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April 2021

## Communities await details on ARPA

### By Jackie Lavender Bird

Local officials across the country are eagerly awaiting guidance from the U.S. Treasury Department for clarity on how American Rescue Plan funds can be spent and exactly how much they'll get.

Signed into law on March 11, the \$1.9 trillion American Rescue Plan Act provides the latest round of stimulus funding to address the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. The federal aid package includes \$350 billion in direct aid to states, local governments, tribes and territories.

The law creates new state and local coronavirus relief funds, with \$220 billion going to states, tribal governments and territories, and \$130 billion going directly to municipal and county governments. The legislation also includes \$10 billion for coronavirus capital relief funds for state governments.

Estimates for Massachusetts indicate that cities and towns could receive as much as \$3 billion in direct aid.

The Treasury Department is responsible for making final decisions about specific allocation amounts, and those details, along with specific guidance on allowable uses, are expected in the coming weeks. The law calls for the funds to begin being disbursed 60 days after enactment.

Working with information from the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Oversight and the National League of Cities, the MMA has provided estimates for direct aid that Massachusetts municipalities could receive from the act, though the numbers should be considered preliminary and will likely be adjusted somewhat by the Treasury, due to refinements in identifying the numbers, types and categorization of cities and towns across the nation that will qualify for direct aid in the final allocation.

In Massachusetts, 37 "Metropolitan Cities" (generally communities with populations above 50,000) will receive about \$1.7 billion distributed through a modified Community Development Block Grant formula, and all other communities



Heath Fahle, special director for federal funds at the Executive Office for Administration and Finance, discusses the implications of the American Rescue Plan for municipalities during a March 23 call with local officials convened by the MMA.

will receive approximately \$368 million distributed on a per-capita basis. Counties will receive about \$1.336 billion, also distributed on a per-capita basis.

The American Rescue Plan directs a substantial portion of Coronavirus Local

■ RESCUE PLAN continued on 21

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### **President unveils \$2 trillion infrastructure plan**

### By John Ouellette

At a March 31 event in Pittsburgh, President Joe Biden unveiled his \$2 trillion American Jobs Plan, the first of two packages he'll be filing to rebuild the economy and create jobs.

The president says the infrastructure package will create millions of good-paying jobs, fix 20,000 miles of roads and 10,000 bridges, and invest in a range of physical infrastructure projects, including transportation, broadband, the electric grid and housing.

In a statement, the White House said, "This is a once-in-a-century capital investment in America to not only meet our current infrastructure needs — like rebuilding crumbling roads and bridges and making sure every American has

access to broadband and clean water — but also investing in research and development, so that we can make in the U.S. and sell around the world 21st century products."

The package will invest in the "care economy," so more people who need care can access it and to ensure that the government is supporting essential caregiving jobs.

It will also target investments in communities of color and rural communities, and address climate change through an environmental justice and clean energy economic approach.

The spending would take place over eight years, according to Biden administration officials, and will not in every

■ INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN continued on 8

### **2021 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-

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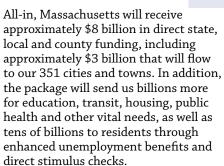
Geoff Beckwith (non-voting) MMA Executive Director

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## **Executive Director's Report**

### Unprecedented federal aid creates great opportunity and immense responsibility

With one sweep of his pen, President Joe Biden transformed the largest federal aid bill in our nation's history into the law of the land. The \$1.9 trillion American Rescue Plan Act, or ARPA. will soon send an unprecedented \$350 billion in direct federal aid to cities, towns, counties, territories and states.



After more than a year in crisis mode, managing and leading during the worst public health emergency in more than a century, ARPA is a huge victory for local governments, providing the resources and investments we need to recover. restore and renew our communities and our economy.

ARPA's passage was not easy. From the start, our powerful federal delegation was united in their support and advocacy for direct aid to cities and towns, and our national affiliate, the National League of Cities, waged a relentless



By Geoffrey Beckwith

campaign across the country to mobilize municipal leaders to call on their lawmakers to make similar commitments. Our U.S. senators and representatives delivered. NLC delivered. And the MMA is proud of its active role supporting, educating and informing stakeholders and the public of the urgent need for sweeping federal relief.

Yet this victory is just the beginning of a new and enormous challenge: how to pivot, plan, act and lead to turn ARPA's promise of rescue and recovery into a

### **Great opportunity brings great** responsibility

While the details will become clearer after the U.S. Treasury Department provides specific guidance by next month, the scope of our new federal aid is known. With approximately \$3 billion flowing directly to our 351 cities and towns, every community, from the smallest to the largest, will receive an unprecedented amount of funding to use by December 2024 to combat the pandemic and invest in our residents, businesses and communities to recharge our economy and rebuild our future.

Local leaders will now have the awesome responsibility of allocating and deploying these funds to achieve the

■ DIRECTOR'S REPORT continued on 18

## Beacon

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Manager of **Publications & Digital** Communications John Quellette

**Associate Editor** Jennifer Kavanaugh

Digital Communications Full Circle Design Coordinator Meredith Gabrilska

Communications & **Membership Director** Candace Pierce

Publisher Geoffrey Beckwith Design

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### **Massachusetts Municipal Association**

Massachusetts Interlocal Insurance Association 3 Center Plaza, Suite 610, Boston, MA 02108 617-426-7272 · www.mma.org Twitter and Facebook: @massmunicipal

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## MMA urges Legislature to boost education funding

### By Jackie Lavender Bird

At a budget hearing on municipal and school aid held by the House and Senate Ways and Means committees on March 16, the MMA advocated for increased funding in a number of key accounts for cities and towns.

## Unrestricted General Government Aid

Gov. Charlie Baker's budget proposal released in January (House 1) would increase Unrestricted General Government Aid at the same rate as the projected growth of state revenues: 3.5%. The increase amounts to \$39.5 million, bringing the account to nearly \$1.17 billion.

The MMA asked the Legislature to continue this revenue-sharing partnership by funding municipalities at the same rate as the growth in state revenues.

### **Chapter 70**

The landmark Student Opportunity Act of 2019 calls for phasing in an additional \$1.5 billion in school aid over a seven-year period. The pandemic postponed implementation in the fiscal 2021 state budget, and House 1 would fund the first year of the seven-year schedule in fiscal 2022.

The MMA, joined by the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents, urged the Legislature to consider funding essentially the first and second years of the Student Opportunity Act so that critical aid to school districts would not remain a year behind schedule. Doing so would increase the Chapter 70 education aid request by approximately \$350 million over fiscal 2021.

Because student enrollment dropped by more than 30,000 statewide during the public health emergency, and the majority of students are expected to return to public schools this fall, the MMA also urged legislators to use student enrollment data from Oct. 1, 2019. rather than Oct. 1, 2020 (or whichever is higher), when calculating Chapter 70 aid. Since using the higher enrollment figure will increase the size of a district's foundation budget, and could therefore increase the district's required local contribution, the MMA asked that legislators be mindful of these proposed changes.

Under the governor's budget, a majority of districts statewide would remain minimum-aid-only, receiving just a \$30 per-student increase over last year's aid. The MMA strongly advocated for \$100



Education Secretary James Peyser discusses Chapter 70 funding during a March 16 budget hearing held by the House and Senate Ways and Means committees.

per student for minimum aid districts.

The governor's Chapter 70 recommendation would make a significant change in how cities and towns can meet their required local contributions for fiscal 2022. Municipalities would be able to use up to 75% of the total grant awarded to the local school district through the federal Elementary and Secondary

■ **BUDGET** continued on 26

### Legislature sends benefits bill with mandated sick leave to governor

#### **By John Robertson**

The House and Senate unanimously approved and sent to the governor legislation (H. 95) to shore up the state's underfunded unemployment insurance program and impose a temporary emergency sick leave requirement on employers, including local governments.

On March 8, legislative leadership announced an agreement on the outline of the legislation. The House approved a version on March 11, and the Senate approved a similar bill on March 18. There were no public hearings on the legislation.

The original bill, filed by the governor in January, included only unemployment insurance provisions.

### Sick leave mandate

The mandated paid sick time provisions would require Massachusetts employers to temporarily provide emergency paid sick leave to employees who are absent

or unable to work for reasons related to COVID-19, including:

- Employee self care
- Care of a family member with a COVID-19 diagnosis or symptoms
- Compliance with an order to quarantine because of exposure or symptoms
- Inability to telework after a COVID-19 diagnosis

The definitions of "employer" and "employee" include local governments.

The new temporary state program is based on requirements in the federal sick leave program included in the Families First Coronavirus Response Act, which expired at the end of 2020.

The state sick leave provisions would take effect 10 days after the effective date of the law and would end on Sept. 30, 2021, unless extended. There are separate bills in the House and Senate

that would make emergency paid sick time during a declared state of emergency or disaster a permanent benefit.

An employee who works 40 hours or more per week would be eligible for 40 hours of emergency paid sick time. For employees who work less than 40 hours per week, leave eligibility would be tied to an average of the number of hours worked.

The Legislature's bill would establish a \$75 million COVID-19 Emergency Paid Sick Leave Fund to reimburse eligible employers for providing paid sick leave. Generally, cities and towns would not be eligible for reimbursements from the fund, but would be able to take a federal tax credit against employment taxes, including Medicare, to cover part of the cost of mandated sick leave. The new tax credit provision was provided through an amendment to the federal

■ SICK LEAVE continued on 25

## Municipalities should prepare federal project requests

### **By Brittney Kohler**

Congress is getting ready to take suggestions on worthy municipal projects ready for investment, but the opportunity to submit them is going to move quickly.

Before the end of April, the <u>House</u> <u>Appropriations Committee is seeking</u> <u>Community-Based Project requests</u>, and the Transportation Committee is taking Local Transportation Priorities from Members that may be used in the upcoming transportation reauthorization bill this spring.

Additionally, the traditional collection of programmatic and language changes by Appropriations subcommittees is also moving forward.

#### **Earmarks are back**

This type of congressionally directed project spending was discontinued for several years, but both the House Democratic majority and House Republican minority made changes to their rules to allow for the new version of "earmarks"

to return. This move is meant to encourage bipartisan cooperation and ensure that Congress was not over-delegating their investment authority to unelected administration officials.

Here's what city leaders need to know to engage in this process:

## Every member of Congress gets to pick and rank community projects:

Your member of Congress will get to rank and submit only 10 Community
Project Funding requests across all subcommittee areas, and only a handful may actually be funded. Each member of Congress is responsible for identifying their office's own preliminary process and submission timelines, and many of your members of Congress will have deadlines coming up in late March and early April.

Municipal leaders who want to participate in sharing a project with their member of Congress should check the member's website for details and be sure to note their office's deadlines

and all the required information. The Appropriations Committee has issued guidance on submitting Community
Project Funding requests, as well as the subcommittee instructions. The earlier that municipalities can provide input, the earlier that their members of Congress can review the input and catch any issues before they move forward with submitting priority projects.

Members of Congress have three ways to support local priorities: In addition to projects, members of Congress can add project and programmatic requests and language across all subcommittees. These changes to programs can be very effective in ensuring strong programs for local governments. Here are some transportation examples from the THUD Subcommittee:

 Community Project Request: a funding request for a specific governmental entity or nonprofit organization to carry out a specific community project

■ TRANSPORTATION continued on 27

### At hearing, MMA calls for increase in Chapter 90 funding

### By Ariela Lovett

On March 9, the MMA and local officials testified before the Joint Committee on Transportation at a preliminary hearing on a \$200 million Chapter 90 bond bill for fiscal 2022.

The MMA, along with Franklin Public Works Director Brutus Cantoreggi and Gloucester Public Works Director Michael Hale, continued to advocate for additional funding to help address local needs and boost economic recovery. With a few small exceptions, annual Chapter 90 funding has been level-funded at \$200 million since 2012, and has lost one-third of its purchasing power over that time.

The MMA panel said the COVID-19 pandemic has created additional challenges for municipal public works departments.

"We're all behind in our road maintenance work," Hale said, citing the need to reduce staffing by half as a safety precaution and due to illnesses, as well as delays to the start of the construction season last year because of the onset of the pandemic. Cantoreggi said with most people staying closer to home due to the pandemic, road-use patterns shifted to put more wear and tear on local roads.

In recent years, the state has added several targeted, competitive road funding opportunities for municipalities, such as the Complete Streets and Small Bridges grant programs. But the MMA argued that "there is no substitute for the core Chapter 90 program," which is "the only non-competitive program that maintains local control over how to spend the dollars on local road projects" and the only one that benefits all 351 cities and towns.

The MMA emphasized the importance of finalizing the bill (H. 57) as quickly as possible so that cities and towns can access their Chapter 90 allotment and begin the spring construction season on time.

The MMA also submitted <u>written testimony</u>.

Once the Transportation Committee reports out the bill, its next step is expected to be the House Bonding Committee.



Franklin Public Works Director Robert "Brutus" Cantoreggi testifies before the Joint Committee on Transportation during a March 9 preliminary hearing about a Chapter 90 bond bill.

The MMA filed a standalone bill, sponsored by Sen. Adam Hinds, that would fund the Chapter 90 program at \$300 million per year for two years. The bill (SD. 2456) has not been assigned a bill number or hearing date as yet.

### Panel discusses new cannabis delivery regulations

### By Brittney Franklin

The Massachusetts Municipal Lawyers Association and the MMA hosted a webinar on March 18 focused on new delivery regulations that the Cannabis Control Commission enacted this past November.

Panelists included Cannabis Control Commission Chair Steven Hoffman, Brockton City Solicitor Megan Bridges and Easthampton Planner Jeff Bagg.

Hoffman opened by reviewing the status of recreational marijuana in Massachusetts. To date, 210 licensees have begun adult-use operations in the state and have generated more than \$1 billion in retail sales, including more than \$200 million in tax revenue for cities and towns.

Hoffman detailed the new delivery regulations, saying the goal for the delivery program is to encourage and carve

out license types for social equity and economic empowerment candidates. The delivery licenses will be limited to social equity and economic empowerment candidates for the first three years. He said an FAQ and guidance for the new delivery regulations should be available soon.

Bridges and Bagg shared what their cities have done to prepare for the new licensee type and some of the issues they foresee.

Bagg said Easthampton recently executed its first delivery host community agreement, but it was done before final zoning was in place. He detailed some of the local regulations his city was thinking about in its final zoning ordinance. For example, if a delivery licensee has six or more vehicles, they should be electric or diesel.

The webinar can be viewed on the MMA website. ●



During a March 18 webinar hosted by the Massachusetts Municipal Lawyers Association and the MMA, Brockton City Solicitor Megan Bridges discusses how her city has prepared for the delivery regulations recently enacted by the Cannabis Control Commission.

### Gov. Baker signs law to extend pandemic-related voting changes

### By Brittney Franklin

A law signed by Gov. Charlie Baker on March 16 provides a three-month extension for a number of changes to voting procedures that were enacted last spring due to the COVID-19 pandemic, including early voting by mail.

The new law does the following:

- Allows a city or town with a municipal caucus or annual or special municipal election scheduled before June 30, 2021, to postpone such municipal caucus or municipal election to a date certain not later than Aug. 1, 2021
- Allows the select board, board of selectmen, town council or board of registrars to vote to eliminate amunicipal caucus scheduled to occur before July 31, 2021, and, in the alternative, use nomination papers to nominate candidates
- Allows any eligible voter to vote early by mail for any annual or special municipal or state primary or election held on or before June 30, 2021
- Allows any eligible voter to vote early in-person for any annual or special municipal election held on or before June 30, 2021, in a community where

the select board, board of selectmen, town council or city council has taken a recorded and public vote to authorize early in-person voting

- For any annual or special municipal or state primary or election held on or before June 30, 2021, allows those taking precautions related to COVID-19 to be deemed unable to cast their vote in person at a polling location by reason of physical disability
- Allows voters instructed by a medical professional or a local or state health official to self-quarantine in their home beginning after noon on the seventh day before any annual or special municipal or state primary or election held on or before June 30, 2021, to designate their home address for delivery of the ballot
- Allows voters with a disability that make it difficult or impossible for them to effectively access a paper vote by mail ballot to request an accommodation from their local election official, and require the local election official to make reasonable efforts to grant accommodations to the voter



A new law gives municipalities more flexibility in conducting their spring elections.

With towns preparing for their annual elections this spring, the Legislature sent the fast-track bill to the governor on March 12, as pandemic-related changes made last spring to election procedures were due to expire on March 31

The MMA had been advocating for quick passage of the measure. ●

### Gov. Baker signs landmark climate change mitigation bill

### By Ariela Lovett

On March 26, Gov. Charlie Baker signed an omnibus climate change bill that codifies the state's commitment to achieving net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.

The Legislature and the administration traded versions of the bill back and forth in recent months as they worked out several policy and language differences.

Following a gubernatorial veto in early January, legislative leaders fulfilled their promise to refile the bill at the start of the new session, and it was quickly passed again by both branches.

Baker returned the refiled bill to the Legislature with several amendments, including substantive policy changes and minor language clarifications. The Legislature then voted to adopt a number of Baker's amendments while maintaining their priority policy positions.

The final version of the law includes interim emissions reduction targets for 2030 and 2040 of at least 50% and 75%, respectively, below 1990 levels.

The law also maintains interim emissions reduction limits for several industrial sectors, such as electric power, residential and commercial cooling and heating, and transportation. Legislative leaders and the governor agreed

to allow these sublimits, but without penalties on specific sectors as long as the overall statewide emissions targets are reached.

The Legislature did not incorporate the governor's preferred language establishing a municipal opt-in "high-performance" stretch energy code, choosing instead to specify that the code include a defi-

nition of net-zero building. The MMA had supported language to establish a municipal opt-in net zero stretch energy code.

The final version of the law incorporates a change the governor made to the definition of environmental justice, adding climate change to the definition of "environmental burdens" faced by environmental justice populations.

The Legislature also adopted the governor's proposed language requiring the



Gov. Charlie Baker speaks during the March 26 signing ceremony for the state's new climate law. Also pictured is House Speaker Ronald Mariano. (Photo courtesy Joshua Qualls/Governor's Press Office)

Department of Environmental Protection to conduct "cumulative impact analysis" as a condition of issuing certain permits. A cumulative analysis would consider not only the environmental impacts specific to the proposed project, but also the aggregate environmental impacts experienced by the affected population to date.

Massachusetts now has one of the strongest climate change mitigation laws in the country. ●

### Management Association discusses police reform, systemic racism

The Massachusetts Municipal Management Association held a webinar March 25 on the topics of police reform and systemic racism in police departments.

Chelsea Police Chief Brian Kyes, large cities chair of the Massachusetts Chiefs of Police Association, discussed the police reform legislation that Gov. Charlie Baker signed into law on the last day of 2020. A key piece of this legislation was the creation of a Peace Officers Standards and Training certification program.

Chief Kyes provided an overview of POST and other key parts of the legislation for city and town managers.

The second part of the meeting focused on systemic racism in police departments. Retired Metropolitan Police (D.C.) Lt. Brett Parson discussed ways to address systemic racism within police departments and its impact on the wider community.

Parson covered the history and evolution of racism within police departments and some of the programs and techniques he has seen work in his own department and others that he has worked with on this issue.

More than 130 members attended the webinar. A recording and other resources are available on www.mma.org. ●



Chelsea Police Chief Brian Kyes discusses the new police reform law during a March 25 webinar hosted by the Massachusetts Municipal Management Association.

## MMHR discusses vaccine implications in the workplace

### By Meredith Gabrilska

A year into the pandemic, a Massachusetts Municipal Human Resources association webinar on March 4 reflected on the lessons learned and the path forward, including a discussion of the implications of the vaccine in the municipal workplace.

Dr. Michael Hirsh, medical director of the Worcester Division of Public Health, trauma services director at UMass Memorial Health Care, and surgeon-inchief for the Children's Medical Center, reflected on the course of events over the past year and looked forward as the nation goes on the offensive against COVID-19.

"We're fortunate to live in a time when we could come up with a vaccination within a year's time," he said. "Development of the vaccine is based on 20 years of research and development against other viruses. Messenger RNA was just waiting for the right virus to be used [against]."

He also noted that the second surge of the virus around the holiday season was less deadly because of lessons learned during the first surge in the spring.

"We wised up quickly about the most vulnerable populations and the best treatment therapies," he said.

Hirsh said local and state governments now must develop public awareness campaigns to connect with populations that have a distrust of vaccines.

He said the COVID pandemic exposed existing health disparities across the country.

With a number of COVID variants emerging and case numbers in flux, he recommends that city and town halls continue to wait before reopening to the public.

### **HR** concerns

Attorney Yetunde Buraimoh, an associate with Morgan, Brown, & Joy, discussed the implications of the COVID vaccine, workplace safety and accommodation, and workers' compensation concerns.

Buraimoh started with the "question of the hour": Can employers require employees to be vaccinated against COVID?

"Yes," Buraimoh said. "As a general

proposition, employers can require employees to be vaccinated, pending a few exceptions."

Buraimoh said employers may request proof of vaccination. but should be careful about any follow-up questions, as they could be considered an inquiry into a disability. Any questions should meet the criteria of being a business necessity.



Panelists cover a range of COVID-related issues during a March 4 webinar hosted by the Massachusetts Municipal Human Resources association. Pictured are (clockwise from top left) MMA Legislative Director John Robertson; Southborough Assistant Town Administrator Vanessa Hale, the MMHR's vice chair; Yetunde Buraimoh, an attorney at Morgan, Brown, & Joy; and Dr. Michael Hirsh, medical director at the Worcester Division of Public Health.

Municipalities that find themselves in the position of having to vaccinate employees should keep in mind that a vaccination is not considered a medical examination under the Americans with Disabilities Act, but the pre-screening questions used to determine eligibility may constitute one.

While employers may mandate a vaccination, they must provide a reasonable accommodation where a disability or sincerely held religious belief prevents someone from getting a vaccination. Buraimoh suggested that employers consider the layout of the workspace to determine what those accommodations could look like.

"That accomodation could be on-site with the necessary separation or a remote work setup," she said. "Employers should engage in the interactive process to determine accommodation, as they would with any other accommodation request."

She also discussed what employers can and cannot ask employees who have COVID-like symptoms or have traveled outside the state, and how to appropriately share information for contact tracing when necessary.

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration has updated standards for keeping workplaces safe for employees, and has made some unannounced work-

place inspections. Buraimoh highlighted certain recommendations, including designating a workplace coordinator, conducting a thorough hazard assessment of the worksite, taking measures to reduce the risk of spread, considering special precautions for those who have self-identified as high risk, and implementing a protocol for employee complaints.

Buraimoh also discussed a few paid leave options for COVID recovery, quarantine or care of family members, including the Families First Coronavirus Response Act, which expired on the last day of 2020, and the corresponding tax credit for employers, which has been extended through March 31, 2021. Employers may still opt to offer the 80 hours of leave under the FFCRA to employees who did not use it in 2020, but they are not required to do so.

Regarding remote work policies, she noted that remote work can be an appropriate reasonable accommodation option. Given current occupancy restrictions, she said, municipalities should make sure that employees who are on-site really need to be there. When developing remote work policies, human resources should consider equipment needs, information technology security concerns, impacts on productivity, and

■ MMHR continued on 25

## Walsh confirmed to cabinet, Janey becomes mayor

### By Jennifer Kavanaugh

The U.S. Senate's confirmation of Martin Walsh as labor secretary on March 22 brought a historic change to the city of Boston, making Kim Janey the city's first Black and first female mayor.

The Senate vote came more than two months after President Joe Biden nominated Walsh, who resigned as mayor a few hours later, after seven years on the job.

Janey, who was the City Council president, was sworn in as acting mayor the next day.

Walsh and Janey hail from two of Boston's less-affluent neighborhoods, and they both have overcome significant obstacles on their way to becoming leaders. In a press conference following the Senate vote, Walsh reflected on the political journeys the two made toward this transition.

"I was texting with Council President Janey last night, and I texted, 'Think about this for a minute: A little girl from Roxbury is about to be mayor of Boston," Walsh said. "And her response was, 'Think about this for a minute: A little boy from Dorchester is about to become the United States labor secretary."

The son of Irish immigrants, Walsh survived cancer as a child and received treatment for alcoholism as an adult. Working as a laborer, he rose through the ranks of the union to become a union president. From 1997 to 2014, he represented the 13th Suffolk District, which includes parts of Boston and Quincy, in the Legislature. He was elected to his first mayoral term in 2013, and was reelected in 2017.



Kim Janey



Martin Walsh

When Biden nominated Walsh for the labor post on Jan. 8, he described Walsh as a good friend and "tough as nails."

Walsh will bring a prominent local voice to the Biden administration. In an email thanking Boston residents, Walsh wrote that he will work to make the new administration "the best federal partner Boston and America's cities have ever had." In his resignation letter, he also reflected on his experience in Boston and connected it to his work in Washington.

"In my new role as our nation's Secretary of Labor, I will draw deeply on the lessons I have learned in Boston these last seven years and throughout my life in our city," Walsh wrote in his resignation letter. "I will be forever grateful to the people of Boston for shaping who I am and granting me the privilege of serving as your Mayor."

Instead of having a special election, Boston will wait to hold its next regular mayoral election this fall, making Janey the city's leader for the rest of the year.

Janey now leads a city in whose difficult racial history has intersected with her own life. As a child during court-ordered school desegregation in the 1970s, Janey faced rock throwing and racial

slurs as she rode the school bus to another section of Boston. Later, she attended school in the town of Reading through the METCO program, which educates city students in suburban districts. She became a mother at age 16, and cleaned bathrooms to attend Smith College and support her daughter.

With a focus on children's issues, civil rights and equity, Janey spent 16 years working for the Massachusetts Advocates for Children, and was previously a community organizer for Parents United for Child Care. She was elected to the City Council in 2017, becoming the city's first female District 7 councillor. She became council president in 2020.

In an opinion piece published on March 22 in The Boston Globe, Janey pledged to address issues such as systemic racism, police reform and the racial wealth gap. In helping the city recover from the COVID pandemic, Janey wrote that she wants to help make vaccines more accessible, work toward safe school reopenings, and address economic disparities while reopening the city for business.

"Let's be clear — the problems laid bare by the pandemic were here before COVID-19," Janey wrote. "The issues of affordable housing, public transportation, and climate change are not new. What's different is that these problems now impact more of us."

In a tweet following Walsh's confirmation, Janey congratulated Walsh and acknowledged the change.

"Now, we look ahead to a new day — a new chapter — in Boston's history," Janey tweeted. ●

### **INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN**

 ${\it Continued from page 1}$ 

case prioritize so-called shovel ready projects. They said the package would end decades of stagnation in federal investment in research and infrastructure and would return government investment in those areas to its highest levels since the 1960s.

"The American Jobs Plan will invest in

America in a way we have not invested since we built the interstate highways and won the Space Race," the White House wrote in its 25-page fact sheet outlining the proposal.

"Throughout this process, we look forward to working with a broad coalition of members of Congress to gather their input and ideas," the White House said, "and determine the path forward, create

good jobs, and make America more competitive."

The president said he will announce the second part of his recovery agenda in mid-April, focused on helping families with the challenges like health care costs, child care, paid leave and education.

## Municipalities mobilize to vaccinate homebound

### **By Lisa Capone**

A large number of communities had already laid the groundwork when the Department of Public Health officially launched the <u>Homebound Vaccination Program</u> on March 29.

Salem, for example, created a screening system in February to identify homebound residents. Following eligibility screening by municipal health and social services staff, the city identified 143 residents, including those referred by the North Shore Physicians Group, to receive in-home vaccinations through a partnership with Cataldo Ambulance Service, according to Mayor Kim Driscoll's office.

In Central Massachusetts, Auburn has been planning its own homebound vaccination program since mid-February, working closely with the local Meals on Wheels organization, as well as the Auburn Senior Center and Housing Authority to identify eligible residents.

"Auburn was operating our own vaccination clinics starting back in January, and those clinics ran very well," said Town Manager Julie Jacobson. "We are therefore poised to vaccinate our homebound residents."

The North Suffolk Public Health Collaborative has facilitated the sharing of best practices for organizing and delivering homebound vaccines for the communities of Revere, Winthrop and Chelsea.

"Since the beginning of our Reach Every Senior campaign, our volunteers identified close to 100 seniors who were not able to leave their homes to get vaccinated," said Revere Mayor Brian Arrigo. "The Revere Board of Health and Revere Fire Department teamed up with the East Boston Neighborhood Health Center to make sure each and every one of these residents got vaccinated."

Public Health Director Lauren Buck said Revere's program relies on a mix of referrals from doctors and social services providers as well as self-attestations to determine eligibility. She added that Revere modeled its program after one in neighboring Winthrop, which began its homebound vaccination program in mid-February.

Winthrop Public Health Director Meredith Hurley said the town promoted

the program through its website and social media platforms as well as the Winthrop Senior Center and local medical providers. Between 60 and 75 homebound residents were served by mid-March, she said.

"The town of Winthrop has

focused our allocations on our most vulnerable populations," said Town Manager Austin Faison. "We know there are members of our community that cannot get to the mass vaccination sites, so we prioritized the homebound populations."

Collaborating on ideas and operations with private sector partners and neighboring communities is a recurring theme for municipalities that have opted for local oversight of in-home vaccinations. In Franklin County, 15 municipalities are participating in a program run by the Franklin Regional Council of Government's Cooperative Public Health Service. Community Services Director Phoebe Walker said the FRCOG will work closely with Life Path, a nonprofit agency on aging in Greenfield, to vaccinate hundreds of homebound Franklin County residents.

### State seeks help

Poised to play a key role in the long-awaited COVID-19 vaccine rollout, Massachusetts cities and towns had to pivot in mid-February when the Baker-Polito administration announced it would prioritize high-capacity state vaccination sites and only provide vaccine doses to municipal clinics in 20 disproportionately impacted communities and approved regional collaboratives.

Health and Human Services Secretary Marylou Sudders asked cities and towns to concentrate instead on "outreach to vulnerable, hard-to-reach populations," particularly those who are eligible but cannot travel to a vaccination site.



In Revere, an in-home vaccination team gathers for another round of home visits. (Photo courtesy city of Revere)

The Department of Public Health introduced its Homebound Vaccination Program with a "soft launch" on March 8. By March 12, municipalities had to inform the DPH whether they would participate in the state program or administer vaccinations themselves for homebound residents, following guidance from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. According to the DPH, 168 boards of health (representing about 40% of the state's population) opted to manage local programs, and 183 cities and towns will use a state system administered through the nonprofit Commonwealth Care Alliance.

In-home vaccinations will be available to individuals who "have considerable difficulty and/or require significant support to leave home for medical appointments; require an ambulance or two-person assistance to leave home; or are not able to leave home for medical appointments under normal circumstances."

The DPH is now operating a toll-free number (833-983-0485) Monday through Friday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m., in multiple languages to help determine eligibility and schedule appointments.

### **Aging population**

One area of Massachusetts likely to shoulder outsized responsibility for at-home vaccinations is Cape Cod, due to the age of its population. Nearly one-third of Barnstable County residents are age 65 and older (compared to 17% statewide). While the recently formed

■ **VACCINATIONS** continued on 27

## **Administration officials explain Housing Choice**

### By Brittney Franklin

The MMA hosted <u>a webinar with administration officials on March 2 to cover the recent Housing Choice provisions</u> included in a comprehensive economic development law that was enacted in January.

The conversation was led by Economic Development Secretary Mike Kennealy and Chris Kluchman, deputy director of the Community Services Division in the Department of Housing and Economic Development.

Kennealy kicked off the program by thanking the MMA and local officials for their active partnership that helped get Housing Choice passed.

"This will better enable municipalities to adopt zoning measures needed to meet the state's housing needs and, importantly, do so in a way that meets their needs," Kennealy said. "The basic thrust of Housing Choice is to make it easier for cities and towns to develop the housing they need at a time when we need a lot more housing of all kinds across Massachusetts."

He said the targeted amendments to Chapter 40A help to create "a more predictable and fair process for zoning" and will result in "a lot more housing production across the state."

Housing Choice changed Chapter 40A by reducing the vote threshold for certain kinds of zoning ordinances and bylaws from a two-thirds supermajority to a simple majority.

"There is no opt-in provision," said Kluchman. "It simply changed the law and now applies to all cities and towns. It doesn't re-

quire you to do anything, it just allows you to make zoning for housing more easily."

Kluchman identified the types of zoning ordinances or bylaws that now require only a simple majority:

- Allowing for multi-family housing or mixed-use developments "as of right" in an eligible location
- Allowing for open space residential development as of right
- Allowing accessory dwelling units, either within the principal dwelling or within a detached structure on the same lot, as-of-right
- Allowing by special permit accessory dwelling units in a detached structure on the same lot
- Reducing the parking requirements for residential or mixed-use development under a special permit
- Allowing an increase in the permissible density of population or intensity of a particular use in a proposed multi-family or mixed-use development that requires a special permit
- Changing dimensional standards such as lot coverage or floor area ratio, height, setbacks, minimum open space coverage, parking, building coverage to allow for the construction of additional residential units on a particular parcel or parcels of land
- Providing for transfer-of-developmentrights zoning or natural resource protection zoning in instances where the adoption of such zoning promotes concentration of development in areas that the municipality deems most appropriate for such development, but will not result in a diminution in the



State officials discuss Housing Choice with municipal officials during a March 2 webinar. Pictured are (clockwise from top left) Chris Kluchman, deputy director of the Community Services Division in the Department of Housing and Economic Development; MMA Executive Director Geoff Beckwith; and Economic Development Secretary Mike Kennealy.

maximum number of housing units that could be developed within the municipality

 Adopting a smart growth or starter home district in accordance with Section 3 of Chapter 40R of the General Laws

Key terms for the items above are defined in Section 1A of the Zoning Act.

Kluchman said zoning amendments that require a simple majority vote should not be combined with amendments that require a two-thirds vote. <u>Guidance issued by DHCD on the new law</u> recommends that municipalities confer with the Municipal Law Unit of the Attorney General's Office before combining proposals with different voting thresholds.

Questions about Housing Choice should be directed to the DHCD at housingchoice@ mass.gov. ■

### **EOHED issues Housing Choice guidance**

The Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development has issued guidance and FAQs on Housing Choice, a component of the comprehensive economic development law signed in January that made changes to Chapter 40A of the General Laws, commonly known as the Zoning Act.

On the cusp of spring town meeting season, Housing and Economic Development issued the guidance so that municipalities could be positioned to act on the changes in the law.

Housing and Economic Development plans to publish more materials to assist

with the implementation effort, and the office also welcomes feedback from municipalities.

Chapter 358 of the Acts of 2020 (sometimes referred to as the economic development legislation of 2020) made several amendments to Chapter 40A. Among these amendments are changes to Section 5 of the Zoning Act, which reduce the number of votes required to enact certain kinds of zoning ordinances and bylaws from a two-thirds supermajority to a simple majority; and changes to Section 9 of the Zoning Act, making similar changes to the voting thresh-

olds for the issuance of certain kinds of special permits.

Section 100 of the economic development law directed the Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development to "issue guidance to assist local officials in determining the voting thresholds for various zoning amendments." The law states that the guidance shall be developed in consultation with the Department of Housing and Community Development, the Municipal Law Unit in the Attorney General's Office, and the Massachusetts Housing Partnership.

## **UMass survey measures COVID pandemic's impact**

Researchers from the University of Massachusetts Amherst on March 11 released the results of a statewide survey of Massachusetts municipalities about the impacts of the pandemic over the past year.

The majority of Massachusetts municipalities reported significant to extreme impacts of COVID-19 on municipal operations (78%) and local economies (65%) since last March.

Sixty percent of respondents said they "definitely" have the ability to administer vaccines, and another 9% said they probably do. Only 8% of municipalities reported that they definitely do not have the ability to administer vaccines, and 13% said they probably do not.

The MMA was a partner in the survey project, and researchers received responses from one-third of the state's municipalities (117) between Feb. 22 and March 2. The executive summary of the survey is available online.

The survey asked questions covering eight areas:

- Impacts on municipal operations
- Strategies adopted by municipalities in their emergency response and current priorities
- Funding and financial impacts on municipal budgets
- Vaccine preparedness, planning and best practices
- Equity indicators used in monitoring the impacts of the COVID-19 crisis
- Impacts on vulnerable populations, in particular food and housing security
- Impacts on local businesses
- Possible strategies for an inclusive and sustainable post-COVID socio-economic recovery

While 75% of municipalities reported having enough financial resources to start vaccination clinics, 72% indicated that they do not have access to sufficient vaccine supply. In response to an open-ended question asking what the most helpful resource would be to support municipal vaccine distribution efforts, 63% of respondents identified a larger and more continuous vaccine supply as most important.

Several respondents reported concerns about equitable access to vaccines in rural

versus urban areas of Massachusetts.

In order to better assist their residents, 81% have a page on their municipal website providing regular, updated information on vaccinations, 61% have volunteers to assist with vaccination registration and scheduling by phone, and 59% have developed outreach and education programs about COVID-19 and vaccination. More than 40% of municipalities have developed services to support vaccinations for elderly and vulnerable populations, including transportation to and from vaccination sites and the ability to provide vaccinations at home.

Cooperation is key to the municipal response to the pandemic, as 73% of the survey's respondents have developed local or regional partnerships with other institutions (hospitals, higher education institutions, EMS, councils on aging, etc.), and 62% have developed local partnerships with neighboring municipalities.

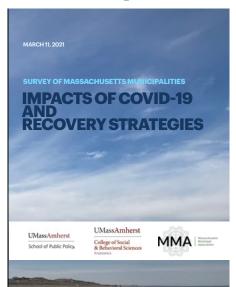
### **Local impacts and priorities**

In addition to preparing for vaccine distribution, the survey found that the top priority areas for municipalities in relation to COVID-19 are enhancing public health and safety protocols in order to facilitate the continuity of in-person learning, and tackling municipal budget and finance challenges.

Vaccinations will be key to addressing the pandemic's local economic impact, as 59% of Massachusetts municipalities reported significant to severe impacts to local businesses, with the strongest impacts on small businesses.

More than 70% of municipalities reported that at least half of hospitality businesses and small businesses had to limit operations, and more than 35% of municipalities reported that at least 10% of businesses in these categories had to permanently close. More than 55% of municipalities reported that at least half of retail businesses and service businesses had to limit operations, and a quarter of municipalities reported that at least 10% of these businesses had to permanently close.

One-third of municipalities have discussed the possibility of a "green recovery," aiming for low-carbon economic growth that prioritizes renewable energy, energy efficiency, green transportation and other environmentally-beneficial



projects. More than 90% of the survey's respondents indicated moderate to strong interest in installing more renewable energy capacity, investing in electric vehicle charging infrastructure, and nature-based solutions to enhance water security, climate resilience, climate adaptation and disaster risk-reduction.

"This survey allowed our team to collect abundant data and we plan to pursue our analysis toward the publication of a research paper," said principal investigator Marta Vicarelli, assistant professor of economics and public policy. "This will allow us to assess how needs, priorities and resources are distributed across Massachusetts municipalities as they respond to the COVID-19 crisis.

"We will also focus on recovery plans, and we will examine how optimal recovery strategies may differ across municipalities with different characteristics and needs. ... We hope that our work will contribute to inform effective socio-economic recovery strategies toward a sustainable, resilient, and inclusive future."

The complete survey, "Impacts of COVID-19 and Recovery Strategies," can be found on the School of Public Policy's website.

The survey was distributed online by the MMA to municipal leaders in each of the state's 351 cities and towns. Two town managers, two mayors and members of the MMA leadership team assisted the UMass team in the survey's development.

## After difficult year, officials look to promote civility

### By Jennifer Kavanaugh

Municipal officials seeking more civility and less discord in public life should prepare and follow a consistent written policy for conduct to head off problems with residents and other officials before controversies erupt and bad feelings surface.

This was the advice of local government veteran and former MMA President Jeff Nutting during a March 12 webinar on civil discourse hosted by the Massachusetts Select Board Association.

"You really have to be committed to the cause," Nutting said. "You have to really say, 'How are we going to solve this?' and not just pass a policy and throw it in the drawer. It has to be an active living document. It has to be something that's used, and something that's said over and over and over."

The stressors confronting local officials have only intensified over the past year, Nutting said, pointing to the COVID-19 pandemic, a strained national political climate, remote governance, environmental challenges, and social media vitriol. Despite the challenges, he said, local officials must work to keep the public conversation respectful.

"You do have to set an example — that's what leadership is about," Nutting said. "It's got to start at the top. ... And then hold your own members accountable. Because if you can't do that, you can't expect anybody else to follow your lead."

Officials should look at other communities' written policies and refer to the MMA's policy recommendation for civil conduct in developing a written conduct policy, Nutting said. After developing the policy, officials should seek as much community support as possible. Boards and committees should ask appointees to sign it, and a copy should be provided to political candidates. Officials should also set clear communication policies with chief municipal officers and staff, he said.

Nutting suggested that boards and committees hold annual goal-setting meetings and carefully select board chairs. Giving each member a turn may seem fair, he said, but it fails to consider the skill set needed for the role of chair, a position that comes with little or no training. Not everyone has the con-

flict-management skills to shut down offensive comments or to end public comment when it becomes repetitive.

"You can't lose control of the meeting," Nutting said. "Because that's really the chair's job."

To minimize conflict, Nutting said, boards and committees should schedule hot-button issues early in the meeting, before fatigue sets in. They should also post the conduct rules on Zoom for virtual meetings, or hand out copies when in-person meetings resume. If needed, the chair should reiterate the rules throughout the meeting, and call a five-minute recess if proceedings grow especially heated. It's important to set and maintain expectations.

"Consistency is critical to people's perception of fairness," Nutting said. "If you run the meeting the same way, then people think it's fair, whether they like the answer or not."

When conflict comes from colleagues, the chair should speak to the abusive member, Nutting said. If that fails, the chair should be prepared to rule them out of order or refuse to recognize them during meetings. If the chair causes offense, or doesn't prevent others' attacks, he said, fellow members should approach the chair with their concerns.

In the days before social media, Nutting said, officials might encounter disgruntled residents at the local coffee shop, but the officials generally knew them. Now, social media provides a megaphone, and encourages people who want to pick fights. Local officials should respond neutrally to such posts, by offering to speak on the phone, or by sharing links and factual information. But they should never join the online fray.

"One of the things you have to learn in your career is when just to be quiet," Nutting said. "What's the upside to you, what's the upside to your community, what's the upside to your committee if you get dragged into some of this stuff?"

Nutting has experienced local government from numerous perspectives. He has served on a select board and school committee, and worked for decades as a town administrator for communities including Stoneham and Franklin, where he spent 18 years before retiring in 2019. Most recently, he stepped in, on a





During a March 12 webinar, Winchester Select Board Member Michael Bettencourt (top), president of the Massachusetts Select Board Association, and Jeff Nutting, a veteran of local government and a past MMA president, discuss the challenges that officials face in promoting civil discourse.

temporary basis, to oversee the Brookline Town Clerk's Office. He was the MMA's president in 2009, is a former president of the Massachusetts Municipal Management Association, and served for a decade on the MIIA Board of Directors.

MSA President Michael Bettencourt, who moderated the question-and-answer session, said local officials are eager to move on from an anxiety-filled year. A member of the Winchester Select Board, Bettencourt said he is the only incumbent from his board seeking reelection.

"Not a lot of people are running again for positions that they've held for a number of years," Bettencourt said. "So some of it may just be a generational shift, but I think people are tired. It's been tough, it's been emotional. Social media really adds to the anxiety."

The open positions will allow for new people to get involved, Bettencourt said, but he wants to promote healthy discourse and ensure that "once they connect with government at the municipal level, they're able to stay."

### Mass. transitions to Phase 4 of reopening plan

On March 22, Massachusetts advanced to Step 1 of Phase 4 of the <u>Commonwealth</u>'s reopening plan.

The change reopened a range of business sectors under capacity restrictions that are expected to be adjusted over time if favorable trends in the public health data continue. Indoor and outdoor stadiums, arenas and ballparks will be permitted to operate at a 12% capacity limit after submitting a plan to the Department of Public Health.

Also effective on March 22, gathering limits for event venues and in public settings increased to 100 people indoors and 150 people outdoors. Outdoor gatherings at private residences and in private backyards remained at a maximum of 25 people, with indoor house gatherings still limited to 10 people.

Dance floors are permitted at weddings and other events only, and overnight



Gov. Charlie Baker

summer camps will be allowed to operate this summer. Exhibition and convention halls may operate following gatherings limits and event protocols.

Other Phase 4 sectors must remain closed.

The administration also replaced the Massachusetts Travel Order originally issued last July with a <u>Travel Advisory</u> effective March 22.

The Travel Advisory urges all persons entering Massachusetts, including returning residents, to quarantine for 10 days upon their arrival if they have been out of the state for 24 hours or more.

The advisory does not apply to the

following:

- Those returning to Massachusetts after an absence of less than 24 hours
- Travelers who have a negative COVID-19 test result that has been administered up to 72 hours prior to their arrival in Massachusetts
- Workers who enter Massachusetts to perform critical infrastructure functions (as specified by the Federal Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency) while they are commuting to or from or while at work
- Travelers who are fully vaccinated 14 or more days ago and do not have symptoms

Travelers are also encouraged to consult and follow guidelines and requirements for travel from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. ●

- John Ouellette

### **DPH launches Trusted Sources public awareness campaign**

The Department of Public Health has launched a public awareness campaign to address COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy.

For the Trusted Sources video project, the DPH is asking community leaders to self-record short (one minute) videos promoting trust in the COVID vaccine. Leaders are asked to share the videos via their social media networks using the #TrusttheFacts hashtag.

Campaign participants include former Boston Red Sox slugger David Ortiz (in English and Spanish) and <u>Dr. Mattie</u> <u>Castiel</u>, commissioner for health and human services for the city of Worcester.

For the Trusted Sources video project, the DPH is asking community leaders to self-record short (one minute) videos promoting trust in the COVID vaccine.

The campaign supplements the state's "Trust the Facts. Get the Vax" effort. ●



Dr. Mattie Castiel, Worcester's commissioner for health and human services, stresses the safety of the COVID-19 vaccine in a video she posted on Twitter.

### Administration announces vaccine timeline for all residents

On March 17, the Baker-Polito administration announced the timeline for all remaining residents to be eligible for a COVID-19 vaccine.

Residents age 60 and older and <u>certain</u> <u>workers</u> (in restaurants, groceries, public works and transit, for example) became eligible on March 22.

Residents age 55 and older and those with one of a <u>specified list of medical</u> <u>conditions</u> will become eligible on April 5.

Everyone else over the age of 16 becomes eligible on April 19.

Those previously eligible in Phase 2 of the three-phase plan include residents age 65 and older, those with two or more qualifying medical conditions, school staff and child care workers, and those who live or work in low-income and affordable senior housing.

The full vaccine timeline is available at mass.gov/COVIDVaccinePhases.

Depending on vaccine supply, the ad-

ministration said it could take weeks for people to be notified that an appointment is available at one of seven Mass Vaccination sites.

All residents can preregister to book an appointment at a Mass Vaccination site at mass.gov/COVIDVaccine. Appointments will be offered based on eligibility and available appointments nearby. The administration expects that more sites will be integrated into the preregistration process in April.

- John Ouellette

### MMA and MIIA office moves to 3 Center Plaza

After 15 years at One Winthrop Square, the MMA and MIIA moved on March 22 to 3 Center Plaza in Government Center.

The MMA and MIIA will occupy the sixth floor of 3 Center Plaza, which is across the street from Boston City Hall and down the hill from the State House.

The new office will provide a great gathering space for our members, but is also outfitted with state-of-the-art technology to be accessible for virtual meetings and events.

"When the new owners of One Winthrop Square announced in late 2019 that they were converting the building into lab space, we knew that the MMA would be on the move at some point, but we didn't know we'd be doing it during a pandemic," said MMA Executive Director Geoff Beckwith. "Fortunately, our search identified a high-quality and affordable location with excellent technology and convenience for our staff and membership.

"Moving during COVID has lots of challenges, but our great staff has been amazing, and we can't wait to finish the transition and open our doors once it is safe to do so." Due to COVID precautions, the MMA/MIIA office remains closed, with all staff working remotely. MMA and MIIA staff have been provided with the tools and resources they need to work remotely, and are accessible to all members.

As always, members may reach any member of the MMA and MIIA staff at their email

address (first initial, last name @mma. org) or by calling 617- 426-7272 and using the person's extension number, which is listed on the MMA website. Phone numbers remain the same in the new office.

Out of an abundance of caution for the health and safety of our staff and members, the MMA will continue to hold remote meetings only until after Labor Day. The MMA website is constant-



MMA and MIIA have moved to the sixth floor of 3 Center Plaza, across the street from Boston City Hall. (Photo courtesy Synergy)

ly updated with relevant and timely information, and the membership team continues to offer a robust schedule of virtual meetings and conferences to provide members the skills and information needed to be successful as local government leaders.

The MMA and MIIA's new address is: 3 Center Plaza, Suite 610, Boston, MA 02108. ●

## Auditor gathers data on municipal spending related to 2020 elections

State Auditor
Suzanne Bump's
Division of Local
Mandates sent
a survey in early
March to all 351
cities and towns
in the Commonwealth asking
them to report
their expenses
associated with



Suzanne Bump

certain 2020 election activities.

The survey was initiated after the fiscal 2021 state budget appropriated \$3 million for reimbursements to cities and towns for costs incurred implementing the vote-by-mail and in-person early voting requirements.

The auditor asked communities to report expenses related to:

- Postponed spring local elections
- · Postponed state special elections

Once Bump's office has received responses from all municipalities, it will provide a certification of those net expenses to the secretary of state, who will reimburse cities and towns for those costs.

- Mail-in ballots and early voting for the September state primary election
- Mail-in ballots and early voting for the November general election

Communities were asked to respond by March 17.

Bump also asked communities to provide an accounting of funding they received from the federal CARES Act, the Secretary of State's Office, or other private sector grant funding to cover all or a portion of these expenses. Bump's office will use this information to ensure that communities are not reimbursed twice for these expenses.

Once Bump's office has received responses from all municipalities, it will provide a certification of those net expenses to the secretary of state, who will reimburse cities and towns for those costs

Bump's office already certified the unfunded, mandated costs of providing early voting for the March 2020 presidential primary election. As a result of this certification, cities and towns were reimbursed a total of \$727,170.

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## Pandemic harms mental health; employers can help

### By Joyce McMahon

Warmer weather and the rollout of COVID-19 vaccines are raising the hopes and spirits of many Massachusetts residents. A range of mental health impacts of COVID remain an issue, however, according to the Department of Public Health's COVID-19 Community Impact Survey.

The percentage of adult respondents who reported poor mental health was three times higher than those reporting poor mental health in the 2019 Massachusetts Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System survey. In the recent DPH survey, one in three adults reported experiencing 15 or more days of poor mental health, including stress, depression and problems with emotions, during the previous 30 days.

All demographic groups in Massachusetts are experiencing mental health impacts, according to the DPH report, released in early March.

The population facing the highest impacts are those with disabilities. Other populations reporting the highest rates of 15 or more days of poor mental health include those who are of transgender experience, nonbinary or questioning their gender identity; LGBQ+respondents; multiracial, American Indian/Alaska Native and Hispanic/Latinx respondents; those between the ages of 25 and 34; and those earning less than \$35,000.

Respondents with poor mental health were:

- Twice as likely to have delays in health care
- 2.4 times more likely to have a change in employment in order to take care of a child or children
- 2.6 times more likely to worry about getting medication
- Twice as likely to be "very worried" about getting COVID

- Two to three times more likely to worry about the following basic needs: health care, technology and child care
- 2.5 times more likely to worry about expenses/bills
- Two to three times more likely to request resources that would be helpful to them

Employee mental health experienced a significant downturn nationwide during this past winter, according to a <u>Feb. 17</u> <u>article in Wellable</u>.

"Unfortunately, despite the promising news of vaccine distribution, employees are not getting more hopeful," the article states. "December 2020 marked the lowest levels of employee mental well-being, according to the Mental Health Index by Total Brain and the National Alliance of Healthcare Purchaser Coalitions. ... Overall employee focus plummeted by 62%, the worst drop in one year."

When employees are depressed, the article reports, work suffers considerably.

The authors noted that when workers are this mentally and emotionally strained, they simply cannot perform well.

Globally, the World Health Organization estimates that poor mental health will cost employers nearly \$6 trillion by 2030.

### How employers can help

Lingering COVID concerns and adjusting to a "new normal" likely means that mental health concerns will remain an issue. The first step for employers to help ease the situation, experts suggest, is to create a culture that is open and supportive, so people feel comfortable asking for and getting help when they need it.

Making sure employees are aware of and can easily access an employee assistance program is one step. Another is allowing for and encouraging dialogue between

■ MIIA continued on 32

### MIIA is the insurance partner for MMA members

All members of the MMA have access to an important member service: the Massachusetts Interlocal Insurance Association, a nonprofit organization created to help cities, towns and other public entities in Massachusetts realize the greatest possible value for their cost of risk.

The following is a brief refresher on MIIA and its services.

### **Health Benefits Trust**

The MIIA Health Benefits Trust, comprising more than 140 cities, towns, and school and water districts, is the largest municipal joint purchasing collaborative in the Northeast. It has a longstanding partnership with Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts, its sole provider for health, dental and

vision insurance.

The trust is a member-driven organization, with annual rate range caps to help provide its members with rate stability.

Municipalities and municipal entities that enroll in the trust receive a full-service team, including an account executive, trust manager, operations manager, retiree program manager, and an enrollment representative.

An introductory or reorientation meeting provides the currently offered medical, dental and vision plans and an overview of plan designs and rate methodology.

■ INSURANCE continued on 22

## Around the Commonwealth

### Wellesley

### **Community initiative promotes** civil discourse

To reverse the coarsening of public discourse, a new initiative in Wellesley is helping municipal leaders and residents bring more civility to community discussions.

Through the Wellesley Civil Discourse Initiative, town employees and residents have trained as community facilitators, and a team has organized structured dialogues to reset how the community addresses difficult topics. The initiative's six-member team includes Amy Frigulietti, the town's assistant executive director, and Select Board Member Lise Olney.

"I definitely have witnessed, in the past four years or so, things in public meetings that I have never seen before," Olney said. "And I don't know how common of an experience that is, but that was certainly part of what was motivating me to try to bring this thing to fruition."

Initiative members are working with Essential Partners, a Cambridge-based organization that has helped Gloucester and other communities build dialogue programs. While the Select Board supports the effort, this initiative is communitybased, Olney said.

"It will be organic within the community as opposed to something that's kind of housed in town government," she said.

Twenty people received facilitator training in March — 10 town employees and 10 community members. The civil discourse team chose employees from numerous departments, and picked community members reflecting the town's diversity and local organizations. It also made sure to recruit from both the Republican and Democratic town committees.

The initiative uses Reflective Structured Dialogue, which focuses on "speaking in ways that are respectful, listening to understand and not to rebut, and asking questions that are genuine and not rhetorical." Unlike mediation, this method doesn't attempt to reach agreement, but to increase understanding. Going into discussions, participants understand the



Through its Civil Discourse Initiative, Wellesley hopes to build connections among community members.

expectations for listening and speaking.

"[It's] really about building community connections and building relationships with one another," Frigulietti said, "so that when contentious topics come up, we're able to look at our neighbors, or look at our peers, and look at them as a person that is sharing an experience rather than arguing or debating to win.

"It's not about winning. It's about understanding the other person's perspective."

Frigulietti said she hopes the community will use this approach proactively, before tensions build over difficult issues.

The team held its first community Zoom meeting, "Community Conversations: How Citizens Are Rebuilding the Public Square," on March 23 to introduce residents to the initiative and to hear leaders from Gloucester, Groton and Watertown describe their experiences with facilitated dialogues.

On April 6, the team's second Zoom session, "A Dialogue on Coping with COVID-19 in Wellesley," will feature facilitated breakout discussions about the challenges residents have faced over the past year. The structured dialogue will allow the newly trained facilitators to practice their skills and residents to experience the process for themselves. Each person will get time to speak.

In the future, Olney said she hopes the trained facilitators will lead community discussions on complex issues such as race and affordable housing.

The initiative received a \$9,750 grant from MIIA to design the program and pay for the employee training. Another \$3,000 from the Community Fund for Wellesley covered training for the community members, Frigulietti said.

Olney and Frigulietti said they hope to train more facilitators and to run programs with the schools. While this initiative focuses on community-level discussions, they see possibilities in extending it to town government.

"I think that would be really useful for making the meetings go more smoothly and making people feel heard," Olney said. "At rock bottom, that's really what it's about, making people feel heard, and building understanding."

- Jennifer Kavanaugh

### Fall River

### City expands outreach to the **homeless**

To connect homeless residents with resources, the city of Fall River has been sending outreach workers onto the streets, giving people more personal service and bringing greater stability to their lives.

The city started a pilot homelessness program this past fall, assigning two full-time employees to help give homeless clients access to shelter, addiction help, mental health services and other resources. The city opened a new permanent overflow shelter in December, as part of its expanded services.

"Instead of going out and providing services to the homeless at their location, we wanted to bring the homeless into the programs, into the services," said Michael Dion, the city's executive director for community development. "Before, we would go out to the homeless, we would give them a tent, we would give them sandwiches, give them toothpaste, a toothbrush — but you're kind of enabling the homelessness to stay the way it is."

Outreach worker Niki Fontaine said that most of her homeless clients have addiction or mental health issues, or both. As a recovering addict who was

## **Around the Commonwealth**



Paul Coogan

once homeless, Fontaine relates to their struggles.

"I totally can understand the full trauma that they're going through and experiencing as they're homeless," Fontaine said. "So I think that helps to

build a lot of trust, that I'm not someone who has never experienced it, doesn't know what they're talking about. ... I've lived it, so that really helps break down some barriers."

Fontaine gets people into shelters, arranges for medical care and mental health services, sets people up with recovery coaches, and takes them to detox centers and other facilities to get clean. She goes on police ride-alongs, reviews 911 reports to identify people who need help, and talks to people brought into the booking room. And she gets to know people's relatives to help improve family dynamics.

Since October, Fontaine said she has helped between 160 and 170 people, with a mixture of heartbreak and success. One couple stayed sober for a couple of months before relapsing, she said, and others have died after using drugs for the first time in years. But she also managed to get medical help and a shelter bed for someone on Christmas Eve, she said. Recently, she received a wedding invitation from a woman she helped to get sober.

"You're not going to save them all, but you just keep trying," Fontaine said. "But I do know that this program — I believe it in my heart — that this is successful and we're on the right track, because I know I'm making a difference."

To pay for the work, Dion said, the city's Community Development Agency is using Coronavirus Relief Funds from the federal CARES Act. He estimates that the program will cost the city between \$150,000 and \$200,000 through September 2022, the CARES Act funding period. Beyond that point, the city will seek other funding sources, such as Community Development Block Grants, to continue the program, he said.

"You can really see a big difference in what's happening out there," Dion said of the program. "I mean, the Police Department is really happy, and I think a lot of pressure's been taken off of them."

As communities nationwide debate the role of police in solving social problems, Mayor Paul Coogan said this outreach program helps to de-escalate situations that can be handled differently.

"I think this is an excellent example of how this should work, because ... not everyone who's down on their luck is a criminal," Coogan said. "If someone needs help, let's help them."

– Jennifer Kavanaugh

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.

### MMHR to hold 2nd virtual boot camp series this spring

Following a successful virtual HR 101 Boot Camp series last fall, the Massachusetts Municipal Human Resources association will offer this annual event as a webinar series once again this spring.

The five-session webinar series will be held weekly on Thursdays at 11 a.m., kicking off on April 29. Each session will run for 90 minutes.

The series will cover core functions of the municipal HR office, including job descriptions, worker's compensation, workplace investigations, municipal leave laws, and diversity hiring policies. The series is geared toward newer municipal human resources professionals, but veterans in the field are welcome to attend for a refresher course.

Featured speakers will include:

Wrentham Human Resources
 Director Mary Beth Bernard, who will
 discuss best practices in crafting job
 descriptions



**Dolores Hamilton** 



Mary Beth Bernard

- Lori Burke, director of absence management and specialty services with AllOneHealth, who will cover workers' compensation during the COVID-19 pandemic
- Jean Haertl, CEO of Safety and Respect at Work, and attorney Jaime Kenny, partner at Clifford & Kenny, who will lead a dynamic discussion about complaint triage, investigations and discipline in the workplace
- Attorney Jackie Kugell, partner at Morgan, Brown & Joy, and Yetunde

- Buraimoh, associate at Morgan, Brown & Joy, who will provide an overview of municipal leave laws
- Maritsa Barros, chief diversity, equity and inclusion officer in Framingham, and MMHR Chair Dolores Hamilton, human resources director in Framingham, who will discuss how to develop a diversity hiring policy in municipalities

The registration fee of \$45 for members and \$55 for nonmembers for the series includes access to the webinar recordings and any follow-up materials. The webinars must be purchased as a series, and recordings will be available only to those who have paid for the series.

A link to register for the series has been sent to all MMHR members.

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

### **DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Continued from page 2

best result, following a process that inspires confidence that municipalities are best positioned to make best use for maximum impact. Done well, ARPA will not only rescue our economies, it can also demonstrate to the nation that cities and towns are up to the task and deserve treatment as full and equal partners in our intergovernmental system.

### A municipal planning framework for maximum impact

Managing and leading in the public square is always complex and filled with multifaceted challenges. With the stakes so high, and billions of dollars soon arriving on municipal doorsteps, local leaders will need to approach ARPA with a comprehensive planning process that emphasizes three overarching themes: governing well, leveraging ARPA with other resources, and **investing** for recovery and results.

This diagram provides a high-level visual of the three complementary planning elements that can make ARPA transformative for your community. Use this framework to build a platform for success.

Each city and town will face differing immediate needs, differing pre-COVID challenges, and differing goals for long-range growth. We'll see different decisions and priorities across Massachusetts, which is the beauty of providing municipalities with direct funding so that local problems can be addressed with local solutions that fit best.

Yet it is imperative that every community embrace governing with excellence, make full use of ARPA by leveraging the funds with other resources and programs, and use a deliberate investment strategy so that the benefits continue long after the spending ceases.

### **Govern well**

With an infusion of thousands, millions or tens of millions coming into your community, there will be no shortage of requests, suggestions, pleas, and lobbying for how to spend the funds. In high-pressure and urgent situations like this, it is not uncommon to start making snap decisions rather than taking a step back and thinking carefully about

how to proceed. Here are some basic suggestions:

- · Convene all stakeholders and build consensus. Decisions on how to spend ARPA funds will likely be concentrated in the hands of municipal CEOs, but the power to act should not shortcircuit an open process to bring all stakeholders in the community together to engage in dialogue about needs, resources and priority-setting, including government colleagues. nonprofits, businesses and others. True engagement and listening will minimize friction and encourage collaboration over ARPA's three-and-ahalf-year lifespan.
- Follow allowable uses under ARPA. Once the Treasury clarifies how and where the funds can be spent, cities and towns should adhere to the rules. One story of misspent funds will undermine 100 stories of impactful
- Meet all accounting and reporting rules. Make sure you have the systems in place to track and inform our federal partners of how well you are using your ARPA funds.
- · Comply with all local and state laws and ordinances. In addition to federal rules, your ARPA processes should be integrated with all other accounting, appropriation and audit requirements.
- Ensure transparency throughout. The public and media will want to know how these funds are being used, especially those that are not subject to appropriation. Consider creating an ARPA dashboard, making it easy for everyone to see the uses of the funds, and who is benefiting.
- Do not create future budget deficits. This is one-time funding, and it should be treated as such. Do not use the funds in collective bargaining contracts, for example, as this would lead to shortfalls in future years. Even premium pay should be closely scrutinized, as any pensionable benefits would increase unfunded liabilities for years to come, eroding available resources for essential services. Since the funds cannot be used after December 2024, recognize that the funding commitments should end then, too.

With the stakes so high, and billions of dollars soon arriving on municipal doorsteps, local leaders will need to approach ARPA with a comprehensive planning process that emphasizes three overarching themes: governing well, leveraging ARPA with other resources, and investing for recovery and results.

### Leverage your ARPA aid

While ARPA is unprecedented in scope and scale, all three levels of government have already dedicated massive resources to fighting all aspects of the pandemic during the past year. Coordinate and integrate ARPA into your planning and execution at all levels to scale existing efforts and create new initiatives.

- Use a thoughtful and integrated strategic planning process that connects ARPA to your entire municipal government. Over the past year, nearly every aspect of local government has been pulled into the battle to subdue the pandemic, and you have created new programs and new ways of doing business, breaking down silos in the process. Don't put ARPA in a silo; integrate it into your overall planning process.
- Leverage your ARPA aid with other funding. The good news is that the federal government has created multiple funding sources, and you should use these resources to stretch your ARPA dollars as far as they can go. Cities and towns should use ARPA to build on, extend or complement their other reimbursements or grants, including from FEMA, the CARES Act, ESSERs 1, 2 and 3, and more. Don't spend ARPA funds on items that will be funded by these programs.
- Coordinate with other state and federal *programs*. The state is using its federal

Continued on next page

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aid and its own resources to address a wide range of urgent needs, such as rent and mortgage relief, small business relief, support for child care, access to public transportation, and much more. Work closely with your state partners to complement each other. If your businesses or residents qualify for state funding, look at ways you can augment this or repurpose your aid to address community needs in other ways, rather than spending resources unnecessarily.

- Collaborate with community partners and organizations. To maximize efficiency, look at what social service and civic agencies are doing and consider partnering with them if they are already addressing critical needs that need to be scaled up.
- Use existing delivery channels for efficiency. You'll want to spend your aid on direct assistance, programs and investments, rather than using precious resources to create new offices or delivery systems. If that means working with outside partners, including nonprofits or nearby communities that are already engaged in the work so you can leverage their systems, that would be a best-practice move.
- Don't reinvent the wheel: learn from others. In addition to looking across your community to connect the dots, look across the state and nation to see what your peers are doing. The NLC and other leading organizations (including the MMA) have or will be creating networks to share information, compare notes, and learn about what works and what doesn't. Bring what you learn back home and apply it.

## Invest in best uses for long-term recovery and results

The third lens to bring to your ARPA challenge is the investment lens. The funding will come in two tranches and last only three and one-half years. Human nature has us focus more on immediate payback rather than longer time horizons that are harder to imagine. That's why fewer people in their 20s start putting extra money in their retirement accounts, and lots of

people in their 50s and 60s are giving their 401Ks unparalleled priority. As you think about the best use of ARPA money, think about investing in your community in ways that will yield benefits far beyond 2024.

- Invest in urgent health and economic needs. Of course the most immediate challenge is to deploy the funds to reverse the damage that the pandemic has done to our residents and small businesses, and using the funds as an economic lifeline is more than appropriate it is called for, especially to lift up the most vulnerable in your community. Failing to do so will hamper future growth and progress.
- Prioritize short-term investments with lasting benefits. Consider multiple ways to provide assistance and choose the path that will go farther and last longer. For example, using ARPA funds to support struggling businesses and households could be coordinated with education and training on financial planning (assuming that would be an allowable use). Some communities could use ESSER funds to address school ventilation issues, making classrooms more pandemic-resilient.
- Identify and address pre-COVID inhibitors to growth. ARPA allows investments in certain types of infrastructure, including water, sewer and broadband. If the quality of these systems has hampered your growth in the past, then it would make sense to consider such investments. Capital investments that improve water quality and access, or close the digital divide, can also make great economic sense and free up funds for future investments as well.
- Move quickly to stimulate a faster recovery. ARPA is intended to serve two key purposes: to provide massive resources to close out the last stages of the pandemic battle, and to provide investments to stimulate our economy. During the last fiscal crisis, the Great Recession, the federal aid package (the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009) was whittled down in a compromise with senators who opposed government spending. The result was a sluggish recovery that was unnecessarily slow and prolonged,

- costing our economy millions of jobs and lost growth. ARPA is intended to avoid that mistake. That's why ARPA should be used to supplement and expand investments in the community, not simply replace planned spending and banking those funds for future use.
- Measure progress throughout to inform ongoing plans. This is a best practice that will be very helpful to allow adjustments over the next several years, ensuring ARPA's success. The most effective strategic plans have four key phases: 1. make sense of the situation (investigate all angles with all stakeholders); 2. make a plan (choosing what to do and what not to do); 3. make it happen (making sure everyone is aligned with your strategy); and 4. make revisions and repeat steps 1-4. It is impossible to make revisions and improve if you do not measure whether you are hitting your targets or achieving expected results. Making changes is not an admission of failure, it is a commitment to excellence and a best practice.

## ARPA brings opportunity and responsibility

The bottom line is clear: ARPA is entrusting cities and towns in Massachusetts and across America with unprecedented aid and resources, and the local leaders of our nation have a responsibility to be outstanding stewards of these resources.

Done well, ARPA can transform our communities, boosting us out of the pandemic recession into a recovery that will create jobs and accelerate growth and prosperity.

Even more, the example of a successful implementation of ARPA programs at the local level can prove once and for all that municipal governments should be equal partners in the governance of our nation. That would be transformational as well.

### WEMO to hold first-ever spring symposium virtually on April 30

Women Elected Municipal Officials will hold its inaugural spring symposium virtually on Friday, April 30, from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

The WEMO Opening Doors for Women symposium will be free to attend.



Erin Vilardi



Jarinete Santos



Sarah Johnson

Despite making up 51% of the population, women continue to be significantly underrepresented at all levels of elected office in the United States, including here in Massachusetts.

The WEMO symposium will highlight the importance of women running for local public office. The event will also explore opportunities for support and mentorship for women who might be interested in running or advancing to a higher level of public office holding.

The symposium will feature a roundtable discussion with 2021 WEMO Committee members about their experiences running for local office, followed by a panel discussion on increasing the number of women running for public office.

Panelists will include:

- Jarinete Santos, political pipeline director, She Should Run
- Sarah Johnson, executive director, Local Progress
- Erin Vilardi, founder and CEO, Vote Run Lead

Advance registration is required, and an email with the registration link has been sent to all WEMO members. Registration will close on Friday, April 23. Any registrations received after April 23 will not be accepted.

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

### MMHR and Management Association to discuss the future of work

On April 15, the Massachusetts Municipal Human Resources association and the Massachusetts Municipal Management Association will co-host a free virtual meeting examining the future of work and what it will look like in municipal government.

The pandemic has dramatically changed what the municipal workplace looked like over the past year. With the "new normal" finally on the horizon, what does the future of work look like?

Rebecca Ryan, founder of NEXT Generation Consulting, will provide some concrete tools to anticipate and plan for an uncertain future.



Rebecca Ryan

Ryan is a futurist, author and entrepreneur who has held residencies at the Alliance for Innovation, the Governing Institute, and the Association of Governmental Risk Pools. She is the board chair

and faculty member at the Institute for Zen Leadership. Ryan helps people figure out what's next so they can be ready for the future. There will also be a discussion about policies and initiatives that have been developed in the towns of Franklin and Lexington to adapt to the changing dynamics of the municipal workplace.

The meeting will be held from 2 to 3:30 p.m., and advance registration is required. An email with the registration link has been sent to all MMHR and MMMA members.

Contact: MMA Member Services Coordinator Isabelle Nichols at inichols@mma.org or MMA Senior Member Services Coordinator Denise Baker at dbaker@mma.org

### Human services group discusses self-care and stress management

The MMA Human Services Council hosted its first virtual meeting of the year on March 26 on the topic of self-care and stress management.

Mind/body specialist Trish Hart led an interactive, educational workshop that featured hands-on practice of mind/body techniques to help participants better manage their stress and prioritize self-care.

Hart began with a discussion about the neuroscience behind the stress response, the physical and emotional symptoms of stress, and the ways in which stress affects human performance.

She provided practical tips for stress management, including setting clear boundaries at work and in your personal life and blocking out regular time in your calendar for self-care. Self-care can include things like personal hobbies, time away from technology, and breaks for movement.

The workshop concluded with the practice of mind/body stress management techniques, including use of "the escape route" body position and mindfulness breathing exercises.

- Isabelle Nichols



A March 26 webinar hosted by the MMA Human Services Council focused on the importance of self care and offered tips for managing stress.

### Administration extends funding for pooled testing in schools

### **By John Ouellette**

The Baker-Polito administration is extending its funding commitment to a pooled COVID-19 testing initiative in schools through the end of the school year.

The first-in-the-nation testing program, launched in February, is available to every Massachusetts public school at no cost.

Also on March 29, the administration announced that the program has found positivity rates far below 1% among participating students and staff across the Commonwealth.

Massachusetts schools have tested nearly 159,000 individuals in 22,679 pools with

a pool positivity rate of 0.76% to date. Because the average pool includes seven people, individual prevalence among those tested is well below that number.

More than 1,000 schools are enrolled in the <u>COVID-19 pooled testing initiative</u>, and more than 329,000 students, educators and staff are eligible to be tested on a weekly basis, according to the administration. Results are delivered within 24 hours.

"Access to this pooled testing program has given many school districts the information and assurance they need in order to be able to keep educating students in person safely and successfully," said Lt. Gov. Karyn Polito.

Initial state funding was due to expire on April 18. The administration said the continuation of the free program is made possible by additional federal funds specifically for COVID-19 testing, anticipated to total approximately \$207 million for Massachusetts.

Schools that are not yet enrolled in the program are encouraged to do so by emailing K12CovidTesting@mass.gov. ●

### **RESCUE PLAN**

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Fiscal Recovery Funds to counties because county governments in much of the country provide an array of direct services to residents. But in Massachusetts, eight of the 14 county governments have been abolished, and the remaining six are not responsible for local services. The MMA worked with the National League of Cities, the Massachusetts congressional delegation and the Baker-Polito administration to ensure that Massachusetts did not get shortchanged because counties are less active here, and a hybrid approach emerged.

Where county governments have been abolished (Berkshire, Essex, Franklin, Hampden, Hampshire, Middlesex, Suffolk and Worcester), the state will receive approximately \$942 million in federal aid designated for those counties and redistribute it to cities and towns based on each municipality's percentage of its county population.

Where county governments remain (Barnstable, Bristol, Dukes, Nantucket, Norfolk and Plymouth), the counties will retain control of about \$394 million in designated funds, and local officials will need to work with their county officials to make sure the funds are available for local government priorities.

In a March 23 call with local officials convened by the MMA, Heath Fahle,

special director for federal funds at the Executive Office for Administration and Finance, said his office has been in contact with officials in the six active counties and, pending additional federal guidance, is prepared to work with county officials should they choose to reallocate funds to their cities and towns.

### Local preparation and uses

The <u>text of the law</u> identifies four eligible use categories:

- Response to the public health emergency or its negative economic consequences
- Provision of premium pay to eligible workers (as designated by the local chief municipal official)
- Revenue replacement (relative to fiscal 2019 local revenue figures)
- Investments in water, sewer and broadband infrastructure

Fahle called the first use "probably the most flexible opportunity for use of the funds." He said more guidance and definitions are needed before he could say more about revenue replacement.

While awaiting Treasury guidance, National League of Cities staff, as well as state administration and finance staff, urge local leaders to identify areas of greatest need within their communities by actively engaging community stakeholders. Each municipality will ultimately need to account for funds expended and will need to provide periodic reports to the Treasury, so municipal leaders are advised to begin working with municipal finance staff to set up systems for accounting for the funds, which will mitigate compliance risk.

Municipal leaders should also be familiarizing themselves with alternative revenue streams, from both federal and state programs.

Beyond the direct relief for municipalities, the American Rescue Plan Act provides funding for emergency rental and homeowner relief, educational support, nutrition programs, unemployment assistance, vaccines, and assistance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Local officials are advised to match their community needs with the right funding sources in order to maximize federal dollars. Fahle said there will be a number of "funding streams that are flowing into the Commonwealth through a variety of different paths."

The MMA is closely following developments related to the American Rescue Plan and is posting updates and guidance on its website as soon as it becomes available.

### MMA continues #MaskUpMA campaign on Twitter

The MMA remains engaged in a social media campaign promoting the use of face coverings, including by those who have been vaccinated, to reduce the spread of the coronavirus until herd immunity can be achieved.

As warmer temperatures arrive, public health experts are urging people to remain vigilant about wearing masks in public spaces.

The MMA campaign involves MMA and MIIA staff and members sharing photos of themselves with masks on and using the hashtags #MaskUpMA and #WearAMask, as well as retweeting content from cities and towns and state agencies.

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.

Municipal officials are encouraged to share mask photos for use in the campaign by emailing MMA Digital Communications Coordinator Meredith Gabrilska at mgabrilska@mma.org.



Weston Town Manager Leon A. Gaumond Jr. shows his appreciation for first responders by wearing his Weston Fire Department mask

### MMCA to discuss school finance issues on April 8

All city and town councillors are invited to a Massachusetts Municipal Councillors' Association Lunch-and-Learn webinar on the topic of school finance on April 8 at noon.

Consultant Mark Abrahams will give an overview of school finance, with a focus on key terms and the budget process.

Jack McCarthy, executive director/deputy chief executive officer at the Massachusetts School Building Authority, will cover the MSBA process, including

what to expect when beginning a school project, whether it's a new school or a renovation.

Both speakers will answer questions from attendees.

The webinar is free, but <u>online pre-registration</u> is required. Councillors will receive a confirmation email with the Zoom link after registering.

For more information, contact MMA Conference and Meeting Planner Timmery Kuck at tkuck@mma.org.



Jack McCarthy



Mark Abrahams

### **INSURANCE**

Continued from page 15

MIIA will discuss any public employee committee agreements on plans, if applicable, and review headcount claims loss ratio reports and high-cost claimants, as well as enrollment and premium billing procedures. MIIA will also review value-added programs such as Smart Shopper, Learn to Live (mental health care), and the Diabetes Care Value Program, as well as its popular wellness programs and activities, and how to access wellness grants.

### **Property and liability**

MMA members that subscribe to MIIA's Property and Casualty Group have access to a full-service team that includes an account executive, account manager, risk

manager, and a property casualty claims representative and workers' compensation representative. The team is committed to establishing relationships up front, with each member and their relevant department heads.

At any orientation meeting, lines of communication are established, member expectations and service requirements are defined, and questions are answered.

A MIIA representative will go over benefits and services, including:

- A review of MIIA's hallmark programs: MIIA Rewards, MIIA Grants, and other tools available (e.g., Enquiron, Local Gov U)
- Information about the free Employee Assistance Program, including how to

access free trainings

- Risk-management services, including free trainings, inspections, accessing driving simulators, and participation in safety committee meetings, as well as establishing individualized trainings needed to reduce risk or transfer risk
- A review of claims reporting instructions
- Updates to auto fleet changes and schedule of locations
- Reviewing the process to request certificates of insurance
- Scheduling a quarterly claims review
- Reviewing contracts for recommended insurance language

For more information about MIIA coverage benefits, visit <a href="https://www.emiia.org">www.emiia.org</a>.

## **MMA-Suffolk programs update**

April 30 is the deadline to apply for the MMA and Suffolk University's Certificate in Local Government Leadership and Management programs scheduled to begin this fall in Barnstable and Marlborough.

The Certificate in Local Government Leadership and Management is a five-course, 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 <u>fillable PDF application</u> for the 2021-2022 programs is available on the MMA website. The cost of the 2021-2022 programs is \$2,550.

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

### Fellowship program

May 1 is the application deadline for a new MMA-Suffolk University Municipal Fellowship Program, which will 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 continuing their salary and position while they attend the program parttime.

Applicants must also 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.

The fellowship application is available on the MMA-Suffolk programs web page.

### **Municipal Finance Management**

The MMA and Suffolk University's fifth Municipal Finance Management Semi-

The MMA and Suffolk University's fifth Municipal Finance Management Seminar holds its online orientation on March 5. The application for the fall 2021 program will be available on the MMA website in May.

nar began in March, and the application for the fall 2021 program will be available on the MMA website in May.

The seminar provides an overview of Massachusetts municipal finance, including the operational aspects of finance structure, systems and processes in Massachusetts cities and towns.

For more information about the three MMA-Suffolk programs, visit <u>www.</u> <u>mma.org/suffolk</u> or email Katie McCue at kmccue@mma.org. ●

### Management Association accepting applications for Galkowski Fund

The Massachusetts Municipal Management Association is accepting applications for the Nancy Galkowski Legacy Fund.

The Galkowski Fund was established in 2013 in honor of Town Manager Nancy Galkowski, who passed away that year after 35 years of public service in municipal management. The fund was created to assist individuals serving in local government pursue professional development that they wouldn't otherwise be

able to afford.

The Management Association administers the fund, but membership is not required to apply. Awards have been made to department heads to attend local and national conferences, assistant town managers and human resources directors for specialized courses, and for the MMA-Suffolk Finance Management Seminar.

The fund does not make awards for

academic credit courses.

All applications are reviewed by a volunteer committee, and applicants are notified of their award.

The <u>online application</u> is now available, and the deadline is May 7.

For more information, contact Franklin Town Administrator Jamie Hellen, chair of the Galkowski Fund, at jhellen@franklinma.gov. ●

### MassRecycle hosting virtual conference April 15 and 16

MassRecycle, a statewide coalition dedicated to increasing recycling and reducing waste, will hold its annual conference virtually on April 15 and 16.

Conference workshop topics include "Where does it go?"; RecycleSmart; and Extended Producer Responsibility for Paint and Mattresses.

MassRecycle board members will facilitate roundtable discussions on educa-

tion and outreach; compost and food waste; transfer station stories; markets and commodities; zero waste; bulky waste and other hard-to-manage waste; and contamination and enforcement.

The conference will include a virtual trade show.

Conference details and registration information can be found at <u>massrecycle</u>. <u>org/events/conference</u>. The registration

cost for municipalities is \$75 for one day or \$95 for both days.

Conference programming will run from 1 to 5 p.m. on April 15, and 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. on April 16.

MassRecycle members include municipalities and municipal staff, industry partners, higher education, and environmental advocacy groups.

- Ariela Lovett

## **People**



Keith Hickey

**Keith Hickey** became the new town administrator in Kingston on Feb. 1.

For the past five years, Hickey served as the town manager in Winchendon. Prior to that, he was the town manager in several New Hampshire commu-

nities — Salem, Merrimack and Bedford — from 2000 through the end of 2015. Earlier in his career, he had worked as a director of finance and personnel, controller and assistant finance director for several New Hampshire municipalities.

Hickey has an MBA from Southern New Hampshire University, and a bachelor's degree in accounting from Franklin Pierce College.

Hickey replaces **Tom Calter**, who left the position last July.



Alex Morse

After serving almost a decade as mayor in Holyoke, **Alex Morse**, will become the new town manager in Provincetown on April 5.

Morse stepped down as mayor on March 26. He was first elected mayor in 2012, having

announced his candidacy as a college senior. He has a bachelor's degree in urban studies from Brown University.

Holyoke City Council President **Todd McGee** was sworn in as acting mayor on March 26. He cited work commitments and possible conflicts of interests as reasons for not wanting to serve out the rest of Morse's term, which runs through the end of this year. Following Morse's announcement that he was leaving, Holyoke filed a home rule petition to avoid having a special election to elect a mayor for the remainder of the year. As of late March, the petition was undergoing revisions, including one that would allow another member of the City Council to serve as acting mayor.

Former Provincetown Town Manager **Robin Craver** left the position last July.



Thomas Hutcheson

Thomas Hutcheson will become the new town manager in Dalton on May 3. Hutcheson has been the town administrator in Conway

Hutcheson has been the town administrator in Conway since August 2013. Before that, he served more than two years as the town administra-

tor in Northfield. He is the District 1 representative for the Massachusetts Municipal Management Association and a member of the MMA Board of Directors. He also serves on the MMMA's Civic Education Committee.

Before entering local government, Hutcheson spent nearly a dozen years working for the Organic Trade Association in several policy roles and as a regulatory analyst. He also served as the project coordinator for the Bonnyvale Environmental Education Center and as a research associate for the National Priorities Project.

Hutcheson has a doctorate in community education for community sustainability, a master's degree in adult and community education, and a bachelor's degree in folklore and folk music, all from UMass Amherst.



Kenneth Walto

In Dalton,
Hutcheson replaces
Kenneth Walto,
who served
for almost two
decades before
retiring on Aug. 13.
Before coming to
Dalton, Walto was
operations manager
at the Brien Center,
a behavioral health

and addiction services center in the Berkshires, and worked for the Pittsfield Department of Community Development for 19 years, as economic development manager, commissioner, and acting director. He served as assistant to the administrator at the Berkshire Regional

Transit Authority from 1976 to 1980. From 2007 to 2012, Walto served on MIIA's Health Benefits Trust Advisory Board, and he served on MIIA's Board of Directors from 2012 until his retirement.

**John Oliver** and **Tarik Lucas** joined the Newton City Council following a March 16 special election to fill two vacant seats.

Oliver won the Ward 1 at-large seat left vacant by the Nov. 7 death of **Allan** "**Jay" Ciccone Jr.** Lucas won the Ward 2 at-large seat previously held by **Jake Auchincloss**, who resigned after his election to Congress in November.

Oliver's and Lucas' terms last through the end of the year. The next regular city election is in November.



Ryan McLane

Hubbardston Town Administrator **Ryan McLane** has taken a military leave to serve in Afghanistan. A U.S. Army veteran who has continued serving in the Massachusetts Army National Guard, McLane is first sergeant of

Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 101st Field Artillery. His deployment is expected to last for one year.



David Nixon

David Nixon stepped in as Hubbardston's acting town administrator on March 4. Nixon had retired in December as the town administrator in Hadley after having served there for 15 years.

**Thaddeus Buczko**, who served the public for decades as a judge, state auditor, legislator and Salem official, died on March 7 at age 95.

A Boston University Law School graduate, Buczko served as a city councillor in

## **People**

Salem, as a state representative, as Salem's postmaster, and as the state auditor from 1964 to 1981. In 1981, he became an associate justice of the Essex County Probate and Family Court, and later became first justice. In 2017, the restored Essex Probate and Family Court building in Salem was named for him.

Buczko also had a long record of military service. He served in the U.S. Navy during World War II, and later in Korea with the Army. He continued in the U.S. Army Reserves until he retired in 1979 as a colonel and chief of staff of the 94th Army Reserve Command.

**Linda Lowe**, a former Gloucester city solicitor and city clerk, died on Feb. 15 at age 72.

Lowe worked for about two decades as solicitor before becoming city clerk in 2009. She served in that role until her

retirement in 2016.

As an attorney, Lowe had been an active member in the City Solicitors and Town Counsel Association, now the Massachusetts Municipal Lawyers Association. She had served several terms on the organization's executive board.

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.

# New select board members elected

The following are new select board members elected in annual town elections through March 29.

This listing is meant to highlight firsttime select board members, but it's possible that some listed here are returning to their board after an absence. If we are missing a new member, let us know by emailing newselectmen@mma.org.

Concord: Henry Dane

**Duxbury:** Cynthia Fiorini, Fernando

Guitart

**Ludlow:** James Gennette **Wellesley:** Ann-Mara Lanza

**Westborough:** Sean Keogh, Patrick

Welch

#### **SICK LEAVE**

Continued from page 3

Emergency Paid Sick Leave Act in the American Rescue Plan Act signed by President Joe Biden on March 11.

The legislation would require the Executive Office for Administration and Finance to draft regulations to implement the new state sick leave program.

### **Unemployment insurance**

The bill includes the governor's recommendations to provide rate relief to contributory employers, take steps to ensure that the Unemployment Insur-

ance Trust Fund remains solvent, and establish a way to repay federal borrowing.

The legislation would freeze the experience rate of employers for 2021 and 2022, rather than jump to a higher schedule based on sharply higher unemployment due to the public health emergency.

The legislation would also set a temporary surcharge on employers to fund interest payments on advances to the Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund from the federal government. The legislation would authorize the state to issue

\$7 billion in special obligation bonds to repay federal advances.

### State tax provisions

The legislation includes several tax provisions that would exclude forgiven federal Paycheck Protection Program loans and certain other loans and payments from gross income for the purpose of state personal income taxes in 2020. The bill would exclude \$10,200 of unemployment compensation received by a taxpayer with a household income of less than 200% of the federal poverty level from gross state income in tax years 2020 and 2021. ●

### **MMHR**

Continued from page 7

team dynamics. A re-evaluation of work hours may be necessary for employees who are caring for children at home.

She said workers' compensation coverage for a communicable disease like COVID is limited to situations where "the hazard of contracting the disease by an employee is inherent in the employment." Ultimately, she said, the determination that an employee qualifies for

workers' compensation lies with the insurance company.

In response to a question on long-term accommodations due to lasting effects from COVID, Buraimoh noted a lack of guidance in this area and said municipalities should be flexible in working with those employees. Dr. Hirsch agreed.

"The long term effects of COVID are still an open question," Hirsch said. "Studies on 'long-haulers' are just beginning."

Asked about employees asking to work

remotely outside of Massachusetts, Buraimoh said there may be tax implications that HR should investigate before making decisions.

Also at the meeting, MMA Legislative Director John Robertson provided an update on HR-related bills in the new legislative session and the new police reform law.

A video recording of the webinar is available on the MMA website. ●

### Administration announces \$24.7M for Vaccine Equity Initiative

On March 17, the Baker-Polito administration announced the release of \$27.4 million in federal funds to increase trust, vaccine acceptance and administration rates as part of its Vaccine Equity Initiative and to meet the needs of priority populations.

Recognizing equity as a critical component of the state's vaccine distribution plan, the Department of Public Health is working closely with the 20 hardest-hit communities in Massachusetts as they identify their specific community needs, further building on existing support.

The funds from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention build upon current and past efforts supporting vaccination in the communities disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 and includes partnerships with municipalities, local boards of health, community- and faith-based organizations,

community health centers and others to reduce barriers to vaccination. These funds also will provide direct vaccine administration to populations that are not effectively reached through existing vaccine supply channels, according to the DPH.

These federal funds will be used to provide direct assistance with vaccine access, including appointment registration assistance, transportation, mobility assistance, medical interpretation, and other supports; to invest in community health centers; to support municipalities and local boards of health through direct funding of the 20 equity municipalities for vaccine clinics and acceptance; to help tailor community outreach and education; and for direct vaccine administration in community settings.

Related activities already underway include the DPH COVID-19 Vaccine Am-

bassador Program, the state's "Trust the Facts. Get the Vax." multilingual public awareness campaign, and the DPH Community Liaisons, who are meeting weekly with representatives from the communities to identify and lift barriers to vaccine access and support community-based solutions.

The Vaccine Equity Initiative focuses on 20 cities and towns with the greatest COVID-19 case burden, taking into account social determinants of health and the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC). These communities are Boston, Brockton, Chelsea, Everett, Fall River, Fitchburg, Framingham, Haverhill, Holyoke, Lawrence, Leominster, Lowell, Lynn, Malden, Methuen, New Bedford, Randolph, Revere, Springfield and Worcester.

### **BUDGET**

Continued from page 3

Education Emergency Relief program known as ESSER II to fund a part of the increase in its local contribution requirement under Chapter 70, but not more than the increase in required local contribution in fiscal 2022 relative to fiscal 2021. This is a new temporary provision that is explained on the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education school finance website.

The DESE website also has fiscal 2022 Chapter 70 aid and net school spending requirements under the governor's budget for each city, town and regional school district, as well as preliminary fiscal 2022 charter school assessments and reimbursements.

#### **Charter schools**

House 1 would fund the first year of the Student Opportunity Act's three-year phase-in formula for the charter school reimbursement account. The MMA is urging the Legislature to fund essentially years one and two of the law to remain on the intended schedule to mitigate Chapter 70 losses from public school districts to charter schools.

The MMA also contends that the Student Opportunity Act's reimbursement formula would not fix the serious flaws in the charter school finance system. Charter schools will continue to divert a high percentage of Chapter 70 funds away from many municipally operated school districts, and place greater strain on the districts that serve the vast majority of public schoolchildren.

The MMA asked legislators to consider a "circuit breaker" to protect the school districts most negatively impacted by the charter funding system.

### **Rural school assistance**

The Student Opportunity Act provides for a commission to study the long-term fiscal health of rural school districts, but it did not address the unique financial and operational challenges faced by rural districts. The MMA asked legislators to adequately fund the Rural School Assistance Program.

## **Special Education Circuit Breaker**

The MMA asked legislators to fully fund the state's share of eligible educational costs, with the schedule included in the Student Opportunity Act, which includes transportation expenses as an eligible cost.

### School transportation

The governor's budget would reduce funding for both regional school transportation reimbursements and reimbursements for transporting homeless students to their original school district, as mandated under the McKinney-Vento Act. Reimbursements for transportation of out-of-district vocational students remains significantly underfunded at \$250,000 in House 1. The MMA asked legislators to fully fund these accounts.

### **PILOT**

The governor's budget would level-fund payments-in-lieu-of-taxes at \$31 million, which the MMA argued would be a significant hardship for many smaller, rural communities with large amounts of state-owned land. This is a key account due to the major impact that PILOT payments have on budgets in a number of small communities. The MMA asked that the Legislature follow the guidance in the state auditor's recently released report suggesting that the line item should be \$45 million.

### **TRANSPORTATION**

Continued from page 4

Example: Provide \$100,000 for capital improvements to a community center in City, County, State

 Programmatic Request: a request to fund a specific program in the bill at a specified level

Examples: Provide \$100,000,000 for the Low and No Emission Bus program; Support highest possible funding for Community Development Block Grants

 Language Request: a request to include specific bill or report language that does not direct funding to a particular entity but encourages, urges or directs some type of action by an agency

Example: The Committee encourages the U.S. Department of Transportation to integrate considerations of the impacts of climate change into all aspects of the Department's transportation planning and into competitive grant and formula programs

Every member of Congress gets to submit and rank highway and transit projects: The Transportation Committee has announced preliminary details for members of Congress to submit highway and transit transportation requests as part of the process for the FAST Act federal transportation reauthorization. The formal process will be announced later this month.

The committee has strongly encouraged members to begin gathering this information now and work directly to get local and MPO project requests.

In addition to basic project information, the committee will require all submissions to include the following information for each project requested:

- Documentation that the project is on the state, tribal, or territorial transportation improvement program (STIP); and on the metropolitan transportation improvement program (TIP), if applicable
- Sources of funding for the full share of the cost of the project beyond the amount requested
- Letter(s) of support from the state department of transportation, or local government, transit agency or other non-federal sponsor
- A description of the process that has been or will be followed to provide an opportunity for public comment on the project
- Project phase (e.g., Planning, Final Design, Construction)
- NEPA category of action (e.g., Categorical Exclusion, Environmental Assessment, Environmental Impact Statement)
- Status of environmental review
- Whether the project has received federal funding previously, and if so, the source and amount
- Certification that the member, their spouse, and other immediate family members do not have a financial interest in the project

Additional information and updates are available on the Transportation Committee website.

### **Community support is required**

The committees have made it clear that community engagement and support are crucial in determining which projects are worthy of federal funding. Only projects with demonstrated community support will be considered.

Municipalities can provide evidence of community support such as:

- Letters of support from elected community leaders
- Press articles highlighting the need for the requested community project funding
- Support from newspaper editorial boards
- Projects listed on state intended use plans, community development plans, or other publicly available planning documents
- Resolutions passed by city councils or boards

Projects may have two congressional supporters. According to the committee, if one member of Congress wishes to sign onto a letter of community support that another member intends to submit as part of a formal request, the first member should take the extra time to also include a financial disclosure statement to ensure the highest ethical standards in the process.

Reprinted with permission from the National League of Cities. Brittney Kohler is the program director for Transportation and Infrastructure on the NLC's Federal Advocacy team.

### **VACCINATIONS**

Continued from page 9

Cape Cod Regional Vaccine Consortium — comprising municipalities, health care providers and others — is providing overarching support for outreach and appointments, targeted efforts for homebound residents are also proceeding.

The Yarmouth Health Department is partnering with Outer Cape Health Services to provide in-home vaccines, with assistance from the Yarmouth Fire Department. Yarmouth tapped the Council on Aging, Meals on Wheels,

churches, and health care providers to get the word out.

"The Yarmouth Council on Aging has been keeping a list of homebound residents in need of vaccinations," said Health Director Bruce Murphy. "At this time, we have approximately 130 homebound residents that we plan to vaccinate by the end of March to the first week of April."

The town of Chatham began its in-home program on March 22, deploying paramedics and EMTs to vaccinate 24 residents in 17 homes with the single-dose Johnson & Johnson vaccine supplied

through Outer Cape Health Services. Chatham is another example of a collaborative effort, involving members of its Health Division, Council on Aging, Housing Authority and Police and Fire departments.

"Their willingness and ability to work through the complexities of this process to protect some of our most vulnerable citizens is testament to their dedication as public servants," said Town Manager Jill Goldsmith.

Lisa Capone is a freelance writer.

## **EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES**

### **Budget Analyst** City of Methuen

General statement of duties: The Budget Analyst provides administrative, analytical, technical, advisory, and clerical support for the Chief Administrative and Financial Officer in the discharge of their duties, including research, data collection, budget projections and statistical and quantitative analysis. The Budget Analyst performs responsible duties requiring a thorough knowledge and understanding of each department's role, operations and responsibilities and requiring the exercise of judgment and initiative within prescribed limits. This position has frequent interaction with the city's various departments and has contact with personnel from state agencies and other municipalities. Qualifications: Bachelor's degree in finance or a related field with three to five years of progressively responsible experience in municipal financial reporting, or administrative support work in a municipal finance office; or equivalent combination of education and experience. Salary: \$75,197-\$83,552 annually. Submit city of Methuen application and resume to: City of Methuen, Human Resource Department, Room 206, 41 Pleasant St., Methuen, MA 01844 or by email to HumanResources@ cityofmethuen.net.

### Resilience Manager (grant funded) City of Chelsea

The city of Chelsea is seeking for a qualified Resilience Manager, a role integral to addressing the climate risks facing the North Suffolk region. Under the purview of an Executive Committee, composed of representatives from the three communities, the Office is housed within the city of Chelsea's Department of Housing and Community Development. The ideal candidate shall possess a background in and knowledge of climate resilience, demonstrated through a track record of progressively responsible and disciplined project management. For a full job description and application, please visit our website at <a href="https://www.chelseama.gov/jobs">www.chelseama.gov/jobs</a>.

## **Sustainability Manager (grant funded) City of Chelsea**

The Office is seeking qualified candidates for the position of Sustainability Manager (grant funded), a role integral to addressing the climate risks facing the North Suffolk region. Under the purview of an Executive Committee, composed of representatives from the three communities, the Office is housed within the city of Chelsea's Department of Housing and Community Development. The Sustainability Manager shall bring demonstrated practical experience in climate resilience planning, with an emphasis on equity and justice. For the full job description and application, please visit our website at www.chelseama.gov/jobs.

### Public Health Director Town of Ashland

The town of Ashland is seeking a collaborative Public Health Director. This position enforces state and local public health laws, rules and regulations. Core COVID-related work handled by another position. Bachelor's degree in public health or a related

field and five years' experience in public health or comparable required. Minimum of three years of experience with food inspection and septic systems. Certifications required: MA Registered Sanitarian/ Health Officer, Lead Inspector, Licensed Soil Evaluator, Title V Septic Inspector, Food Program Manager, Registered Certified Pool Operator. This is a full-time position (40 hours) in Ashland, Mass. Salary range is \$80,000-\$95,000 annually. Apply online: www.ashlandmass.com.

### **DPW Water Worker 3** Town of Wayland

Union/Grade: Teamsters/D-11. Full-time: 40 hours/week. Salary Range: \$29.72/hr - \$36.23/ hr. Description of position: Performs technical and skilled manual work in the operation of a water treatment plant and water treatment systems; performs skilled manual and technical work in construction and maintenance of the water distribution system. Recommended Minimum Qualifications: Education: high school diploma; additional related education or training is preferred. Experience: Three years of experience working in public water systems. Experience in water treatment plant is desirable. Licenses/Certificates: Minimum of a full Grade 2 Treatment (2T) at time of hire; full Grade 2 Distribution (2D) at time of hire or in training Grade 2 Distribution (2D) as soon as possible within DEP regulatory guidelines and applicable laws. Must have a valid Class B driver's license. Must have a valid 2B hoisting license, 2A preferred. Date posted: Feb. 24. Closing date: Open until filled. Apply to: Human Resources Manager, Town of Wayland, 41 Cochituate Road, Wayland, MA 01778 or hr@wayland. ma.us. The town of Wayland is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

### **Director of Assessing** Town of Wayland

Department: Assessor's Office. Full-time: 35 hours/week. Union/Grade: AFSCME/G-9. Starting Salary: \$76,640-\$81,281. Salary Range: \$76,640-\$101,865. Description of position: Professional, administrative,

supervisory, and technical work relating to the enforcement and interpretations of Department of Revenue (DOR) regulations as they pertain to the operations of the Assessing Department in accordance with state and local statutes and regulations pertaining to municipal assessments and the policies of the Board of Assessors; all other related work as required. Recommended Minimum Qualifications: Education: Bachelor's degree in business administration, finance or a related field of endeavor. Experience: Three years of experience in property tax administration. Substitutions: An additional four years of related experience may be substituted for the degree requirement. Licenses/ Certificate: Bi-annual Certificate of Completion of Uniform Standards of Professional Appraisal Practice (USPAP) as required by the Massachusetts Association of Assessing Officers (MAAO) and MA Department of Revenue. Must possess a valid driver's license to operate a motor vehicle. Date posted: Feb. 24. Closing date: Open until filled. To apply: Please submit a resume and cover letter to the Human Resources Manager, Town of Wayland, 41 Cochituate Road, Wavland, MA 01778 or hr@wavland.ma.us. The town of Wayland is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

### Senior Planner Economic Development Berkshire Regional Planning Commission

Berkshire Regional Planning Commission seeks a collaborative self-motivated individual to join the Economic Development program. This position will be instrumental in assisting communities and businesses in the Berkshires in their economic recovery and improved resilience to future economic disruptions. Visit berkshireplanning.org/ senior-planner-economic-development. Minimum requirements: Master's degree in planning, economic development, business, marketing and communications or closely related field, plus two years' experience, or bachelor's degree with degree/ coursework in related subjects and four years of fulltime experience. Candidates must have a valid driver's license and access to a private vehicle. Cover letter, resume, and writing sample to

### 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.

#### May Beacon

Deadline: April 23 Publication: April 30

#### June Beacon

Deadline: May 26 Publication: June 2

#### 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 www.mma.org for details.

info@berkshireplanning.org with Senior Planner -Economic Development in subject line.

### **Commissioner of Public Health** City of Quincy

The Commissioner of Public Health is responsible for the development, direction, coordination and supervision of the public health programs for the city of Quincy. Reporting directly to the Mayor, the Commissioner of Public Health will administer and oversee programs, policies and budget preparation for the Department of Public Health. The Commissioner is responsible for enforcing public health laws and regulations. Essential Functions: 1. Plans and administers community health service programs, including prioritizing, monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness and efficiency of programs, developing and implementing plans to improve services. 2. Enforces state and local public health laws, rules and regulations for the city; manages a comprehensive public health program for the city. 3. Identifies and evaluates the need for new programs for prevention and control of health problems; recommends and coordinates operations to implement new programs or modify existing ones. 4. Acts as a public health liaison with the general public, media, other city departments and health care professionals. 5. Oversees the review, development, and implementation of policies, procedures, processes and guidelines in compliance with Massachusetts General Laws, board of health regulations, and city charter and bylaws. 6. Advises the Mayor and other city departments in all community/public health matters. 7. Oversees inspection of restaurants and retail food establishments for compliance with applicable laws. Responsible for investigating violations and resolving complex complaints. 8. Prepares for public health emergencies, including potential infectious disease outbreaks in accordance with the requirements of the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH). 9. Develops department budget. 10. Participates in a variety of meetings, committees etc. regarding community health. 11. Collaborates with City leadership in applicable community and departments on identifying gaps in community health services. 12. Performs similar or related work as required, directed or as situation dictates. Recommended Minimum Oualifications: Education and Experience: Bachelor's degree in public health, nursing or related field; master's degree preferred. Five years of experience in a position in a public health program; progressive supervisory experience preferably in a municipal setting; or an equivalent combination of education and experience. Certified MA Registered Sanitarian and/or Certified Health Officer a plus. Strong skills in organization, communication and familiarity with Microsoft Office software are required. Must have a thorough and proven knowledge of the principles, practices and current developments in public health administration. Please submit cover letter and resume to Patricia McGowan, Director of Human Resources, at pmcgowan@quincyma.gov.

### **Constituent Services Liaison** City of Brockton

Works to ensure consistent issues reported to the Mayor's office are handled promptly and professionally. Assists in planning and executing community events. Maintain consistent engagement with all constituents to assure their needs are met. Represents the office of the Mayor at community

events. Full-time/Benefited/Non-Union. Salary: Commensurate with experience. For a complete description of the position and/or to apply please visit brockton.ma.us/city-departments/human-resources/ job-postings. City of Brockton residency required, or candidate shall, within one year of employment, establish residency within the city. The city of Brockton is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer.

### **Public Access Assistant Town of Millbury**

This is a 15 hour, part-time, evening hours', nonbenefited position. This position may work the occasional holiday and weekends. Duties include but not limited to: Assisting the Public Access Director with the operations and programming of local cable access channels, social media, Final Cut Pro, editing footage, streaming, studio production, post production, facilitating Zoom meetings, broadcasting content, and general record keeping. Qualifications: Degree or certificate in television production or communications; should be able to sit or stand for long periods of time and lift over 65 pounds. Understanding of open meeting law and public records law preferred. Salary: \$16 per hour. All applicants must be able to pass a criminal background/CORI check and a pre-employment physical including drug testing. Resumes will be accepted until position filled at: Human Resources Department, Town of Millbury, 127 Elm St., Millbury, MA 01527. Resumes@townofmillbury.net AA/EOE

### **Department of Public Works Director Town of Marion**

The town of Marion seeks qualified applicants to direct and oversee the operations of the Department of Public Works. A Professional Engineer is preferred, or bachelor's degree with specialization in engineering, technical/science, program management or a related field with 10 years' related work experience, with a minimum of three years in a supervisory capacity, or any equivalent combination of education, training and experience. A full description of the responsibilities, requirements, qualifications, and deadline to respond to this advertisement is available on the town of Marion website at www.marionma.gov. The town of Marion is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

### **Highway Superintendent** Town of Blandford

This full-time and benefited working Department Head position is responsible for planning, directing and supervising the activities and operation of the Blandford's Highway Department, which includes the construction, improvement, repair, care and maintenance of designated highways, bridges, and culverts within the town. The Highway Superintendent is also responsible for supervising the work of highway crew(s) composed of Heavy Equipment Operators, Motor Equipment Operators, Mechanics, and Laborers. Salary range for this position is \$62,000 to \$72,000, depending on experience and qualifications. A full job description with submission of application guidelines can be found at www.townofblandford.com/job-openings. Closing date for all applications is Friday, April 16.

### **Highway Director** Town of Hanson

Salary Range \$80,000 - \$100,000 (DOQ). The town of Hanson seeks qualified applicants for the position

of full-time Highway Director, minimum 40 hours per week which may include nights, weekends and emergency situations. The duties include management, development and maintenance of the town's infrastructure assets and related services. The Highway Director performs high level managerial, administrative and professional engineering work in managing, directing and conducting the activities of the Highway Department relating to roads, parks, drainage, facility management, engineering review, and snow and ice operations. The Highway Director is responsible for maintaining and improving upon the efficiency and effectiveness of all areas under his/ her direction and control. The Highway Director may serve as the Hanson's Tree Warden, with training in the field arbor-culture and pesticides provided, if needed. The Highway Director works under the supervision of the Town Administrator and the Board of Selectmen. Further information regarding this position is available by contacting the Hanson Town Administrator's office at 781-293-2131. Applications, resumes and references will be accepted through Friday, April 30 at 11 a.m. Hanson is an equal opportunity employer. This position will remain open

### Town Planner (full-time)

#### Town of Dalton

Open until filled. Go to www.dalton-ma.gov and click on Job Posting for further information. EOE/AA

### **Head Mechanic**

#### Town of Holliston

The town of Holliston is seeking a full-time head mechanic responsible for repair, maintenance, registration and safety inspection of department equipment and vehicles. Operate snow and ice equipment; establish budget; prepare bids for major repairs; recommend vendors. Five years experience in automotive, diesel and equipment maintenance and repair. Class B Massachusetts CDL required. Class C hoisting license 2A and 2B required within one year. Hourly range: \$27.07-\$33.46. Applications are available at www.townofholliston.us and may be submitted to houle@holliston.k12.ma.us or dropped off: Holliston Town Hall, 703 Washington St., Holliston, MA 01746, attn: Cheryl Houle. Deadline is April 2 at 12 p.m. or until position is filled.

### Treasurer/Collector Town of Georgetown

Finance Department, full-time (40 hours). Four-dayper-week, salaried position. Salary: \$85,000-\$95,000, depending on experience. The town of Georgetown is seeking qualified applicants for the position of Treasurer/Collector. This is a full-time position appointed by the Board of Selectmen and reporting to the Town Administrator/Acting Finance Director. This individual will work independently under the general administrative direction of the Town Administrator and is responsible for supervising the receipt, collection, custody, deposit, investment and disbursement of town funds and other securities and the maintenance of related records. Required Minimum Qualifications: Bachelor's degree in accounting, business or public administration or a closely related field with five years' treasury management experience preferred an equivalent combination of experience and education may be considered. Certification by the Treasurer/Collectors'

■ CLASSIFIEDS continued on 30

#### **CLASSIFIEDS**

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Association of Massachusetts or the ability to obtain certification as soon as possible. Duties require considerable knowledge of legal provisions governing the receipt, custody and accounting of town revenues; accounting principles, practices, procedures and related computer operations; and treasury management principles, practices and procedures. Knowledge of modem office practices and procedures, and the operation of office equipment are required. Ability to maintain financial records, prepare and present complete financial reports and to reconcile departmental reports with those of the Accountant's office is essential. Ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships with government officials, department heads, employees and the general public is essential to performing the functions of this position. Strong customer service skills and the ability to deal with the public in a calm, tactful and courteous manner are required. Familiarity with Munis software and proficiency in the use of Word, Excel, and presentation applications. Interested applicants should send a resume via email only to: Town Administrator's Office Attn; Maureen Shultz, mshultz@georgetownma.gov. EEO/AA

### **Assistant to the Assessors** Town of Gill

The town of Gill is accepting applications for a part-time, benefited Assistant to the Assessors. Performs technical and administrative work related to the operation of the Assessors' Office and the administration of a fair and equitable town-wide property appraisal system in accordance with Massachusetts General Laws, and all other related work as required. The Assistant to the Assessors is appointed by and is under the general direction of the Board of Assessors. Attendance at some evening meetings is required. Applicants must possess strong verbal and written communication skills. The job description and employment application form are available at gillmass.org/jobs. The salary is negotiable based on qualifications. Review of applications starts mid-April and continues until the position is filled. Submit an employment application, resume and cover letter for consideration by mail to Town of Gill, Attention: Board of Assessors, 325 Main Road, Gill, MA 01354 or by email to assessors@gillmass.org. For questions, please call 413-863-0138. The town of Gill is an equal opportunity employer.

### **Activity Coordinator**

### Town of Swampscott

This part-time position is a key player of the Swampscott Senior Center Team. The position is responsible for planning and implementing a wide range of programs and activities designed to meet the interests and the physical, mental, and psychosocial well-being of the participants of the Senior Center. Overseen by the Senior Center Director, this position assists with promoting programs and services through a monthly newsletter, social media, a bulletin board, and other modes of communication. The Swampscott Senior Center is an active hub of resources and programs for the senior community in Swampscott. View the full job description: www. swampscottma.gov/human-resources/pages/ employment-opportunities.

#### Inspector of Buildings/Zoning **Enforcement Officer**

#### Town of Boxford

The town of Boxford is seeking an Inspector of Buildings to enforce all applicable codes relating to building construction, design and zoning enforcement and to respond to all inquiries regarding code and bylaw interpretation, etc. Qualifications: High school diploma required; related higher education or additional technical training preferred. Eight years of experience in building construction supervision and knowledge of zoning is required. MA Unrestricted Construction Supervisor License required; Must be a MA Certified Inspector of Buildings or be qualified to become a MA Certified Inspector of Buildings within 18 months of appointment. Thorough knowledge of MA Building Code. Knowledge of permit tracking software is a plus. Valid MA driver's license required. This position comes with benefits and a compensation range of \$34.02-\$44.99 per hour. Working hours within the range of 26-32 hours per week are to be determined. The job description is available on the town website at www.town.boxford.ma.us/human-resources/ pages/inspector-buildingszoning-enforcementofficer. Applications will be accepted until finalists are chosen. Submit resume with cover letter of interest to: Susan Inman, Assistant Town Administrator, Boxford Town Hall, 7A Spofford Road, Boxford, MA 01921 or via email at inspectorhire@boxfordma.gov. For questions call Susan Inman at 978-887-6740. EOE

### **Drinking Water Treatment Operator Town of Amesbury**

The Amesbury Water Dept. is seeking a 2nd shift (3-11 p.m.) Drinking Water Treatment Operator. Amesbury's public water system operates under strict state and federal regulations. To help meet the stringent standards, quality control and quality assurance procedures are employed at every level of water system operations. A multi-barrier approach to drinking water protection is in place to eliminate contamination from the supply water all the way to the tap. The management and employee teams charged with the responsibility for providing safe drinking water to you are skilled and well-trained. With this combination of measures, we are able to provide a safe and reliable product that is essential to this community. Required qualifications: Massachusetts Drinking Water Grade 3T Full Operator license or greater, Massachusetts Class D Driver's License, two years minimum working in a Drinking Water Facility. Salary range \$24.45 to \$30.06; 40 hrs/week. Employment applications are available online at www.amesburyma.gov/publicworks. Please send the completed application with a cover letter to: Dept. of Public Works, 39 South Hunt Road, Amesbury, MA 01913 or email to forde@ amesburyma.gov.

### **Town Administrator** Town of Williamsburg

Williamsburg, Mass., is seeking applicants for a Town Administrator. Williamsburg has a population of approximately 2,500 and an annual operating budget of \$8.29 million. As the chief administrative officer of the town, the Town Administrator is appointed by and reports to the Board of Selectmen. While working with considerable independence, the Town Administrator performs administrative and supervisory duties coordinating the activities of the

departments, commissions, boards, committees, and offices of the town of Williamsburg, carries out the policies and activities of the Board of Selectmen, and serves as liaison and coordinator among other town departments and organizations. A bachelor's degree in public administration, business or a related field is required; three to five years of experience in municipal administration, as Town Administrator preferred, or a related field; or an equivalent combination of education and experience. Position is 40 hours per week with a minimum of two evenings per month required. Salary is commensurate with experience. A job description and the town application are available on the town's website, www. burgy.org. Resume, cover letter, and completed town application should be sent to the Williamsburg Town Administrator Search Committee, P.O. Box 447, Haydenville, MA by April 16 at 5 p.m.

### Coordinator/Senior Level IT Technician Town of Uxbridge

The coordinator/senior level technician is established for the purpose of providing technical leadership for the town by coordinating, maintaining, all of the technology systems in the town of Uxbridge from the direction of the Technology Director. Three to five years' experience in a technology leadership position is preferred, extensive knowledge of technology uses in hardware and network operations, as well as management, demonstrated success working within a diverse workforce with multiple, extensive knowledge of network security is preferred. Municipal experience preferred. Information on applying and a full job description can be found under Careers at www. uxbridge-ma.gov.

### **Director of Community Development Town of Douglas**

The town of Douglas seeks qualified candidates for the full-time role of Director of Community Development. This is a unique opportunity for a forward-thinking, committed public servant to participate in a comprehensive overhaul of an active planning and development department. Process design, staffing levels, and use of technology resources are all part of the conversation. The Director is accountable to the job description posted with other job application materials at www.douglas-ma. gov. The town will consider candidates with either a planning or a civil engineering background. Planners must have a bachelor's degree in the planning field and no less than five years of management and project exposure as a municipal planner or as a deputy planner in a community of 30,000 or greater. Registered professional engineers must have a bachelor's degree and no less than five years of active experience as an engineer and no less than two years of experience working for a municipality. This role is a salaried, supervisory, exempt, fully benefited position requiring a minimum of 40 hours of work per week. Starting salary range from \$74,100 to \$83,800 DQE. This position will remain open until filled. Submit a cover letter, resume, and town of Douglas application for employment to Matthew J. Wojcik, Town Administrator, 29 Depot St., Douglas, MA 01516 or via email to Suzanne Kane at skane@douglas-ma. gov. The town of Douglas is an equal opportunity employer and provider.

### **SERVICES**

### **Municipal Energy Services**

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

#### **Public Management Consultants**

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

### **Municipal Accounting Services**

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

## Executive Recruiting, Management and Governance Consulting Services

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

### Executive Recruiting, Interim Staffing, Human Resources and Management Consulting

GovHR USA/GovTempsUSA provides executive recruiting and interim staffing solutions, management and human resource consulting to local

government and nonprofit clients across the country. Seasoned local government professionals provide five-star quality services including: Classification and Compensation Studies; Temporary and Outsourced staffing; Performance Evaluation System and Training. Visit our website at <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 wir@theexecutivesuite.com, or visit www.theexecutivesuite.com.

### **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 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  $\underline{\text{www.k-plaw.com}}$  or contact Lauren Goldberg, Esq., at 617-556-0007, or toll-free at 800-548-3522, or at lgoldberg@k-plaw.com.

### General Consultant, Recruiting and Special Studies

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

### **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, costeffective services. For additional information, please visit <u>www.k-plaw.com</u> or contact Lauren Goldberg, Esq. at 617-556-0007, or toll-free at 800-548-3522, or at lgoldberg@k-plaw.com.

■ **CLASSIFIEDS** continued on 32

### **CLASSIFIEDS**

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#### 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 <a href="https://www.VADARsystems.com">www.VADARsystems.com</a>. Locally owned and operated at 20 Main St., Suite G1, Acton, MA 01701.

## 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 case-by-case basis. Many of our clients take advantage of a flat monthly rate for unlimited phone calls and emails, which encourages key managers to work with counsel prior to making critical personnel decisions. Check our

website at <u>CliffordKennyLaw.com</u> to see a complete list of our satisfied clients or call John Clifford or Jaime Kenny at 781-924-5796 for more information.

#### Municipal Financial Management Services

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

### **Human Resources Consulting**

Human Resources Services Inc. provides a full range of human resource management consulting services to Massachusetts' local governments and other public agencies. Specialization includes compensation/ classification, performance appraisal, job analysis and evaluation, job descriptions, salary/benefits and total compensation surveys and analytics, personnel policies/handbooks, staffing and organizational management studies, HR audits and assessments, HR training services, recruitment and selection services, web-based HR services, and special projects. Please contact Sandy Stapczynski, President, Human Resources Services Inc., 9 Bartlet St., Suite 186, Andover, MA 01810; 978-474-0200; hrsconsulting@ comcast.net; or visit www.hrsconsultinginc.com. WBE certified.

### Executive Recruitment and Municipal Management

Groux-White Consulting, LLC, is a full-service municipal management consulting firm specializing

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

#### **RFPs**

### Town Counsel Services Town of Bourne

The town of Bourne seeks to appoint an attorney or law firm as Town Counsel on or about May 18, 2021. Interested parties must meet/exceed the qualifications stated in the RFQ/I, be readily accessible to authorized public officials, exceptionally experienced in municipal law as described in the RFQ/I, possess an adherence to the highest standards of professional conduct and ethics, and be committed to rendering sound and objective legal advice and opinion. In seeking Town Counsel, the Board of Selectmen is not bound by MGL c30B or by any other constraints apart from member's sound judgment. This process is being used to communicate the desired qualifications of Town Counsel and to solicit information in an orderly fashion for rough comparative purposes. The town of Bourne reserves the right to waive any irregularities in the RFQ/I process and to accept or reject any or all proposals. Full context and instructions may be found on the town website (<u>townofbourne.com</u>) under "Town Bids/RFPs." Sealed envelopes containing responses shall be marked "Town Counsel RFQ/I" and be received no later than Friday, April 9 at 4 p.m. at Bourne Town Hall, 24 Perry Ave., Buzzards Bay, MA 02532. Questions may be directed to Town Administrator Anthony Schiavi at aschiavi@ townofbourne.com.

### **MIIA**

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supervisors, managers and staff so everyone feels comfortable sharing their personal needs for support.

Demonstrating this openness can come in many forms, such as having online support groups for employees or making mental health professionals available during all-hands calls to talk about mental health and to dispel myths.

Employers may consider programs such as MIIA's WellAware, which has a comprehensive suite of online, onsite, self-directed and telephonic options in all areas of well-being. MIIA's Learn to Live offers customized online programs based on the proven principles of cognitive behavioral therapy, which can be very effective.

An article last August in the Harvard Business Review notes that bosses can demonstrate that they are vulnerable by acknowledging what has brought them discomfort during these times. The article also suggests modeling healthy behaviors, such as sharing that you're taking a walk in the middle of the day, having a therapy appointment, or prioritizing a staycation.

Additional tips for employers include:

- Hosting online mental health webinars on topics such as grief, anxiety, and substance use
- Rebranding "sick days" to "wellness days" to encourage employees to use those days for emotional as well as physical health
- Offering an employee health plan that is progressive on mental health and

substance use disorder benefits

 Offer benefits and resources that support caregivers, and provide education on personal finance to help employees that are feeling lost amid major life changes and events

With the weather getting nicer, managers can address social isolation by holding small outdoor gatherings with safety protocols in place.

We've all been living through strange and difficult times. The pandemic has created a range of stressful and challenging situations for most everyone. Empathy, kindness and offering support are the top ways to help yourself and your employees get through this period.

Joyce McMahon is a freelance writer.

## **Calendar**

#### **APRIL**

Women Leading Government, remote meeting, 10 a.m.-noon. Contact: MMA Senior Member Services Coordinator Denise Baker

8 Massachusetts Municipal Councillors' Association,

webinar, 12-1 p.m. Contact: MMA Senior Member Services Coordinator Denise Baker

Massachusetts Municipal Councillors' Association,

remote board meeting, 8:45-9:30 a.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

Massachusetts Municipal Management Association and Massachusetts Municipal Human

**Resources**, remote joint meeting, 2-4 p.m. Contact: Member Services Coordinator Isabelle Nichols and Senior Member Services Coordinator Denise Baker

Association of Town Finance Committees, webinar, 7-8 p.m.
Contact: MMA Senior Member Services Coordinator Denise Baker

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

Massachusetts Municipal Human Resources, HR101 Boot

Camp webinar #1, 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Contact: Member Services Coordinator Isabelle Nichols TheBeacon

**Massachusetts Municipal Association** 

3 Center Plaza, Suite 610, Boston, MA 02108

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

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the MMA is hosting meetings remotely until after Labor Day. Meeting details may be subject to change.

Women Elected Municipal Officials, virtual meeting, 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m.. Contact: Member Services Coordinator Isabelle Nichols

**MAY** 

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

Massachusetts Municipal Human Resources, HR101 Boot Camp webinar #2, 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Contact: Member Services Coordinator Isabelle Nichols

Massachusetts Municipal Councillors' Association,

remote board meeting, 8:45-9:45 a.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

Massachusetts Municipal Human Resources, HR101 Boot

Camp webinar #3, 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Contact: Member Services Coordinator Isabelle Nichols

Association of Town Finance Committees, webinar, 4-5:15 p.m. Contact: Senior Member Services Coordinator Denise Baker

Online registration is available for most of these events.

Massachusetts Municipal Human Resources, HR101 Boot

**PERIODICALS** 

Camp webinar #4, 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Contact: Member Services Coordinator Isabelle Nichols

Massachusetts Municipal Human Resources, HR101 Boot

Camp webinar #5, 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Contact: Member Services Coordinator Isabelle Nichols

### JUNE

Massachusetts Municipal Management Association,

remote meeting. Contact: Senior Member Services Coordinator Denise Baker

Massachusetts Municipal Councillors' Association,

remote board meeting, 8:45-9:45 a.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

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 <u>www.mma.org</u>.