher



The federal stimulus package signed into law on Dec. 27 does not include any new direct aid to state and local governments.

education, including \$815 million for a K-12 school emergency relief fund, \$472 million for higher education, and \$47 million for a Governor's Emergency Relief Fund. Updates will be provided as new information becomes available.

• <u>View Congressional summary of new</u> <u>federal coronavirus relief law (PDF)</u> •

# Legislature ends session with action on housing, transportation

### By John Robertson

The House and Senate ended the 2019-2020 legislative session in the early morning hours on Jan. 6 by sending to the governor two major bills that had been in the works since the summer, and dozens of smaller bills, including a number of local petitions. The session-ending meetings wrapped up just before 5 a.m.

The MMA is reviewing these bills and others approved in the waning days and hours of the session and will provide additional updates as soon as possible.

### **Partnerships for Growth**

In near unanimous votes, the House and Senate approved a long-awaited conference committee report (H. 5250) on an economic development bill meant to sustain and support economic growth and job creation.

The bill includes controversial sections related to local zoning and permitting statutes.

The compromise bill contains a version of the governor's Housing Choices proposal, which would lower from two-thirds to a simple majority the threshold of votes required to approve certain permits and zoning changes aimed at increasing housing density.

However, the bill also includes language (section 18), opposed by the MMA, that would require the 175 cities and towns in the MBTA region to have at least one by-right multifamily housing district of a reasonable size as determined by the state's housing agency. Any city or town that fails to comply would not be eligible for funds from the MassWorks Program, the Housing Choice Initiative, or the state's Local Capital Projects Fund.

### **Transportation investments**

In a second round of near-unanimous votes, the House and Senate at 3 a.m. approved a conference committee report (H. 5248) on a \$16.5 billion transportation bond bill.

The bill includes substantial funding for highway and bridge maintenance, train modernization and other major transportation and transit capital projects.

The borrowing package includes renewed funding for several priority municipal grant programs, such as Complete Streets and Small Bridges, as well as new Municipal Pavement Partnership and Local Bottleneck Reduction programs, and funding to support construction and repair of state-numbered, locally owned roads.

The final transportation bond package does not include long-term funding for the Chapter 90 local road program. Legislators separated the fiscal 2021 Chapter 90 authorization from an earlier version of the bond bill, and the governor signed that one-year authorization last July. A new Chapter 90 bond bill for fiscal 2022 will be needed in the spring.

# Video highlights link between taxes, essential services

By Jennifer Kavanaugh

The leaders of Lawrence and Arlington share their views on the property tax and local services in a new video from the <u>Lincoln Institute of Land Policy</u> that highlights the connection between taxes and the ability of communities to control their own destinies.

Lawrence Mayor Daniel Rivera and Arlington Town Manager Adam Chapdelaine are interviewed in the <u>nine-minute video</u>, "Property Tax 101: Why the Property Tax," which explains the importance of the property tax and the value of local government.

"I think about local government as the most important form of government," Rivera says in the video. "It's the closest to people. Let me tell you something: if one mayor falls down on the job, if one city council falls down on the job, you feel it immediately. And so local government and the way we fund local government is very, very important."

The Lincoln Institute's video makes the case that local government functions well by avoiding much of the partisanship and bureaucracy that bog down higher levels of government. In the video, Chapdelaine says that local governments are able to be nimble and find innovative ways to address issues like transportation needs and climate change. He also said that the work of municipalities is integral to people's daily lives.

"If we're doing our job well, you don't think of us, because it is just your life," Chapdelaine says.

He also describes the tangible benefits provided by local governments. Every time people turn on a faucet, flush a toilet, put out their trash, or drive on roads that are repaired and plowed, they are experiencing local government doing its job.

"Everything you interact with in your local daily life is somehow supported by local government," Chapdelaine adds.

The locally controlled process of taxation and spending gives residents an incentive to become engaged citizens, results in more efficient government, and better matches spending priorities with the wishes and needs of residents, the video points out.



In a video called "Property Tax 101: Why the Property Tax" produced by the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, Lawrence Mayor Daniel Rivera, left, and Arlington Town Manager Adam Chapdelaine discuss the importance of local government services and the key role of the local property tax.

The video includes footage of Arlington's April 2019 special Town Meeting, where voters deliberated whether the town should build a new high school. After discussing the project and the property-tax implications, the Town Meeting overwhelmingly voted to send the question to the local ballot, where the project was approved a couple of months later.

The video also addresses the differences between Arlington and Lawrence, and the implications for local property taxes. Between 2014 and 2018, Arlington had a median home value of \$609,800, compared to Lawrence's \$255,800. As a result, Arlington can raise property taxes more easily for big-ticket items such as a new high school, while Lawrence needs more state funding to provide greater educational equity.

Despite that additional reliance on state funding, Rivera said, his city places great importance on local receipts. It recently increased taxes during the pandemic, he said, because ultimately the city must ensure that it has the police and firefighting protection it needs, and that the streets get cleaned and the sidewalks are fixed.

"No one cares about those things more than us," Rivera said.

The Lincoln Institute, which has an office in Cambridge, advocates for effec-

tive land use, taxation and stewardship, and researches property-tax practices worldwide.

In the video, Chapdelaine says that local governments are able to be nimble and find innovative ways to address issues like transportation needs and climate change. He also said that the work of municipalities is integral to people's daily lives.

The institute is promoting the video on its social media channels, will feature the video in its digital Land Lines magazine, and ultimately plans to include it on a dedicated property-tax web page as part of a wider education effort. While the institute typically directs its property-tax data toward policymakers, policy analysts and researchers, it hopes that the Property Tax 101 initiative reaches a more general audience nationwide.

# **Auditor: PILOTs undermined by lack of funding**

The Commonwealth's payments-in-lieuof-taxes program for state-owned lands is underfunded and disproportionately disadvantages smaller, rural communities, according to <u>a report issued by</u> <u>State Auditor Suzanne Bump</u> on Dec. 10.

The report also finds that state laws governing taxes paid to cities and towns by solar power generators are outdated, confusing for both municipalities and the solar operators, and may slow the adoption of solar technologies.

PILOT programs help municipal governments replace some or all of the revenue lost due to certain state property tax exemptions, such as those associated with nonprofit organizations, recreational areas and properties owned by the state.

"These PILOT programs were designed to help communities with significant state-owned land holdings and to promote solar development," Bump said, "but chronic underfunding of the former and rulings from the Appellate Tax Board on the latter have blunted their impact. There are simple steps lawmakers can take to get these programs back on track: provide adequate funding, implement provisions to protect communities with declining property values, and clarify that solar tax exemptions are designed for residential and small commercial installations.

"At a time when municipalities are facing historic financial challenges, I encourage the Legislature to act quickly on these recommendations."

The report is the first from the state auditor's office in 19 years to look at PI-LOTs for state-owned land, and the first ever to review the solar energy facility PILOT program.

The <u>report</u> was produced by the auditor's Division of Local Mandates. The auditor's <u>municipal impact study of the state-owned land PILOT and solar taxation policies</u> is also available online.

# State-owned land PILOT underfunded

The state-owned-land PILOT program provides reimbursement payments to municipalities for tax-exempt land owned by the Commonwealth. In the last 20 years, the program's funding has not met statutory obligations to reimburse municipalities.



Suzanne Bump

Since fiscal 2009, the program's appropriation has remained flat, at close to \$30 million, while property tax collections across the state have increased by approximately 57% over the same period.

Bump's study estimates that the Legislature would need to increase the state-owned-land PILOT appropriation to at least \$45.6 million in order to fully fund the program.

"The state-owned land PILOT program represents a pact," said Linda Dunlavy, executive director of the Franklin Regional Council of Governments. "Cities and towns will house and provide critical services for untaxed properties that benefit the public, such as universities, recreational lands and government buildings, and in exchange, the state government will ensure they are fairly compensated.

"These PILOT programs were designed to help communities with significant stateowned land holdings and to promote solar development..."

- Auditor Suzanne Bump

"But years of underfunding of this critical program have strained this agreement and local budgets. With COVID-19 challenging local government budgets like never before, now is the time for the Commonwealth to finally fully fund this important program."

Under the state-owned land PILOT program's funding formula, reimbursements are partly based on each municipality's state-owned land value. Bump's study notes that communities with decreasing, stagnant or slowly increasing property values have seen reductions in their PILOT payments. As a result, communities in the eastern part of the state,

where property values have consistently risen, have seen their PILOT reimbursements increase, while reimbursements to communities in the western part of the state have generally decreased.

Bump is urging the Legislature to add a hold-harmless provision to the PILOT program to ensure that communities with property values that are declining or growing at below average rates do not see their reimbursements reduced.

# PILOT confusion stymies solar development

Under state law, municipalities can enter into PILOT agreements with energy generation companies, including solar energy producers. Such agreements provide predictable revenue for the communities and security to generation facilities by allowing them to anticipate future tax payments.

Decisions by the Appellate Tax Board, however, have allowed large commercial solar facilities to avoid paying personal property taxes on their equipment by taking advantage of an exemption on solar equipment that was designed to promote residential and small commercial solar installations, according to the auditor's report. These rulings have created confusion for local officials and may result in slower rates of solar development in the future, the report states.

Bump is calling on the Legislature to clarify the solar property tax exemption and the tax status of solar facilities that may be eligible to enter into a PILOT agreement.

Sen. Michael Rodrigues and Rep. Jeffrey Roy have brought forward bills to address these problems by clarifying the solar tax exemption and resolving issues resulting from the ATB rulings.

Concord Assessor Lane Partridge, past president of the Massachusetts Association of Assessing Officers, said the auditor's report "confirms the challenges local officials and municipalities have been having administering the solar property tax exemption law, and the need for legislative change. These provisions were enacted many decades ago and are outdated in terms of technology or current municipal practices."

For more information, visit  $\underline{www.mass.}$   $\underline{gov/auditor}$ .

# FY21 state budget takes final shape as session ends

### By John Robertson

With the legislative session ending on Jan. 5, the House and Senate over the last weeks of the year took up vetoes and items returned by the governor to give final shape to the fiscal 2021 state budget plan that was signed in mid-December.

Some of the overrides and returned items included funding for local government accounts and important law changes.

The \$45.9 billion budget law, Chapter 227 of the Acts of 2020, maintains funding of the Unrestricted General Government Aid account at \$1.13 billion, and includes \$5.28 billion for Chapter 70 education aid, a \$107 million increase.

Gov. Charlie Baker vetoed \$167 million in spending items and a number of proposed law changes, and he returned a dozen

other policy items to the Legislature with recommended amendments.

The Legislature overrode Baker's veto of \$1.5 million for the Commonwealth Sewer Rate Relief Fund, full and partial vetoes of funding for several other targeted grant programs, and a wide variety of other spending items.

The governor also vetoed \$53 million in funding for one-time grants to schools to help support educational quality during the pandemic based on per student allocations, though he proposed in a separate budget bill that the same amount of assistance be provided on an as-needed basis. This veto was overridden on the last day of the session.

The governor signed a provision to extend through calendar 2021 the waiver of the cap on hours worked and salary earned

by retired public employees who return to work in the public sector (Section 68) and the provision to establish an interagency task force to review and investigate water and ground contamination by per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) across the Commonwealth (Section 98).

The governor returned with a proposed amendment to Section 99, which was drafted to provide for early voting by mail in state and municipal elections through March 31, 2021. This section was re-enacted by the Legislature as H. 5184 and signed by the governor.

The state had been operating under interim budgets since the fiscal year began on July 1, while state leaders awaited more solid data about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the economy and tax collections.

# Administration unveils \$668M small business relief package

### By Brittney Franklin

On Dec. 23, the administration announced a \$668 million small business relief package to help the hardest-hit main street and downtown small businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The grants will be administered through the Massachusetts Growth Capital Corporation.

On Dec. 21, the administration announced \$49 million in first-round grants administered through the MGCC. The Small Business Grant Program, established in the fall, has a pool of applicants awaiting funds due to limited initial funding availability.

The MGCC is continuing to review existing applications and will make awards over the coming weeks to companies that meet demographic and industry preferences. Businesses that have already applied to the MGCC's Small Business Grant Program do not need to reapply to the new program.

The \$668 million package will also be used to set up another grant program administered by the MGCC for businesses that fall into specific industry sectors. Eligible businesses will include some of the hardest-hit industries: restaurants, bars, caterers, indoor recreation and entertainment establishments, gyms and fitness centers, event-support professionals such as

photographers, personal services, and retail. For additional details, see Sector-Specific Relief Grant Program for Massachusetts Businesses.

The application period for the new program will run from Dec. 31 through Jan. 15. Applicants will be eligible to receive up to \$75,000, but not more than three

months of operating expenses.

Businesses that have already submitted complete and accurate applications to the first program and either (a) meet the demographic preferences from the first program or (b) meet the sector-specific preferences from the new program will receive funding.

The demographic preferences are: minority-owned, women-owned, veteran-owned, LGBTQ+-owned businesses, businesses owned by persons with disabilities, or businesses located in Gateway Cities.

Businesses that have already applied to the MGCC through the first program will

At a Dec. 23 press briefing, Housing and Economic Development Secretary Mike Kennealy discusses the administration's new \$668 million program to help small businesses affected by the pandemic. Also participating in the briefing was Gov. Charlie Baker (background, left). (Photo courtesy Joshua Qualls/Governor's Press Office)

be notified of their award status by Jan. 18.

Businesses that have not already applied to the MGCC and choose to apply in the new program will be notified of their award status in February.

The new grant program relied in part on the \$900 billion federal stimulus law that was signed on Dec. 27 and grants additional flexibility to states in administering

For more information, including eligibility and how to apply, visit empoweringsmallbusiness.org.

# **Annual Meeting to feature 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 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.

Here are this year's Trade Show exhibitors:

Abacus Health Solutions
Absolute Auctions & Realty
AllOne Employee Assistance Program
Allways Health Partners
Altus Dental
Auctions International
BMSI
Boston Mutual Life Insurance Company
Bridgewater State University, College of Graduate
Studies
CAI Technologies
Cascade Cart Solutions
Casella Waste Systems

Central Square Technologies
City Point Partners
CLA, LLP
CVEC (Cape & Vineyard Electric Cooperative)
DGI Communications
Division of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance
EFI Global

Eri Global Environmental Partners Eric A. Kinsherf, CPA Full Circle Technologies Fuss & O'Neill GovHR USA Green International Affiliates Health New England

Hilltop Securities In-House Alternatives KFDA Risk Advisors

Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners Massachusetts Education and Government Association Massachusetts Executive Office of Housing and Eco-

nomic Development and Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development Massachusetts Federation of Building Officials Massachusetts Interlocal Insurance Association Massachusetts Municipal Depository Trust

Massachusetts Municipal Depository Trust
Massachusetts Office of the State Auditor/Division of
Local Mandates

MassCyberCenter at Mass Tech Collaborative MassDevelopment

MassRecycle Marsh and McLennan Agency

Melanson

Melansor

Meridia Interactive Solutions Metropolitan Area Planning Council

MIIA Risk Management MIIA Wellness

Miyares and Harrington Nitsch Engineering

Norwood Bank
O'Brien and Sons
Old Colony Planning Co

Old Colony Planning Council Pare Corporation Pierce Davis & Perritano

Precision Concrete Cutting/Safesidewalks ServiceMaster by Gaudet/Williams/South Shore



The Trade Show's virtual exhibit hall will allow officials to interact with exhibitors and learn about their products and services.

SLR International Corporation (previously Milone & MacBroom)
Solect Energy
Springbrook Software
Strategic Municipal Solutions
Suffolk University, Institute for Public Service
T-Mobile Work Perks
TEC
TechChoice
Trident Environmental Group
Vadar Systems
Verizon
Weston & Sampson
Wright-Pierce

The MMA Annual Meeting & Trade Show also has 12 sponsors (see related story, page 1).

For more information, contact Karen LaPointe at klapointe@mma.org or 800-884-1498, ext. 154. ●

# Select Board Association to hold Annual Business Meeting on Jan. 8

The Massachusetts Select Board Association will elect new officers and discuss best practices for evaluating key municipal employees during its Annual Business Meeting via Zoom on Friday, Jan. 8, from 9 to 10:30 a.m.

The business meeting will feature opening remarks from MSA President Katie Conlon and MMA Executive Director Geoff Beckwith, followed by a report from the MSA Nominating Committee and a vote on the 2021 MSA Board of Directors.

The meeting will also feature a panel discussion covering best practices for select boards in evaluating and developing key municipal employees, including town managers and department heads that report directly to the select board. The panelists will be Wareham Town



James Boudreau



Vanessa Hale

Counsel Richard Bowen, Scituate Town Administrator James Boudreau, and Southborough Assistant Town Administrator Vanessa Hale, vice chair of the Massachusetts Municipal Human Resources association. The moderator will be Winchester Select Board Chair Michael Bettencourt, first vice president of the MSA. Because the meeting will take place on Zoom, all attendees will be visible on camera. Voting on the proposed 2021 board slate will be conducted using Zoom's polling feature, which requires use of the Zoom desktop or mobile app.

The meeting is free, but advance registration is required. An email with the registration link has been sent to all select board members. Attendance at this meeting is open only to members of the Massachusetts Select Board Association.

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

# State increases restrictions to stop spread of COVID

By John Ouellette

In the midst of a COVID-19 surge, the Baker-Polito administration on Dec. 22 announced further restrictions to help stop the spread in the Commonwealth, including new capacity and gathering limits.

The measures took effect on Dec. 26, and will remain in effect until noon on Jan. 10, 2021, unless further extended by the governor.

The new rules limit gatherings to 10 persons indoors and 25 outdoors (at both private homes and event venues and public spaces).

Many types of businesses, including restaurants, offices and retailers, must limit occupancy to 25% of capacity.

The revised limits supersede previously existing limits in the sector-specific protocols for Phase 3, Step 1, of the state's <u>four-phase reopening plan</u>. All other terms of COVID-19 gatherings order (including exceptions) and all sector-specific workplace safety rules remain in effect.

In a press briefing on Dec. 22, Gov. Charlie Baker pointed out that the state is not making changes in its guidance regarding K-12 schools.

He said reducing capacity at businesses was "an enormously difficult decision," but said he was hopeful that a new federal aid package would "help to reduce the damage," and said the administra-

tion was ready to launch a "significant" small business relief package of its own.

"COVID-19 is relentless," he said. "It's been a hard year for everyone. ... We all need to hang in there, stay vigilant. ... The work we do now has a lot to do with the bridge we build to get to the vaccine."

At several points, the governor expressed concerns about the burden that COVID-19 is placing on the state's health care system.

Businesses and industries in Massachusetts subject to a 25% capacity limit include the following:

- Restaurants (based on permitted seating capacity)
- · Office spaces
- · Retail businesses
- · Places of worship
- Libraries
- Close-contact personal services
- Fitness centers and health clubs
- Theatres and performance venues
- Casinos
- Driving and flight schools
- Golf facilities (for indoor spaces)
- · Lodging (for common areas)
- Arcades and indoor recreation businesses



Gov. Charlie Baker announces additional measures to curb the spread of COVID-19 during a Dec. 22 press briefing. The measures include lowering limits on gathering sizes and business occupancy. (Photo courtesy Joshua Qualls/Governor's Press Office)

Museums, cultural facilities and guided tours

Workers and staff do not count toward the occupancy count for restaurants, places of worship, close-contact personal services and retail businesses.

In order to preserve health care personnel resources, the Department of Public Health released updated guidance to hospitals around nonessential, elective invasive procedures. Effective Dec. 26, all hospitals are directed to postpone or cancel all nonessential inpatient elective invasive procedures in order to maintain and increase inpatient capacity.

# **MMA publishes new Massachusetts Municipal Directory**

The MMA's 2020-2021 Massachusetts Municipal Directory was published on Dec. 21 and is available online as an easyto-use pdf.

The MMA adopted the new electronic format for the first time this year due to the COVID-19 emergency. The directory was 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 includes 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 directory is available online as a password-pro-

tected PDF to members and others who receive the publication. The MMA has sent 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 <a href="https://www.mma.org/about-mma/publications">www.mma.org/about-mma/publications</a> to purchase online access.

Those who might be experiencing difficulty accessing their copy of the directory, or who believe they should have received a login email but haven't, should email directory@mma.org for assistance.

The MMA greatly appreciates the help of local officials across the state who used the MMA's online tool to update their communities' profiles for this year's directory.

- Jennifer Kavanaugh

# **Group releases Minimum Baseline of Cybersecurity**

By Meg Speranza

Technology plays a vital role in the lives of Massachusetts municipalities and citizens, and it has only become more critical since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Services once considered "nice to have" have become required, as people have moved to working and attending school from home and technologies like virtual meeting applications have become mainstream.

The changing role of technology has created larger threats to the information we need to live and work. That has led to an increased focus on cybersecurity and a growing need to actively protect and defend the networks and systems that hold that information.

Cyber adversaries have increased the volume of attacks, taking advantage of a crisis to find new ways to exploit information systems. Recent attacks on major hospitals, universities and public agencies underscore the point that there has never been a greater need for people to be aware of cybersecurity.

Municipalities and school systems are among the most vulnerable organizations during this pandemic, facing cyber threats while trying to maintain "business as usual," often while working remotely and without the usual day-to-day support.

# Minimum Baseline of Cybersecurity

The MassCyberCenter and the Cyber Resilient Massachusetts Working Group have been working on cybersecurity initiatives aimed at bolstering municipal cybersecurity and resiliency. In order to help municipalities address the growing cybersecurity risks, the Working Group recently released a Minimum Baseline of Cybersecurity for Municipalities guide, part of the Cyber Center's Municipal Toolkit.

The purpose of defining a "minimum baseline" – the lowest level of cybersecurity municipalities should achieve – is to encourage municipalities to improve their ability to protect and defend themselves from a cyberattack, inspire



Municipalities can take a number of steps to bolster their cybersecurity and resiliency.

collaboration, and strengthen cybersecurity resilience across Massachusetts. These basics can be done fairly inexpensively, but require an investment of time from municipal employees.

The Minimum Baseline is made up of four goals:

- 1. Trained and Cyber-secure Employees to reduce risk of cybersecurity incident by improving the training and awareness of system users.
- 2. Improved Threat Sharing for a faster response to threats and improved regional awareness and resilience.
- 3. Cyber Incident Response Planning to create an effective strategy to respond to incidents and to strengthen municipal defenses against incidents.
- 4. Secure Technology Environment and Best Practices to reduce the threat of cybersecurity incidents and minimize incident impacts.

Each goal includes a description of how to attain the goal and associated resources that provide tools and information to help municipalities along the way.

### **Annual Meeting workshop**

The Minimum Baseline of Cybersecurity and how to protect your municipality will be the focus of a workshop during the MMA Annual Meeting & Trade Show on Jan. 21, from 12:30 to 1:15 p.m.

"Setting and Achieving Cybersecurity Goals for Your Community" will be moderated by MassCyberCenter Director The Minimum Baseline of Cybersecurity for Municipalities is made up of four goals:

- Trained and Cybersecure Employees
- Improved Threat Sharing
- Cyber Incident Response Planning
- 4. Secure Technology Environment and Best Practices

Stephanie Helm and will feature four panelists:

- Sam Curry, Chief Security Officer, Cybereason
- Michael Kar, cybersecurity attorney, Wilson Elser Moskowitz Edelman & Dicker LLP
- Meg Speranza, Resiliency Program Manager, MassCyberCenter
- Mike Steben, Chief Information Officer, City of Pittsfield

The workshop, presented by the Massachusetts Interlocal Insurance Association (MIIA), will provide an overview of current cyber threats, tools available to help municipalities strengthen their cybersecurity posture, and examples of how municipalities are using the tools and creating a cybersecurity culture. Information about services available to those insured through the MIIA program, specifically around how services fit into a community's Cyber Incident Response Plan, will also be provided. Time will be set aside at the end of the program for questions.

Meg Speranza is Resiliency Program Manager at the MassCyberCenter. For more about the MassCyberCenter, visit masscybercenter.org.

# **DHCD** expands services for tenants facing eviction

The Department of Housing and Community Development announced that it has extensively expanded its free legal services for tenants facing eviction, the next phase of the Eviction Diversion Initiative.

The COVID-19 Eviction Legal Help **Project** supports low-income tenants, as well as low-income owner-occupants of two- and three-family properties navigating the eviction process, before the eviction process or in concert with mediation services.

These services can be used before the eviction process begins, as well as once a notice has been received, and can be used in coordination with community mediation services offered through Resolution Massachusetts.

For the legal services, income eligibility is capped at 200% of the federal poverty level.

Legal services will be available in every region and can be found on a new website built for this initiative: evictionlegalhelp.org. Households can also call 2-1-1, and learn more at the COVID Housing Help website.

The DHCD is asking local officials to post and share information about expanded legal services. Public information campaign materials, including a new video in English and Spanish, social media posts and new flyers in seven languages, can be found online.

The DHCD is encouraging tenants and



Expanded legal services for tenants have been made available through the state's Eviction Diversion Initiative.

landlords to learn about legal help as well as community mediation resources. Eligible tenants and landlords are urged to seek help as soon as possible, before a court filing occurs.

# Legislature OKs climate and net zero emissions bill

### **Bv Ariela Lovett**

The Legislature on Jan. 4 passed and sent to the governor a multifaceted bill to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and address climate change.

The compromise bill (S. 2995), released by a legislative conference committee on Jan. 3, would limit statewide greenhouse gas emissions to "net zero" by 2050 (with gross emissions at least 85% below 1990 levels), and would set emissions limits for 2030 at half or less of 1990 levels and for 2040 at no more than one-quarter of 1990 levels.

The bill would set statewide emissions limits at five-year intervals and require the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs to develop comprehensive and specific plans for reaching each goal. The bill would also require Energy and Environmental Affairs to produce regular reports on how the state is doing on emissions goals.

The bill focuses on emissions produced by six priority sectors of the economy and would mandate that emissions sublimits be established for these sectors, which are:

- Electric power
- Transportation
- · Commercial and industrial heating and cooling
- · Residential heating and cooling
- Industrial processes
- Natural gas distribution and service

Described by the committee as a climate toolkit, the bill includes a range of measures to help mitigate climate change, such as establishing a local-option net zero stretch energy code, enabling municipal buildings to host rooftop solar arrays, setting energy efficiency standards for appliances, and addressing natural gas safety.

The bill includes new language related to property tax exemptions for solar and wind power, expanding an existing exemption (clause 45 of section 5 of Chapter 59) to include larger solar energy systems (up to 25KW). The language also adds a new broad property tax exemption for fuel cell systems.

The bill includes elements from a series of Senate bills approved last January as well as a House bill approved last July. A detailed summary of the bill is available on the website of Sen. Michael Barrett. who co-chaired the conference committee with Rep. Thomas Golden Jr.

"Reducing emissions to net zero is the contribution Massachusetts must make to the nation's, and the world's, larger climate effort," the conference committee stated in a press release. "No question, doing our part is a big lift. With the tools the Legislature brings together here, we can construct the response we need and provide a blueprint to other states."

"Reducing emissions to net zero is the contribution Massachusetts must make to the nation's, and the world's, larger climate effort." the conference committee stated in a press release.

The MMA Policy Committee on Energy and the Environment will present a workshop at MMA Annual Meeting on Jan. 21 titled "Municipalities Lead the Way to Net Zero." The panel discussion will explore ways that municipalities have and will continue to invest in greenhouse gas emissions reduction and clean energy alternatives.

# **Dan Rivera set to lead MassDevelopment**

### By Jennifer Kavanaugh

Lawrence Mayor Daniel Rivera, who helped steer his city through financial challenges and public safety and health crises over the past seven years, will resign this month to take a job leading MassDevelopment, the Commonwealth's economic development and finance authority.

Nominated by Gov. Charlie Baker and approved by MassDevelopment's Board of Directors last month, Rivera will become the agency's president and CEO on Jan. 11, replacing Lauren Liss, who served for three years.

In a statement, Gov. Baker said that Rivera would offer leadership experience, compassion and a commitment to the economic recovery and growth of municipalities.

"In his role as mayor for the city of Lawrence, Dan met every challenge and seized every opportunity to support his residents and create a stronger economy, including more jobs and housing," Baker said. "I'm confident he will work tirelessly in his new role to support economic growth statewide for all the residents in Massachusetts."

MassDevelopment works with businesses, nonprofits, banks and communities to stimulate economic growth statewide. Over the past seven years, Rivera has worked with MassDevelopment and other agencies to finish 13 infrastructure projects.

Rivera said he is excited to focus on economic development during trying times.

"In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, MassDevelopment stands to play a role in reconstruction of our economy that is inclusive, equitable and focuses on neighborhoods and business districts in every corner of the Commonwealth," Rivera said.

Rivera brings more than a decade of city government experience, as manager of a \$341 million city operating budget, a \$92 million capital improvement plan, and a workforce of 3,500 employees. First elected to the Lawrence City Council in 2009, he served one term before winning his first mayoral race in 2013. He was reelected in 2017, but would have been unable to run in 2021 due to the city's mayoral term limit.

Rivera may be best known for his leadership following natural gas explosions and fires in September 2018 that damaged properties in Lawrence, Andover and North Andover, injured two dozen people and killed a Lawrence teenager. Working with Andover Town Manager Andrew Flanagan and then-North Andover Town Manager Andrew Maylor to help residents and businesses, Rivera even slept in city shelters with his displaced residents.

Over the past 10 months, Rivera has led efforts to fight COVID in a city that has been hit hard by the virus, with its larger proportion of vulnerable and low-income residents. Rivera served on the Baker-Polito administration's COVID-19 Reopening Advisory Board earlier this year and more recently on the COVID-19 Vaccine Working Group.

Rivera improved Lawrence's fiscal stability, building up cash reserves, bolstering the credit rating, and establishing the city's first five-year capital improvement plan. The mayor oversaw residential and commercial development totalling 1.5 million square feet, with 2,400 new housing units to be finished by the end of 2022. He is also credited with bringing greater hiring diversity to city and school departments and focusing on quality-0f-life improvements, including making three bus routes free to residents in high-need neighborhoods.

Rivera has served on various regional and statewide boards, including the state's Latino Advisory Commission. This past fall, Rivera received a 2020 Environmental Merit Award from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's New England region and MassInc's first Mayor Bill Carpenter Award for Excellence in Gateway City Leadership, named for the highly regarded Brockton mayor who died in 2019.

An Army veteran who served in Iraq and Kuwait, he worked as a special assistant to former Lawrence Mayor Patricia Dowling and as economic development director for former Congressman Marty Meehan, who is now president of the University of Massachusetts. He earned a bachelor's degree in political science from UMass Amherst and a master's in business administration from Suffolk University.



Lawrence Mayor Daniel Rivera

Rivera improved
Lawrence's fiscal stability,
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Rivera told the Lawrence City Council on Dec. 15 that he would work with city leaders to ensure a smooth transition, and that his regard for the city will not end with his resignation.

"Just know I did not run for mayor because I sought the power, the title, or the trappings of high office," Rivera said. "I signed up because there was work to do, much work, important work, to make Lawrence better and to improve the lives and fortunes of its people."

# **Administration outlines COVID-19 vaccine plan**

The Baker-Polito administration on Dec. 9 announced allocation and distribution plans for the first round of COVID-19 vaccine shipments to Massachusetts, which began on Dec. 15.

According to the administration, the state's first shipment of nearly 60,000 doses of the Pfizer vaccine was ordered from the federal government on Dec. 4 and will be delivered directly to 21 hospitals in eight counties, as well as to the Department of Public Health's Immunization Lab. Doses will then be redistributed to 74 hospitals in all 14 counties for front line medical workers.

The next 40,000 doses of Pfizer vaccine will be allocated to the Federal Pharmacy Program to begin vaccinating staff and residents of skilled nursing facilities, rest homes and assisted living residences. The vaccine is being prioritized for these groups to maximize life preservation and to support the health care system, the administration announced.

Massachusetts was expecting 300,000 first doses of the vaccine to be delivered by the end of December. The first vaccines, manufactured by Pfizer and Moderna, will require two doses administered three to four weeks apart.

The administration has launched a new vaccine website, and has posted a vaccine presentation. Answers to Frequently Asked Questions are also available online.

While all delivery dates and quantities are subject to change, the administration plans to receive and distribute more than 2 million doses to priority population groups by the end of March.

In collaboration with the COVID-19 Vaccine Advisory Group, the administration designated groups of medical workers, first responders and residents most at risk for serious illness to receive the vaccine before the general population. The Vaccine Advisory Group is made up of medical, infectious disease and public

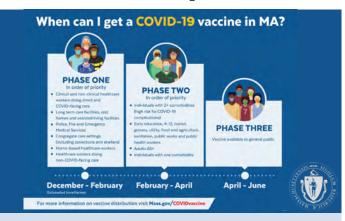
health experts as well as representatives from communities of color and representatives of high-risk populations.

The administration noted that communities of color and at-risk populations are prioritized throughout the process to maximize life preservation and to prevent serious complications from COVID related illnesses.

### Phases and timeline

**Phase 1** (December 2020-February 2021, in order of priority):

- Clinical and non-clinical health care workers doing direct and COVIDfacing care
- Long-term care facilities, rest homes and assisted living facilities
- Police, fire and emergency medical services
- · Congregate care settings (including



Delivery of COVID-19 vaccines began in mid-December, with priority given to designated groups of medical workers, first responders and residents most at risk for serious illness.

shelters and corrections)

- · Home-based health care workers
- Health care workers doing non-COVID facing care

**Phase 2** (February 2021-April 2021, in order of priority):

- Individuals with two or more comorbidities (high risk for COVID-19 complications)
- Early education, K-12, transit, grocery, utility, food and agriculture, sanitation, public works and public health workers
- · Adults aged 65 and up
- Individuals with one comorbidity

**Phase 3:** Vaccines will become available to the general public beginning in April 2021. ●

# MMA seeks responses to Chapter 90 survey

By Alandra Champion

The MMA is urging members to complete the association's biennial Chapter 90 Local Road Funding Survey as soon as possible.

The MMA emailed a link to the survey 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. Accurate and up-todate information is essential to demonstrate the resources needed to maintain local road infrastructure.

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

■ CHAPTER 90 continued on 25



The MMA is seeking responses to its biennial Chapter 90 Local Road Funding Survey to compile data on local road conditions and the need for additional state funding.

# **House convenes Green Recovery Task Force**

### By Ariela Lovett

A panel of state representatives convened by the Committee on Telecommunications, Utilities and Energy met with stakeholders on Dec. 9 to explore ways to support a "green" economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The House's Green Recovery Task Force, chaired by reps. Thomas Golden and Carolyn Dykema, was created last June with an initial mandate to review and develop policy proposals to address the needs of the state's clean energy economy.

In a prepared statement, Golden said, "Once again, we need to roll up our sleeves, take a clear view of our challenges, and forge ahead to identify pathways to a cleaner, more resilient Commonwealth."

Presentations to the task force have addressed broader environmental and infrastructure challenges and offered recommendations across a range of related issue areas. Past presenters have included representatives from the Metropolitan Area Planning Council, Nature Conservancy, American Council of Engineering Companies of Massachusetts, Greentown Labs and Massachusetts Clean Energy Center, among others.

The MMA emphasized several important areas for cities and towns, including increased funding for the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness program and culvert repair and replacement grants; investment in water infrastructure needs to manage stormwater and replace aging drinking water and wastewater systems; electrification of public transportation and municipally owned or leased vehicles; and expansion of a range of municipal clean energy and energy efficiency initiatives that help contribute to the Commonwealth's net zero emissions goal.

The MMA also advocated for increased Chapter 90 local road funding as a way to stimulate a statewide economic recovery and make roadways more resilient to flooding and weather-related damage.

Presenting on behalf of the MMA were Newton City Councillor Emily Norton, a member of the MMA Policy Committee on Energy and the Environment, and MMA Legislative Analyst Ariela Lovett.

To follow the work of the Green Recovery Task Force, visit the group's Twitter page: <a href="mailto:twitter.com/MAGreenRecovery">twitter.com/MAGreenRecovery</a>.

# MMHR holiday meeting features stress expert LaRoche

### By Isabelle Nichols

The Massachusetts Municipal Human Resources association focused on the importance of finding humor, hope and fun during difficult times during its annual holiday meeting on Dec. 17.

Renowned humorist and stress management expert Loretta LaRoche kicked off the virtual meeting with a discussion about how to "stress less with humor and optimism."

LaRoche guided participants through a conversation about how to use humor to transform negativity and unhappiness into a more optimistic outlook. She encouraged participants to use fun as an antidote to stress and allow themselves to laugh at the absurdities that arise in everyday life.

Steven Bernstein of AllOneHealth led a discussion about how human resources professionals can support both employees and themselves during times of stress. He encouraged participants to acknowledge the stress that human resources managers take on as a result of feeling responsible for supporting employees while simultaneously coping with the sense of loss that we're all feeling in the wake of the pandemic.

Bernstein provided a number of tips for managing personal stress, including practicing mindfulness and developing a "playlist" of feel-good quotes, songs and videos to use as an "escape-plan" during moments of crisis.

MMA Legislative Director John Roberston provided a legislative update covering labor and personnel-related bills that the MMA

has been tracking this year, including the pending police reform bill. Robertson also responded to questions about a possible extension to the Families First Coronavirus Response Act, and an extension of the 960-hour work waiver for retirees.

The meeting concluded with a series of breakout groups, where participants



Renowned humorist and stress management expert Loretta LaRoche kicks off the Massachusetts Municipal Human Resources association's virtual holiday meeting on Dec. 17 with a discussion about how to "stress less with humor and optimism."

discussed what they felt hopeful for going into 2021 and had some fun playing holiday trivia.

More than 85 human resources professionals attended the virtual meeting, which took place during the first big snowstorm of the season (but did not need to be postponed due to the weather!).

# Managers discuss tips for effective virtual work

**Bv Meredith Gabrilska** 

When the COVID-19 pandemic forced an abrupt switch to a virtual work environment, municipal employees and officials needed to acclimate to the world of online internal and public meetings quickly – and without much guidance or experience.

At the Dec. 10 meeting of Women Leading Government, an initiative of the Massachusetts Municipal Management Association, Allison Shapira conducted an interactive training session with 140 attendees focused on three strategies to be just as impactful and powerful in a virtual environment as in person: strategically preparation; speaking with presence; and speaking with precision on camera.

"Many of the benefits of a virtual world are not going away," said Shapira, the founder and CEO of Global Public Speakers. "Expectations have been raised in terms of the accessibility and availability of the people in our community."

Using an online polling tool, Shapira asked the group for words that describe the challenges of virtual meetings. Setting aside technical issues, the overwhelming majority named fatigue, staying engaged, and speaking up as the most difficult.

"Everyone needs these skills regardless of their role, background or gender," Shapira said. "But it disproportionately affects women to not have these skills."

Background and lighting are key when preparing for a virtual meeting, she said. Even when confined to a small space or when sharing space, she said, it's important to control even one small corner as the background of your workspace, and make sure it is intentional and not distracting to viewers. Lighting should be consistent and in front of you to make sure you can be seen clearly, and the camera should be

kept at eye level. Shapira then encouraged attendees to make one 30-second adjustment to improve their setup.

Meeting facilitators should practice in advance and be intentional about everything happening during the meeting with a well-planned agenda, she said, adding that "we could

wing it more easily in person because we could pick up on cues in the room."

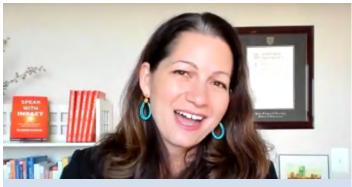
It's important to know the platform or software being used for every meeting, and what it allows.

The energy and cues we're used to during in-person interactions are missing from the virtual environment, especially with the additional stress of a pandemic, but there are ways to recreate that energy by considering, and practicing, how to speak with intention, or focused energy, in front of a camera.

"In person, we are picking up on the energy in the room," Shapira said. "But now we have to speak into a camera with no energy coming back to us."

Attendees were asked to practice introducing themselves without intention, and then pausing, breathing and trying the same introduction with full intention. Attendees noticed that the latter sounded happier, more engaged, passionate, and more inviting.

Referring to this "executive voice," Shapira said, "Intention isn't yelling; it is a power-



Allison Shapira conducts an interactive training session via Zoom on Dec. 10 with members of Women Leading Government, an initiative of the Massachusetts Municipal Management Association.

fulness that isn't loud."

The home environment has distractions that compete for our attention, and we can unintentionally ramble during online meetings due to nerves. Shapira introduced her PREP framework for speaking clearly and concisely: Point, Reason, Example and Point. The framework helps speakers organize their thoughts on the fly and helps rein them back in if they find themselves moving off topic. It can also be a valuable tool when answering difficult questions.

Shapira instructed attendees to practice the PREP method in breakout rooms, using issues municipal officials and employees routinely face and speak to during internal and public meetings. She recommended practicing the method before meetings, as well as easy transitional phrases, to help build "muscle memory."

Following the training, attendees shared stories of "Zoom gone wrong" and tips for dealing with lessons learned over the past 10 months working in a virtual environment.

# MMA and Suffolk University launch Municipal Fellowship Program

Suffolk University, in partnership with MMA, is launching a Municipal Fellowship Program to offer significant support to municipal managers and professionals to attend Suffolk's master's in public administration program at its Sawyer School of Business.

The fellowship program will provide a scholarship of up to \$28,000 while the recipients' municipality commits to con-

tinuing their salary and position while they attend the program part-time.

Applicants must already be accepted for admission to the master's in public administration program and receive the support of the chief municipal official in their municipality. Consideration will be given to graduates of the MMA-Suffolk Certificate in Local Government Leadership and Management.

Suffolk University will hold an information session via Zoom on Feb. 11 at 3 p.m. To RSVP for the information session and receive a link, email Kate Evarts at kevarts@mma.org.

The application will be available on the MMA-Suffolk programs web page in early January. The application deadline is May 1 at 5 p.m. ●

# **MMA-Suffolk programs planned for 2021**

The MMA and Suffolk University are offering both finance and leadership programs in 2021.

The fifth Municipal Finance Management Seminar will begin virtually on March 5, and applications are due on Jan. 15.

The five-week finance seminar covers 10 topics in municipal finance, including budget, assessing, treasury functions, and costing out contracts.

The application and additional details can be found at <a href="www.mma.org/suffolk">www.mma.org/suffolk</a>. The cost of the spring 2021 seminar is \$825.

# **Local Government Leadership** and Management

The MMA and Suffolk University will launch the 2021-2022 academic year with Certificate in Local Government Leadership and Management programs in September in the town of Barnstable and the city of Marlborough.

These will be the 17th and 18th programs held by the MMA and Suffolk.

The Certificate in Local Government Leadership and Management is a fivecourse, graduate-level program held over the course of 25 Fridays. The program is designed for municipal employees looking to further their careers in municipal management. Sample classes include budgeting, human resources management, and strategic leadership.

The application for the 2021-2022 programs will be available on the MMA website on Feb. 1, and the deadline is April 30. The cost of the 2021-2022 programs is \$2,550.

For more information, visit <u>www.mma.</u> <u>org/suffolk</u>.

For more information about any of the MMA-Suffolk programs, email Katie McCue at kmccue@mma.org.

# Administration awards \$3.7M in IT grants to 55 municipalities

The Baker-Polito administration on Dec. 10 announced \$3.7 million in grants to 55 municipalities through the Community Compact Cabinet Information Technology grant program.

Lt. Gov. Karyn Polito made the announcement during a virtual award ceremony, attended by recipients, local and state officials, and community leaders. She said the grant program has had "an outsized impact on economic and community development, and this round of awards will ensure that cities and towns deliver better services for Massachusetts residents for years to come."

More than \$15 million in municipal IT grants has been issued over the past four years, supporting more than 300 municipalities and school districts.

At the ceremony, Gov. Charlie Baker noted that during the COVID-19 pandemic, "we have seen incredible innovation from our local communities to provide services to residents, and we are pleased to see vari-

ous cities, towns and school districts take advantage of this program."

More than \$15 million in municipal IT grants has been issued over the past four years, supporting more than 300 municipalities and school districts.

<u>Community Compact IT grant initiatives</u> in this round of funding include the following:

- West Springfield will receive a \$115,750 grant to purchase a modern human resources system that centralizes town and school HR operations.
- New Bedford will receive a \$176,972 grant to bolster its cybersecurity

infrastructure and improve disaster recovery capabilities.

- Monterey will receive a \$82,000 grant to implement a web-based road surface temperature measurement system.
- Cummington will receive a \$69,631 grant to deploy a computer network to complete a recently built fiber optic network.

Formed in January 2015, the Community Compact Cabinet is chaired by Polito and includes the secretaries of Housing and Economic Development, Education, Transportation, Energy and Environmental Affairs, and Technology Services and Security, along with the senior deputy commissioner of Local Services and the assistant secretary of Operational Services. The Community Compact Cabinet elevates the administration's partnerships with cities and towns, and allows the governor's office to work more closely with municipal leaders.

# **CHAPA** hosts affordable housing conference

The Citizens' Housing and Planning Association is holding a three-session virtual conference in January to help communities expand their affordable housing opportunities.

The virtual conference, "Taking the Initiative on Housing Production in Your Community," will be held on three Thursdays, Jan. 14, 21 and 28, from 3 to 4:30 p.m.

The conference will cover the most up-to-date information and breakout sessions covering Chapter 40B (comprehensive permit), Chapter 40R (Smart Growth Districts) and Chapter 40A, inclusionary zoning, public land use, fair housing, and other tools that create and preserve affordability in Massachusetts communities.

Tickets covering all three sessions are

\$25 for non-CHAPA members and \$15 for CHAPA members. Details and online registration are available at <a href="https://www.chapa.org/events/2021-virtual-40b-conference">www.chapa.org/events/2021-virtual-40b-conference</a>.

Contact Carol Marine at cmarine@chapa. org with any questions. ●

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# **Embrace winter walks for better health**

By Joyce McMahon

Cabin fever has taken on new meaning this winter, as the cold and short days are exacerbated by pandemic-driven social distancing and self-quarantine.

Sequestering indoors is hardly the way to feel any better, says Dr. John Sharp, a clinical psychiatrist and specialist in seasonal affective disorder at Beth-Israel Deaconess Medical Center in Boston. Too little sunlight is stressful and affects our emotional and physical wellbeing, making us vulnerable to being pessimistic and fatigued.

There is, however, something that you can do about feeling cloistered, and it doesn't cost a dime. A 10- to 20-minute walk outside during the winter months can boost your immune system and Vitamin D levels, burn calories, and deliver a quick mood boost.

Walking in cold weather may also help to keep illness at bay because it flushes

bacteria out of your airways and lungs, according to MedlinePlus, a website from the U.S. National Library of Medicine. Even if the sun does not look as if it is going to come out, spending time in daylight helps to maintain high spirits, provides fresh air, and puts more oxygen into your system.

"Feeling comfortable makes a big difference," says Stan Corcoran, executive vice president of MIIA. "After spending the spring and summer hiking, I've invested in a warmer coat, hat and gloves so we can keep up with our walks. Getting outside, while remaining socially distant has really helped during these challenging times."

MIIA Health Trust Manager Chris Bailey notes that sometimes the hardest part is getting out the door. But, he adds, "We dress the kids up to stay warm and do the same ourselves. And once you're out, you're really glad you did it."

Don't hesitate to go outdoors during

your lunch break or whenever you can. Just a few minutes of fresh air, sunshine and focusing on the outdoor environment can be uplifting and refresh your outlook.

### **Friluftsliv**

If you think it's too cold to go outside, you might want to take a page from the citizens of Norway, where the average winter temperature is 19.7 degrees Fahrenheit. Norwegians embrace being outdoors, and their heritage of "Friluftsliv" offers an alternative. hardy inspiration for a frigid time of year. Friluftsliv, was popularized in 1859 by Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen, and loosely means "free air life." Friluftsliv is a commitment to celebrating time outdoors, no matter the weather forecast, and a popular saying throughout Scandinavia is, "There is no such thing as bad weather, only bad clothing."

■ MIIA continued on 25

### **BCBS's Andrew Dreyfus to headline MIIA Business Meeting**

Andrew Dreyfus, president and CEO of Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts, will be the keynote speaker during the MIIA Annual Business Meeting on Friday, Jan. 22, during the MMA Annual Meeting & Trade Show

In a video recorded just for MIIA, Dreyfus plans to discuss the insurer's COVID-19 response, including the adoption of telehealth programs and the expansion of access to mental health services.

He also anticipates talking about improving diversity, inclusion and health inequities among BCBS's members and its workforce. Dreyfus also expects to speak about the economic toll that the pandemic has taken, and the ways that Blue Cross Blue Shield



Andrew Dreyfus

is improving health care value and affordability.

(Note: These topics may change depending on breaking news.)

The Annual Business Meeting, to be held from 2 to 3 p.m., will also fea-

ture the winners of MIIA's annual Risk Management and Wellness awards.

### **MIIA Rewards**

A highlight of the MMA Annual Meeting is the timely workshops. MIIA members whose employees participate in any of the following training sessions will be eligible to earn MIIA Rewards credits:

- Setting and Achieving Cybersecurity Goals for Your Community
- Governing Remotely
- Ready, Set, Lead! Thriving in a Virtual Reality
- Getting Public Health Right
- Municipal Law Update
- Mutual Aid in Public Works
- Navigating Difficult Conversations About Workforce Diversity
- Cultivating Equity in Your Community
- · Labor Law Update
- Pandemic Permitting
- Managing Systemic Racism and Bias in Your Police Department

For more information on the MMA Annual Meeting, or to register, visit www.mma.org/annual-meeting.

- Joyce McMahon

# **Around the Commonwealth**

### Greenfield

# City continues domestic-violence outreach during pandemic

Recognizing that home doesn't always provide a safe haven, the Greenfield Mayor's Task Force on Domestic Violence has continued addressing domestic violence during the COVID-19 emergency, with an eye on pandemic-related pressures.

For the past 15 years, a city task force has addressed domestic violence with an emphasis on public outreach and education. This past fall, the task force erected billboards, created posters and distributed flyers telling residents where to find help during the pandemic.

"Domestic and sexual violence are issues that need to be addressed from all different angles. It can't just be a one-prong approach," said Mary Kociela, the task force's chair and the director of domestic and sexual violence projects for the Northwestern District Attorney's Office. "To have municipal government willing and able to take it on – it's just something that really gives it a lot of credence. If you're a survivor, and you know that it's something your town really cares about, I



think it can really make a difference."

In 2019, the task force surveyed Greenfield residents on their understanding of abuse and their knowledge about resources. In the survey, 93% percent said they would call 911 or intervene in an abusive situation. However, 38% didn't know of programs that could help.

In response, the task force created informational posters and flyers, conducted social media outreach, and set up two billboards in October, during Domestic Violence Awareness Month. One billboard displayed information in English, and the other in Spanish. The billboards cost about \$1,800, paid for with city funds and a private donation, according to City Councillor Otis Wheeler, who represents the council on the seven-member task force.

The pandemic has prompted fears that isolation, health and financial stresses would exacerbate tensions in fragile households. Closed-down courthouses, and limited access to outside supports can further isolate victims.

"There are many reasons that may be happening, but I think the main one is really that being confined to our homes for such an amount of time is trying for everyone's mental health," Wheeler said. "And it puts an abuser in a position where they have even more opportunities to manipulate a victim, or hopefully, a survivor."

From March 16 to May 16, the National Domestic Violence Hotline reported a 9% increase in contacts, with 10% citing COVID-19 as a factor. In Hampshire and Franklin counties, which the Northwestern District Attorney's Office serves, the situation was "eerily quiet" initially, Kociela said. Advocates conducted outreach, she said, to assure people that restraining orders and services were still available even if the courts were closed. Then the DA's office started seeing more potentially lethal cases.

"In terms of high-risk cases, it's been pretty unsettling," Kociela said. "We've had a lot of cases that are very, very serious."

Greenfield Mayor Roxann Wedegartner said she was worried about the pandemic's isolating effects. A springtime conversation with her police chief confirmed that fear.

"It was almost instantaneous – the minute we shut down the schools, they began getting an increase in calls," Wedegartner said. "It just seemed like it was inevitable, that that would happen."

The mayor emphasized Greenfield's holistic approach and collaboration among the task force, the police and the local Children's Advocacy Center. She said the task force, established about 15 years ago under Christine Forgey, Greenfield's first mayor, demonstrates a long commitment to addressing abuse.

"We formed the domestic violence task force and codified it in our city charter to show how serious we were about the issue," Wedegartner said.

When the city emerges from the pandemic, the task force plans to bring back an annual flag-raising event highlighting child abuse. And now that the mayor's office has a communications director, Wedegartner said, she hopes he can help amplify the task force's work for future projects.

"Domestic violence is going to be with us regardless, unfortunately," she said.

– Jennifer Kavanaugh

### Newburyport

### City invests in range of antiracism initiatives

Following a summer of protests around the world demanding attention to systemic racism and inequity, the city of Newburyport has launched communitybased, anti-racism and equity-focused initiatives.

"The entire country was reeling but we had a series of incidents that happened in our city," said Mayor Donna Holaday. "We certainly recognized that we had work to do as a community."

The city's new Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Alliance comprises 24 community members selected from a competitive pool of applicants. It will focus on examining racial equity issues in the community, including policies, services and ordinances, and developing recommendations for change.

"Our goal was to make sure we were reaching across the entire city and for representation across all peoples," Holaday

dents about domestic violence help.

# Around the Commonwealth



Newburyport Mayor Donna Holaday takes part in the "Hate Has No Port Here" video campaign.

said. "We have students, members of the LGBTQ community, faith-based, people of color, representing a variety of ethnicities."

The alliance was brought together last month and will continue to meet virtually to get to know each other and begin an analysis of strengths, weaknesses, accomplishments and threats (SWAT) to help develop a mission statement and goals for the group. The city is working to coordinate an immediate training for the alliance, as well as future opportunities for learning as they dive into their work.

"I am so impressed with people in this

community wanting to be a part of this effort," Holadav said. "It's been incredible to learn stories and backgrounds of people in the community. We have voices from all areas."

Following the development stage, the alliance is expected to create smaller working groups

to address specific action items in the community and will work closely with the community as a whole, with the potential for a community-wide survey, resource development and programming on local

The city is also launching a community read of Bryan Stevenson's book "Just Mercy," led by the school district. And city officials, including Mayor Holaday, took part in a new video campaign led by the First Religious Society, Unitarian Universalist titled "Hate Has No Port

Here." The three-and-a-half-minute video, available on YouTube, features faith and city leaders, along with members and families of the community, reading quotes from civil rights leaders and other advocates. The campaign also has yard signs available for residents and businesses to display to bring attention to the cause.

"The faith-based community is very large and active in the city," said Holaday, noting that several members of the DEI Alliance took part in the video. "I was so pleased that they took the initiative and reached out to us. I thought it was a good way to launch this video followed by the DEI Alliance and our community read."

The mayor noted that there was no set timeline for the alliance to complete its work, and that an important part of the application process was to emphasize the commitment being asked of the members.

"We have a lot of work to do," she said.

– Meredith Gabrilska

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.

### **SPEAKERS**

Continued from page 1

him one of the country's most popular governors. Before he became governor, he was CEO of Harvard Pilgrim Health Care for 10 years, where he turned a company on the brink of bankruptcy into the nation's highest-ranked health care provider for member satisfaction and clinical effectiveness for six straight

He served as undersecretary and then secretary of Health and Human Services under Gov. Bill Weld in the early 1990s and later served as secretary of Administration and Finance under Weld and his successor, Gov. Paul Cellucci.

He served as a selectman in Swampscott from 2004 through 2007.

Polito is a former Shrewsbury selectman and state representative who has addressed local officials at every MMA Annual Meeting since she took office in 2015. She serves as the administration's liaison to municipalities and typically presides over meetings of the Local Government Advisory Commission to discuss the intersections of state and local government. She has famously visited all 351 cities and towns as lieutenant governor and has developed close relationships with the MMA and with mayors, town administrators and managers, and other municipal officials.

Polito chairs the Community Compact Cabinet, which has signed agreements with every city and town to partner with state government on more than 800 smarter ways to deliver services. She has worked closely with local officials to encourage housing production through the Housing Choice Initiative, improve public ways through the Complete Streets program, and invest in projects to address climate change through the

Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness program.

A lifelong resident of Shrewsbury, she has served as a Town Meeting member (1993-2000), a member of the Zoning Board of Appeals (1994-1995), and a selectman (1995-1998). She was the commissioner of the Massachusetts Lottery from 1999 to 2000, and in 2001 was elected state representative for the 11th Worcester District (Shrewsbury and Westborough), serving five terms.

In addition to Baker and Polito, featured Annual Meeting speakers are bestselling author and Robin Hood Foundation CEO Wes Moore, Framingham Mayor Yvonne Spicer (interviewed by the Rev. Liz Walker), and diversity and bias expert and author Risha Grant.

For more information on the MMA Annual Meeting & Trade Show, visit www. mma.org/annual-meeting.

### **DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Continued from page 2

products and services.

Even though it is impossible to be together at the Hynes Convention Center this year, you'll still be able to get a great Annual Meeting experience. We won't be face to face or shoulder to shoulder in person, but we will be chatting and texting and connecting.

For me, I think one of the most valuable aspects of the conference is that it will offer a chance for you to take a deep breath and focus on what the past year has meant for you and for local government in general.

With 2020 in the rearview mirror, it's tempting to try to forget the unsettling, disruptive and disorienting events that cascaded onto Massachusetts and the nation since March. The stress on organizations and people has been immense, and the changes have been difficult to endure. Remote work, constant worry, sleep disruption, millions of questions, far fewer answers. What a year.

Through it all, my colleagues and I on the MMA staff have been greatly inspired by your resilience and leadership. Like a championship team protecting your communities from wave after wave of attacks, your pattern of leadership has been to bend, but not break, and move forward. Bend, not break, move forward, bend, not break, move forward. Again and again.

The ground you've covered is more than remarkable - it is amazing. You've stood up massive public health and safety programs and initiatives, you've protected and saved thousands of lives, prioritizing the most vulnerable among us. You've redesigned public services, streamlined your governance processes, informed and calmed the public - all while enduring the same stress in your personal lives.

During the conference, we will invite you to reflect on the leadership questions and lessons we can all take from the past year. What does resilient leadership look like to you? How can we be at our best while carrying this stress and high anxiety? How do we care for others

and care for ourselves and our families? How can we grow as leaders? How can we remain optimistic when facing the daunting challenges of addressing racial equity, speeding an economic recovery, and putting an end to the pandemic? These are all big questions that we can lean into all throughout the year ahead.

Many years from now, I predict that much of local government will be transformed. How we meet, how we engage, how we collaborate, and how we communicate will have roots in this time of upheaval.

I also predict that, seeing how quickly local government has turned on a dime, and scaled up programs and services in unprecedented ways, our citizens' expectations of local leaders will be higher than ever before. That's a good thing – people expect the most out of those they respect and love. This is all your doing!

May 2021 be safe and bountiful for you and your family. See you at Annual Meeting!

### **VACCINE**

Continued from page 3

The application period for the new program will run from Dec. 31 through Jan. 15.

Businesses that already applied to the MGCC's first small business relief program from October do not need to reapply to the new program. All applications in the existing program are currently being reviewed.

For more information, visit www. empoweringsmallbusiness.org/covid-19response.

Heath Fahle, special director for federal funds at the Executive Office for Administration and Finance, discussed the new federal coronavirus relief package, which was signed into law on Dec. 27 and extended by one year the deadline for using Coronavirus Relief Fund allocations provided through the CARES Act - from Dec. 30, 2020, to Dec. 31, 2021.

The <u>Division of Local Services website</u> provides complete information about the CARES Act Coronavirus Relief Fund Municipal Program.

Administration and Finance has also issued guidance for the current reconciliation period.

The conference call was the 28th Zoom

meeting of high-level state officials and municipal CEOs since the pandemic began in March.



### MMA-Suffolk graduates fall 2020 finance class

Members of the fall 2020 MMA-Suffolk Municipal Finance Management Seminar gather for their online graduation on Dec. 11. To graduate from the program, members had to complete five weeks of classes covering topics such as budgets, assessing, treasury functions and the costing out of contracts. Applications for the next municipal finance seminar are due on Jan. 15, and the spring session will begin virtually on March 5. For more information about upcoming MMA-Suffolk programs, see related story on page 18.

# MMA seeks members for its five policy committees

Local officials are invited to fill a limited number of positions available on the MMA's five policy committees for 2021.

More than 100 local officials from communities across Massachusetts serve on MMA policy committees, which advise the MMA Board of Directors, staff and MMA members on legislative, regulatory and public policy issues.

The committees also draft resolutions for the MMA's Annual Business Meeting, municipal best practices for the MMA's Best Practices series, and bills (biannually) for the MMA's legislative package.

Each committee has a regular schedule of meetings, usually one per month. Additionally, committee members may be asked to read legislative summaries, bill text, and/or position papers to prepare for meetings.

Each committee is assigned an MMA staff member to assist with its research, consideration of issues, and administrative functions.

Each committee has 23 members, including mayors, selectmen, councillors, city and town managers/administrators, and finance committee members, plus four presidential appointees and four technical appointees.

The MMA president names the chair and members of the committee, subject to approval by the MMA Board of Directors.

### Online application on mma.org

Those with the interest and time to serve on a policy committee are asked to fill out the application form on the MMA website by Jan. 27. The form provides space to list areas of interest and expertise so that a good match can be made between volunteers and the work of the committees.

The committees are as follows:

### **Fiscal Policy Committee**

This committee considers all municipal finance issues. Legislation that has a fiscal impact is referred to this committee from other committees as well. This committee also develops a policy framework for local government financing in the future.



# Policy Committee on Energy and the Environment

This committee formulates policy in the following areas: water quality, water supply, air quality, solid waste and recycling, hazardous waste, wetlands, coastal areas, wastewater treatment, renewable energy and energy conservation.

More than 100 local officials from communities across Massachusetts serve on MMA policy committees, which advise the MMA Board of Directors, staff and MMA members on legislative, regulatory and public policy issues.

# Policy Committee on Municipal and Regional Administration

This committee considers issues that relate to the organization, structure, efficiency, and productivity of local and regional government and the relationships between the two levels of government. Issues include housing and zoning, procurement, economic development, regulation of marijuana, open meeting law and public records law, public health and safety, and licensing.

# Policy Committee on Personnel and Labor Relations

This committee considers issues in the following areas: collective bargaining, civil service, employee benefits and pension reform.

# Policy Committee on Public Works, Transportation and Public Utilities

This committee considers issues that relate to regional and metropolitan transportation, transportation planning, the relationship between local governments and the Massachusetts Department of Transportation, and the question of local control in joint state-local public works programs.

The MMA is the one voice that advocates for direct aid and support for core municipal and public education services provided by every community in Massachusetts. The MMA's advocacy efforts are focused on a single goal: Building strong communities in Massachusetts.

For more information, contact Alandra Champion at achampion@mma.org or or visit <a href="www.mma.org/advocacy">www.mma.org/advocacy</a>.

# MMA continues #MaskUpMA campaign on Twitter

With the holiday season's impact on COVID-19 case numbers now coming into focus, and with a vaccine not yet available to the general public, the MMA remains engaged in a social media campaign promoting the use of face coverings to reduce 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 virus.

The MMA will be retweeting mask photos and content from members and state





MMA staff share mask selfies as a part of the #MaskUpMA campaign (MMA Senior Legislative Analyst Brittney Franklin, left, and MIIA Health Benefits Trust Project Manager Monica Smigliani).

agencies. Please share images with MMA Digital Communications Coordinator Meredith Gabrilska at mgabrilska@mma.org.

# MBLC releases new space planning guide for libraries

The Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners in mid-November released a free, 160-page guide to planning new or reconfigured public library spaces.

"This space planning guide will not only help plan flexible and efficient library buildings that meet a community's unique needs," said Library Building Specialist Lauren Stara, "it will also save communities time and money as they begin exploring options for a new or reconfigured library."

"Library Space: A Planning Resource for Librarians" creates a formal set of best practices for designing library space that may be applied to libraries across the nation, according to the **Board of Library** Commissioners. The guide empowers librarians, administrators, space planners and architects with tools for the planning and design of public library buildings. It takes the user through the step-by-step process of determining what to consider when designing a new library for their community, and includes illustrations of different room types, adjacencies, shelving and seating that can be considered for a building project.

Because library services are changing so rapidly, formal standards for space plan-



The Cambridge Public Library's main branch is a modern building that meets the varied needs of the city's population. (Photo courtesy Robert Benson Photography)

.....

ning have been lacking for many years. Massachusetts Public Library Construction Program staff worked closely with the Boston-based global design firm Sasaki for more than a year to develop the planning resource. The process included a series of site visits to recently constructed or renovated public libraries across the Commonwealth, an in-depth analysis of 13 selected case study libraries, and a focus group with the directors of the case

study libraries to discuss the successes and shortcomings of their completed buildings and the planning process.

Since 1987, the MBLC's Massachusetts Public Library Construction Program has guided communities through more than 200 projects. The program is nationally recognized and serves as a model for other states.

# **Guide helps communities promote winter activities**

### By James Fuccione

Through grant funding, collaboration and technical support, communities across Massachusetts have an opportunity to support older adults and residents of all ages in remaining physically active and socially engaged this winter.

Cities and towns can promote social engagement with the help of a new guide, "Age-Friendly Winter Spaces: Ideas for Municipalities to Embrace Winter." Developed by the Executive Office of Elder Affairs, WalkBoston and the Massachusetts Healthy Aging Collaborative, the guide was also reviewed with the MMA Policy Committee on Public Works,

Utilities and Transportation.

With a timely funding opportunity available through the Massachusetts Department of Transportation's <u>Shared Winter Streets and Spaces program</u>, communities can consider simple concepts and examples that promote physical and mental wellness along with safety and social connection. The grant program awards bonus points for projects that are inclusive of older adults, and the new guide can help communities develop successful bids.

Such projects could include "Safe Routes for Seniors," including safe walking and bicycling facilities within one mile of senior centers, housing for elders, and travel corridors used by seniors.

The Shared Streets and Spaces Program, established in June 2020, provides grants from \$5,000 to \$300,000 for quick-build improvements to sidewalks, curbs, streets, on-street parking spaces, and off-street parking lots in support of public health, safe mobility and renewed commerce.

James Fuccione is Senior Director of the Massachusetts Healthy Aging Collaborative

### MIIA

Continued from page 19

"Friluftsliv is more than just an activity, it's a kind of lifestyle," says Lasse Heimdal, secretary general of Norsk Friluftsliv, an organization representing 5,000 outdoors groups in Norway. "Most people think it's healthy, it's social. ... You get kind of a time-out from cell phones and computers, being outdoors and in nature, it's one of the best places to relax."

Outdoor life does not have to focus on competition or timekeeping, but on physical activity at your own pace, explains Dag Terje Klarp Solvang, of the Norwegian Trekking Association, as well as relaxation and time for yourself and with others. It really is something that

everyone can enjoy.

### 120 minutes per week

Spending just two hours a week in natural environments such as parks or green spaces boosts well-being, according to a 2019 paper published in the journal "Nature."

People who spent two hours a week outdoors, either all at one time or spaced over several trips, were substantially more likely to report good health and psychological well-being than those who did not. Those studied cut across different occupations and socioeconomic groups and included people with illnesses and disabilities.

An emerging area of research, ecopsychology, examines the

relationship between people and nature. Studies have shown how immersion in nature can benefit one's health, reduce stress and speed the rate of healing, among other benefits.

Walking works whether you have time for a long walk or just 10 minutes of free time in your day, according to the American Heart Association's Cold Weather Fitness Guide. You are also more likely to stick with walking than any other form of exercise.

So, grab your hat and find a time to take a 10-minute jaunt to walk the dog, or a stroll around the block after dinner. It'll make a world of difference.

Joyce McMahon is a freelance writer.

### **CHAPTER 90**

Continued from page 15

and beyond to help cities and towns maintain safe local roads and build strong local economies.

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.

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

#### **ANNUAL MEETING**

Continued from page 1

and towns

- A general business meeting and important policy updates
- Creative networking opportunities and fun

The 2021 Annual Meeting theme is "Leading Through Challenge and Change."

For this year's event, attendees will participate from their homes and offices, eliminating the need for travel and accommodations. And the two-day meeting will be held on a Thursday and Friday, rather than the typical Friday and Saturday.

There's no app to download; everything will happen right in your web browser. Attendees will have access to the Chime platform for 30 days after the meeting is over, in order to revisit highlights and enjoy content that was missed when it was live.

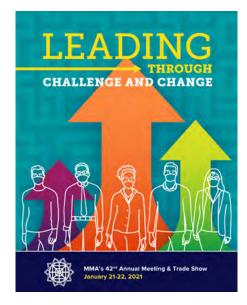
"I couldn't imagine skipping the MMA's Annual Meeting, even if it's virtual," says North Adams Councillor Lisa Blackmer, president of the Massachusetts Municipal Councillors' Association. "I always get so much value out of attending, and I don't think this year we'll get any less. I'm looking forward to hearing from the governor – he usually has something new to announce. The price is so low that we can all afford to attend."

<u>Featured speakers</u> include Gov. Charlie Baker and Lt. Gov. Karyn Polito (see related story, page 1) and keynote addresses from:

- Bestselling author and Robin Hood Foundation CEO Wes Moore:
   "Evolve, Adapt, Inspire: The Tenets of Transformational Leadership"
- Diversity and bias expert and author Risha Grant: "Get Rid of the BS (Bias Synapse)"

The Women Elected Municipal Officials Leadership Symposium (a separate ticketed event) will feature Framingham Mayor Yvonne Spicer discussing diversity, equity and inclusion in a fireside chat with the Rev. Liz Walker, formerly a longtime news anchor at WBZ-TV.

<u>Fifteen interactive, 45-minute workshops</u> will cover topics including cybersecurity, economic and fiscal outlook, governing remotely, net zero emissions, thriving



while working virtually, public health lessons from the pandemic, helping local businesses, municipal and labor law updates, mutual aid in public works, workforce diversity, engaging on equity, pandemic permitting, policing bias, and water resources.

"As always, the workshops at the MMA Annual Meeting will be addressing all of the issues currently important to local government," says Bolton Finance Committee Member Brian Boyle, president of the Association of Town Finance Committees. "It really helps me to hear about best practices and new ideas, which I think we need more than ever now that we are in a new normal."

The early registration deadline is midnight on Jan. 6, but those who miss it may still register online at a rate of \$105 (though they will not have advance access to the Chime platform). Online registration will close at 5 p.m. on Jan. 20, but members may email amregistrations@ mma.org for day-of registration access.

"This year's Annual Meeting is an excellent value at such a low price," says Milton Select Board Member Katie Conlon, president of the Massachusetts Select Board Association. "The MMA has outstanding speakers and interesting workshops. Everything will be recorded and available to watch for up to a month afterwards, so we won't have to miss anything."

Brianna Sunryd, communications manager and community participation officer in Amherst, notes 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," she says, "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."

The 2021 Annual Meeting & Trade Show is being produced with assistance from the following sponsors:

Platinum: Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts

Gold: Constellation and KP Law

Silver: Beta Group and Cloudphish

Blue Ribbon: Bartholomew & Company; Massachusetts State Lottery; Murphy, Hesse, Toomey & Lehane; Operational Services Division; PARS Public Agency Retirement Services; Santander Bank; and VHB

### **Registration details**

Online registration is available at <a href="https://www.mma.org/am-registration">www.mma.org/am-registration</a>. Registrants may also make reservations for the WEMO Leadership Symposium, which will be held as part of the Annual Meeting on Thursday, Jan. 21, at an additional cost of \$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.

Registrants will receive details and log-in information in January.

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 tkuck@mma.org. For Trade Show and Partnership Program information, contact Karen LaPointe at klapointe@mma.org.

# **People**



Kellie Hebert

**Kellie Hebert**, who has three decades of experience in municipal roles, became Sterling's new town administrator on Dec. 1.

Most recently, Hebert had served one year as a fiscal analyst for the city

of Methuen. Before that, she had been the town administrator in Topsfield from 2013 to 2019. Previous roles include assistant and interim town administrator in Belmont, human relations manager for the city of Lowell, assistant to the town manager and community development administrator in Chelmsford, assistant director and then director of neighborhood services in Lowell, and assistant roles in the city of Boston.

Hebert earned a bachelor's degree in political science from Emmanuel College and a master's degree in public administration from Northeastern University.

In Sterling, she replaces **Ross Perry**, who

retired after three-and-a-half years as town administrator.



Rajon Hudson

**Rajon Hudson** became the new assistant town administrator in Boxborough on Dec. 7.

Hudson served for more than a year in North Attleborough as assistant to the town manager and clerk/assistant to

the Town Council. Before that, he spent two years in Lexington, including a year as a management analyst and a year as the ICMA Local Government Management Fellow.

Hudson earned a bachelor's degree in criminal justice from Jacksonville State University, and a master's degree in public administration from Auburn University.

In Boxborough, Hudson replaces Sean

**Donahue**, who is now the human resources director in Reading.

**Cobi Frongillo** was elected to the Franklin Town Council in a special election on Dec. 5, filling a seat left vacant by **Eamon McCarthy Earls** in September.

**Glenda Hazard** joined the Hopedale Board of Selectmen after winning a special election on Dec. 8, filling a seat left open by **Thomas Wesley**, who left the board last summer because he was moving out of town.

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.

# Vanessa Hale wins 2020 Leadership Trailblazer Award

On Dec. 23, Vanessa Hale, Southborough's longtime assistant town administrator, was recognized with a national award for her public service and support of other women in her field as the winner of the 2020 Leadership Trailblazer Award.

The annual award is presented by the League of Women in Government and the National Research Center Inc. to recognize accomplished local government leaders who support other women and inspire them to succeed. Hale was chosen from 10 finalists from around the country.

"Being granted such recognition by my colleagues has been a blessing that I will always cherish and hope to repay to others for decades to come," Hale said in the league's online announcement about her award.



Vanessa Hale

Hale has held her job in Southborough since 2000. Before that, she served as a senior administrative assistant for the towns of Northborough and Sherborn, and as a database administrator for the MMA and for the League of Women Voters

of Massachusetts. At the MMA, she said, she was "coached by many on the nuts and bolts of local government," before going to work for several Massachusetts municipalities.

"In the last twenty-five years, I have worked in three communities and found every day in local government more interesting than the last," Hale said.

Hale has earned two master's degrees, one in library and information science from the University of Rhode Island and one in public administration from Clark University. She also earned a bachelor's degree in English from Albertus Magnus College.

# **Classified Advertisements**

# EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

# **Director, Community Development and Planning**

#### **Town of Lancaster**

Town of Lancaster seeks qualified and experienced candidates for the full-time position for Director, Community Development and Planning. The position will coordinate all economic, land use, and community development planning in the town, reporting to the Town Administrator and working to accomplish the community and economic goals as envisioned by the Board of Selectmen and Planning Board. The Director performs professional, technical, marketing and administrative work in planning, zoning, economic development and grant writing/administration and advises various boards/committees. Qualified applicants will have a bachelor's degree in planning, or public policy, and five or more years of progressively responsible experience in municipal planning or land use; or any equivalent combination of education experience. AICP credential and master's degree preferred. Anticipated hiring range up to \$75,000-plus. Complete job description available at www.ci.lancaster.ma.us. Send cover letter and resume to Orlando Pacheco, Town Administrator, to opacheco@lancasterma.net. Position open until filled. EOE/AA

### Water Superintendent Town of East Brookfield

Please email Ted Boulay at tboulay@eastbrookfieldma. us or call 508-320-3431 for complete job description. Applicants will be considered on a rolling basis, and the position will be posted until filled.

### Diversity and Inclusion Manager City of Brockton

The Diversity and Inclusion Manager works with the Human Resources Director on matters related to Affirmative Action metrics, analyzes statistics regarding employment data, application flow, hires, promotions, transfers, demotions, reorganizations, terminations and other movements. Full-time/Benefited/Non-Union. Position will start at Step I - \$62,000 (8-step position, increase received annually, maxed at \$76,256.) For a complete description of duties, requirements and to apply for the position visit: brockton.ma.us/city-departments/human-resources/job-postings. City of Brockton residency required or shall, within one year of employment establish residency within the city. City of Brockton is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer

### Collections Coordinator - Revenue Town of Foxborough

Foxborough seeks qualified Collections Coordinator applicants to join a great finance team. Responsible for receipt and custody of municipal funds. Duties include state and federal reporting requirements, collection of revenue and reconciliation activities. Requires: High school diploma as minimum, three to five years' experience, preferably in municipal billing/collections and have experience in MUNIS, passports and payroll. Must be bondable. The ideal candidate will possess solid skills in: customer service, teamwork, written/oral communication, organization, and computers. Full range: \$25.33-\$30.88, with expected starting pay of \$25.33-\$26.35 per hour, depending on qualifications and experience. Posted: Dec. 4. Applications reviewed

upon receipt, open until filled. Cover letter and resume to: hr@foxboroughma.gov.

### Resident Services Coordinator Greenfield Housing Authority

The Greenfield Housing Authority is looking for a Resident Services Coordinator. The individual who holds this position will be responsible for planning and implementing the delivery of services to improve the quality of life of residents of the Greenfield Housing Authority. The position will be dedicated to the provision of educational, employment, and social service guidance and support, with the goal of fostering self-sufficiency. The individual in this position must have the ability to develop, implement, coordinate and monitor programs and activities designed to serve low income families and individuals. Comprehensive knowledge of and active working relationships with community agencies that provide social services, as well as job and skill development, recreational, educational, legal, health, and other services. Additional skills include demonstrated grant writing ability, strong interpersonal skills; strong written and verbal skills; ability to make public presentations and develop public relations materials. A bachelor's degree in social work, early childhood education, public administration, public health, counseling or related field is preferred but experience may substitute for a degree. Three to five years' direct experience delivering programs and supportive services designed to provide educational, recreational, social, and economic development to low income individuals and families. Salary range \$39,500 to \$43,000, plus a generous benefit package. This position is a three-year grant, with the potential for up to five years. For a full job description email Jodi@greenfieldhousing.org. Please forward a cover letter and resume to Greenfield Housing Authority, Attn: Jodi Clough, 1 Elm Terrace, Greenfield, MA 01301 or Jodi@greenfieldhousing.org. Resumes will be accepted through Jan. 10.

# Assistant DPW Director Town of Palmer

Summary of Position: The Assistant DPW Director is responsible for assisting the Director in the provision of administrative and supervisory duties pertaining to highway/grounds/cemetery, fleet maintenance, engineering, and any other tasks that are assigned by the Director. Employee will be required to perform all similar or related duties as required. For a full job description, go to www.townofpalmer.com. Salary: Full-time, benefit-eligible position with an annual salary range of \$85,000 to \$101,000 depending upon education and experience. Qualifications and Experience: Bachelor's degree with three to five years of related experience is required. A civil engineering degree is preferred. An equivalent combination of education and experience may be substituted for listed requirements at the discretion of the hiring authority. Submit resume and letter of interest to Town Manager's Office, 4417 Main St., Palmer, MA 01069 or by emailing rmcnutt@townofpalmer.com. Open until filled.

### IT Manager Town of Newbury

The town of Newbury seeks qualified candidates for the full-time position of IT Manager. The position is responsible for overseeing the town's Windows and telephone environments, point of contact for questions and issues from end-users and their systems, manage community engagement through social media/website, oversee/participate in the new software/ programs/application initiatives and ensuring overall health and protection of IT infrastructure for the town of Newbury. Applicants should possess an associate's degree in a related field and at least five to seven years' experience in a technical support capacity. Familiarity with a municipal setting preferred. Position is 35 hours per week (Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, 8 a.m.-4 p.m. and Tuesdays 8 a.m.-7 p.m. with benefits package, salary negotiable based on experience. Accepting resumes until the position is filled. Town of Newbury, Town Administrator, 12 Kent Way, Byfield, MA 01922, AA/EOE

### **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 <a href="www.mma.org">www.mma.org</a>, 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.

### **February Beacon**

Deadline: Jan 20 Publication: Feb. 1

### March Beacon

Deadline: Feb. 23 Publication: Mar. 1

### 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.

# **Classified Advertisements**

### Assistant Commissioner for Operations -Public Works and Parks City of Worcester

The city of Worcester (population 185,000; budget: \$721.8M) seeks qualified applicants for the position of Assistant Commissioner for Operations - Public Works and Parks. The Assistant Commissioner for Operations is a leader in the Public Works and Parks division (\$100M budget), reporting to the Commissioner. The Assistant Commissioner performs highly responsible professional work leading the operations divisions of DPW which include water, sewer, streets, sanitation, and central garage. This position directly oversees six full-time employees/managers and indirectly oversees 300 employees. The Assistant Commissioner is responsible for establishing short- and long-range goals and objectives, personal performance standards, and assumes direct accountability for department results. Qualified candidates will have the ability to conduct and oversee major public works programs; identify and resolve problems; read and interpret engineering plans and reports as well as state and federal environmental laws and regulations; regularly meet deadlines; and exercise considerable judgement. Worcester seeks an experienced and energetic Assistant Commissioner excited by the opportunity to work collaboratively and assist the city in accomplishing its ambitious goals. Applicants should have a bachelor's degree (master's preferred) in civil engineering or related field. Seven years of related work experience, with three or more years in a managerial capacity, is required. A Professional Engineer License is preferred. A detailed position statement can be located at www.communityparadigm.com. Salary: \$120,000-\$145,000 commensurate with qualifications. Worcester is an EOE/AA employer. For additional information related to the position, the city and the application process, contact Bernard Lynch, Principal, Community Paradigm Associates at blynch@ communityparadigm.com. Resume and cover letter, in confidence, via email in a single PDF, to: apply@communityparadigm.com. Subject: Worcester Assistant Commissioner Operations. Position is open until filled. For a guaranteed review of application materials, apply by Jan. 17.

# Inspectional Services Administrator Town of Newbury

The town of Newbury seeks qualified candidates for the full-time position of Inspectional Services Administrator. The Inspectional Services Administrator reports to the Director of Inspectional Services and will serve as a liaison between the inspectional service department and the citizens of Newbury, town departments, boards, commissions, and state or federal agencies. S/he oversees office operations for the Inspectional Services Department with a focus on duties of the Building Commissioner, Conservation Agent and Planning Director Commission and carries out all their instructions, policies and decisions, and performs all administrative related duties. Applicants should possess a high school diploma and have a minimum of five years' experience in an office environment. Familiarity with a municipal setting preferred. Position is 35 hours per week (Monday, Wednesday, Thursday 8 a.m.-4 p.m. and Tuesdays 8 a.m.-7 p.m. with benefits package, starting at salary negotiable based on experience \$20 per hour. Accepting resumes until the position is filled. Town of Newbury, Town Administrator, 12 Kent Way, Byfield, MA 01922. AA/EOE

### **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@mma.org.

### **Leadership Excellence Program**

The UMass Donahue Institute, in collaboration with University Without Walls and UMass Online, is offering a new online leadership development certificate program. The Leadership Excellence program is for emerging leaders who need new skills and tools to implement organizational change and propel their careers forward. The five-module program provides 30 hours of hands-on learning over eight weeks in an interactive online classroom. Participants also complete two online leadership assessments and receive individualized coaching to interpret the results. Completion of this program will earn learners a certificate and is accredited to award three CEUs through UWW. Visit <a href="https://www.donahue.umass.edu/ODLS">www.donahue.umass.edu/ODLS</a> for more information.

### **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 <a href="https://www.GovHRusa.com">www.GovHRusa.com</a> 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 <a href="https://www.govhrjobs.com">www.govhrjobs.com</a>.

# 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 <a href="https://www.theexecutivesuite.com">www.theexecutivesuite.com</a>.

### **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 <a href="https://www.spatial-relationships.com">www.spatial-relationships.com</a>.

### **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

■ **CLASSIFIEDS** continued on 30

# **Classified Advertisements**

### **CLASSIFIEDS**

Continued from page 29

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 <a href="www.k-plaw.com">www.k-plaw.com</a> 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.

### **Town Counsel/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 Jack Dolan for labor, employment, civil rights 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 <a href="https://www.themediationgroup.org">www.themediationgroup.org</a>, 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, cost-effective services. For additional information, please visit <a href="https://www.k-plaw.com">www.k-plaw.com</a> or contact Lauren Goldberg, Esq. at 617-556-0007, or toll-free at 800-548-3522, or at Igoldberg@k-plaw.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 long-term 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 caseby-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 con-

sulting 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 <a href="https://www.erickinsherfcpa.com">www.erickinsherfcpa.com</a>.

### **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 <a href="www.hrsconsultingimc.com">www.hrsconsultingimc.com</a>. 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.

# Send us your address changes

In order to maintain accurate records, and to assure that our members receive MMA publications, we need to know when you change your address or role in your community.

Please send us any changes, and include your title, municipality or organization, address, and phone and fax numbers.

Changes should be sent to the MMA database administrator at 1 Winthrop Square, Boston, MA 02110 or database@mma.org.

Call 800-882-1498 if you have any questions. ●

# **Calendar**

### **JANUARY**

Massachusetts Select Board Association, annual business meeting, 9-10:30 a.m., remote. Contact: MMA Member Services Coordinator Isabelle Nichols

Massachusetts Mayors'
Association, annual business
meeting, 10-11 a.m. Contact: MMA
Communications and Membership
Director Candace Pierce

Massachusetts Municipal Councillors' Association,

annual business meeting, remote, 5:30-6:45 p.m. 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**

Association of Town Finance Committees, governing board, remote, 4-5 p.m. Contact: MMA Senior Member Services Coordinator Denise Baker

9 Massachusetts Municipal Councillors' Association,

remote board meeting, 8:45-9:30 a.m. Contact: MMA Senior Member Services Coordinator Denise Baker

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

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

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

**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.

### **MARCH**

Association of Town Finance Committees, governing board, remote, 4-5 p.m. Contact: MMA Senior Member Services Coordinator Denise Baker

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

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

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

### **APRIL**

Association of Town Finance Committees, governing board, remote, 4-5 p.m. Contact: MMA Senior Member Services Coordinator Denise Baker

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

Massachusetts Select Board Association, remote board meeting, 2-3:30 p.m. Contact: MMA Member Services Coordinator Isabelle Nichols CHALLENGE AND CHANGE

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JANUARY 21-22
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**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

For more information, visit <a href="https://www.mma.org">www.mma.org</a>.

Online registration is available for most of these events.