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May 2021

House approves FY22 state budget

By Jackie Lavender Bird

The House of Representatives on April 29 approved a \$47.7 billion state spending plan for fiscal 2022 that, for municipal and school aid accounts, closely aligns with the <u>recommendation released by the</u> <u>House Ways and Means Committee</u> in early April.

The budget matches the governor's proposed 3.5% increase in Unrestricted General Government Aid, significantly increases Chapter 70 school aid and charter school reimbursements, and includes \$55 million for new education-related grant programs.

After consolidating more than 1,100 amendments into seven categories, House members voted to increase spending by \$59.8 million over the Ways and Means proposal, bringing the total to \$2.1 billion above the budget plan filed by the governor in January.

The House endorsed amendments to

create a reserve for cities and towns impacted by the federal shortfall in aid for military families, and to create an earmark for school districts facing extraordinary special education costs.

Two operational amendments would allow the METCO program to carry over funds from fiscal 2021 to be used by the end of the calendar year and would extend the deadline for municipalities to appropriate fiscal 2021 early voting implementation funds.

The House also approved more than \$6 million in earmarked spending for programs and projects in cities and towns across the state.

On the main local aid accounts, the House budget matches the House-Senate local aid agreement of early April. Unrestricted General Government Aid would increase by \$39.5 million, or 3.5%, matching the projected growth in state tax collections and consistent with the state reve-



Now that the House has approved a state spending plan for fiscal 2022, the Senate Ways and Means Committee's recommendation is expected in mid-May.

nue-sharing practice over the last several years.

The House budget meets the House-Senate commitment to fund the Student Opportunity Act at one-sixth of the implementation schedule rather than

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Treasury Dept. expected to issue American Rescue Plan details soon

By Jackie Lavender Bird

The U.S. Department of the Treasury is expected to issue guidance by May 10 and possibly sooner — for the State and Local Fiscal Recovery funds included in the American Rescue Plan Act.

The \$1.9 trillion federal relief package, signed into law on March 11, includes \$360 billion for State and Local Government Fiscal Recovery Funds, with \$7.9 billion coming to Massachusetts.

The law gives the Treasury 60 days from enactment to distribute funds directly to states, counties, territories, and Metropolitan communities (generally cities and towns with populations over 50,000). Funds for non-entitlement communities (mostly those with populations below 50,000) will be issued to the states on the same timeline and will be distributed to



U.S. Treasury Building

individual municipalities within 30 days thereafter.

Detailed guidance from the Treasury around allowable use of funds is expected to be released in conjunction with the first round of funds. The <u>text of the ARPA</u>

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 617-426-7272.

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Executive Director's Report

Next pandemic phase brings another challenge

Fourteen months after COVID-19's exponential spread triggered an international pandemic that washed over Massachusetts and disrupted nearly all aspects of our daily lives, we are beginning to see light at the end of the tunnel.

We have lost so much during the past year. Thousands of our neighbors have perished. Hundreds of thousands have become ill. Millions have changed their lives, limited their activities, and suffered loss of connection with family, friends and colleagues.

At the same time, we must recognize that our region has been spared even more devastating impacts, due to the remarkable leadership of public officials at the municipal and state level, strong collaboration and support between local and state government, and now rescue-level funding and vaccines from the federal government. Massachusetts is a true leader in protecting its residents and laying the groundwork to move ahead to the last stages of the public health emergency.

Just a short while ago, the **Baker-Polito** administration outlined the projected calendar for lifting most of the public health restrictions that have been in place for a year. If the infection rate continues to fall, vaccine delivery continues to rise, and key health metrics confirm



By Geoffrey Beckwith

that the COVID-19 threat is low, then we could reach a "new normal" stage on Aug. 1. At that time, the administration envisions removing almost all restrictions on the public and businesses, except for face covering requirements indoors and in close-contact situations.

This is great news for all of us. Yet the coming transition

period will not be easy for local leaders. It is likely that the public will be divided, with differing perspectives on how fast we should reopen, how safe it will be, and whether enough people have been vaccinated to provide an appropriate level of protection. Because we are still living with uncertainty, with few definitive answers to these questions, you will soon be forced to make decisions about municipal operations, public events and local health requirements, all without perfect information.

In short, while there is light at the end of the tunnel, there's still a lot of dimly lit ground to cover before we emerge from the crisis.

For example, while the state has announced its timeline for easing public health restrictions, with different stages of activity allowed as of May 10 and May 29 (see related information in this Beacon and on the MMA website), some municipalities may opt to move more

DIRECTOR'S REPORT continued on 20

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We encourage readers to send comments, story ideas, news items, and events notices to editor@mma.org.

Sick leave mandate sent back to Legislature

By John Robertson

The mandated sick leave provision included in urgent unemployment insurance legislation signed by Gov. Charlie Baker on April 1 is back with lawmakers.

The governor approved unemployment insurance and tax provisions (Chapter 9 of the Acts of 2021), but returned the temporary COVID-related sick leave sections in the Legislature's bill with recommendations to improve and simplify implementation of the program. In addition, the governor's proposal (H. 3703) would exempt cities and towns from the sick leave requirement.

Legislative leaders have said that they intend to stick with their original plan to include local government employers in the mandate, but a return bill was not re-enacted as April ended.

The MMA opposed including local government in the sick leave mandate and emailed municipal officials asking them to contact their legislators. The MMA noted that municipal employees are already provided with strong sick leave benefits through collective bargaining agreements and local policies, and it should remain a local decision to use municipal revenues to offer special supplemental COVID-19 benefits.

The Legislature quickly enacted the bill over a 10-day period in March, starting from legislation filed by the governor to shore up the state's underfunded unemployment insurance program. An agreement on the basics of the Legislature's bill, including the sick leave provision, was announced on March 8 by House and Senate leadership. 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, and the bills were approved unanimously.

The Legislature's mandated paid sicktime provision 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.

The Legislature's mandated paid sick time provision 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 and care of a family member with a COVID-19 diagnosis or symptoms, a quarantine order due to exposure or symptoms, and inability to telework after a COVID-19 diagnosis. The definitions of "employer" and "employee" include local government.

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 both the House and Senate that would make emergency paid sick time during a declared state of emergency or disaster a permanent state statute.

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 fewer than 40 hours per week, leave eligibility would be tied to an average of the number of hours worked.

Generally, cities and towns would be eligible to take a federal tax credit against employment taxes, including Medicare, to cover part of the cost of mandated sick leave through an amendment to the federal Emergency Paid Sick Leave Act that was part of the American Rescue Plan Act, which was signed by President Joe Biden on March 11. ●

MSA to discuss codes of conduct for town boards and committees

The Massachusetts Select Board Association and the Massachusetts Interlocal Insurance Association will co-host a free webinar on May 12 to discuss codes of conduct for town boards and committees, as well as the rise in harassment claims being seen in town halls.

The training will be led by attorney Regina Ryan of Discrimination and Harassment Solutions LLC. With more than 25 years of employment law experience, Ryan has completed multiple MCAD-certified training courses for conducting investigations and trainings related to discrimination and/or harassment in the workplace.

The training will include a review of a code of conduct template that Ryan has



Bud Dunham

Regina Ryan

developed for town boards and commissions, with a particular emphasis on maintaining appropriate relationships between elected officials and town employees. Ryan will also discuss discrimination and harassment and provide prevention information.

Sandwich Town Manager Bud Dunham will moderate the session, which will run from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Advance registration is required (at least one hour prior to the start). The session will use Zoom's Chat and Q&A functions, which require use of the Zoom desktop or smartphone app.

This webinar is co-sponsored by MIIA, but attendance is not limited to MIIA member communities. All MSA members are welcome. The webinar will be eligible for MIIA Rewards credit.

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

Policing reform commission begins its work

By John Robertson

The nine members of the new Peace Officer Standards and Training Commission took office on April 26 and began the hard work of implementing core reforms called for in the landmark policing reform law enacted last December.

The law and the rules developed by the commission, created by the law, will result in enhanced oversight and regulation of local police officers and departments as the state moves to improve accountability for policing practices and police officers and departments.

In addition to new rules on allowable policing practices, the law calls for enhanced training obligations and a variety of record keeping and reporting requirements for local government that will be implemented over the next year.

The Peace Officer Standards and Training Commission includes three members appointed by the governor, three members appointed by the attorney general, and three members appointed jointly by the governor and the attorney general. The chair of the commission is former superior court judge Margaret Hinkle.

After hiring an executive director and staff, the commission will begin to tackle the ambitious agenda set in the law (Chapter 253 of the Acts of 2020), including establishing minimum standards for the certification of police officers and police departments and setting rules governing suspension and revocation. The commission will also maintain a database with records for each certified police officer, including complaints, investigations and disciplinary actions. The policing reform law requires cities and towns to file disciplinary records of current police officers with the commission by Sept. 30 and records for former officers by Dec. 1.

Within the commission is a Division of Police Certification charged with setting uniform policies and standards for the certification of law enforcement officers. The reform law requires the division to work with the Municipal Police Training Committee in setting minimum certification standards. Another part of the commission is a Division of Police Standards, charged with investigating officer misconduct and making disciplinary recommendations to the commission. Local police departments will be required to notify the standards division of any complaint and the results of a local investigation. The commission is empowered to act as the primary civil enforcement agency for violations of the law.

After hiring an executive director and staff, the commission will begin to tackle the ambitious agenda set in the law, including establishing minimum standards for the certification of police officers and police departments and setting rules governing suspension and revocation.

Special commissions

While the policing reform law covers a range of policing and justice issues, it also set up more than a dozen special commissions to take a look at a variety of sometimes-contentious issues that couldn't be resolved during legislative deliberations last year. The MMA has representatives on two of the legislative commissions.

Special Legislative Commission on Civil Service and Personnel

Practices: The law established a 29-member special legislative commission to study and examine the civil service law, personnel administration rules, hiring procedures and bylaws for municipalities not subject to the civil service law and state police hiring practices. The MMA has one representative on this commission, which is scheduled to hold its first meeting on May 5. This is an important commission for the MMA to pursue



Former superior court judge Margaret Hinkle is chair of the new Peace Officer Standards and Training Commission.

long-standing workplace diversity proposals.

A related 21-member special legislative commission will study the establishment of a statewide law enforcement officer cadet program. The MMA is not represented on this commission.

Special Legislative Commission on Qualified Immunity: The law established a 15-member special legislative commission to investigate and study the impact to the administration of justice of the qualified immunity doctrine in Massachusetts.

The MMA has one representative on this commission, which was scheduled to hold its first meeting on April 30.

Alternative Emergency Response

Practices: The law requires the existing Community Policing and Behavioral Health Advisory Council to study and make recommendations for creating a crisis response and system of care system that delivers alternative emergency services and programs, including identification of crisis response training programs and protocols for law enforcement officers and 911 telecommunicators that reflect best practices.

ARPA includes numerous funding streams

By Jackie Lavender Bird

On April 21, the <u>MMA and the National</u> <u>League of Cities co-hosted a webinar</u>

about the range of programs in the American Rescue Plan Act that are not direct aid to state and local governments but could directly or indirectly impact municipalities, including funds for education, transit, housing, small businesses, and public health initiatives.

Presenters from the NLC outlined the range of programs included in the \$1.9 trillion relief package. They stressed the importance of using other dedicated federal grant programs to assist local residents, businesses and programs before tapping their dedicated local aid recovery funds. As municipal officials engage with community stakeholders and assess the needs of both government operations and the community at large, this approach will allow for maximizing available federal resources, they advised.

Many of the ARPA programs will be administered through the state, and the MMA is working closely with administration officials to provide information about these programs to municipal leaders as soon as possible.

Education

The American Rescue Plan Act includes \$170 billion for education funding, ranging from early childhood programs through higher education. Nearly \$122 billion was included for K-12 relief, creating a third round of Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) grants.

Housing

To address the severe, negative economic impacts from the pandemic, the relief package includes two major funding sources to address housing insecurity. The first is a \$21 billion investment in emergency rental relief and utility assistance, and the second is \$10 billion for a Homeowners' Assistance Fund, to assist homeowners with mortgage payments, property taxes and utilities.

Homeless intervention programs were also prioritized, with \$5 billion allocated for emergency housing vouchers and \$5 billion for HUD Homeless Assistance programs. An additional \$400 million will support the Federal Emergency Management Agency's emergency food and shelter program.

In addition, the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program receives \$4.5 billion, and the Low-Income Household Water Assistance Program gets \$500 million.

Small businesses

A large piece of the ARPA is dedicated to stabilizing small businesses, with

\$50 billion distributed to the Small Business Administration and \$7.2 billion for the Paycheck Protection Program. Economic Injury Disaster Loans were allocated \$15 billion to support businesses in low-income communities.

There's also \$28.6 billion in targeted relief for the food service industry, including restaurants, food trucks and caterers, and \$1.25 billion to help shuttered arts and cultural venues.

Human services

To stabilize the child care industry, a \$23.9 billion one-time grant program will support child care providers. An additional \$15 billion will be available in one-time community development block grants to provide child care support to essential workers. Significant investments were also made to programs such as the Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program, Head Start, Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment state grants, and violence prevention programs.

The Older Americans Act, which provides for in-home services, nutrition programs, transportation, caregiver support, and elder abuse prevention services, receives \$1.4 billion.

Food insecurity will be addressed through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, including an extension of benefits through September 2021, and funding for the Women, Infants and Children program.

For veterans negatively impacted by



Irma Esparza Diggs, senior executive and director of federal advocacy for the National League of Cities, breaks down some major components of the American Rescue Plan Act during an April 21 webinar.

COVID, there are funds for retraining, housing, and health care programs.

Public health

Close to \$68 billion was included in the ARPA to address the ongoing public health emergency and response, including funds for COVID testing, contact tracing, and mitigation.

The package includes funding to support vaccine distribution and to strengthen confidence in vaccines, as well as funds for mitigating COVID risks in nursing facilities and for providing emergency medical supplies.

Additional investments for public health include \$1.5 billion for Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment block grants and \$1.5 billion for Community Mental Health Services block grants. There are also funds for youth suicide prevention, pediatric mental health, and community health centers, and a \$7.6 billion investment to expand and sustain the public health workforce.

Broadband

Within the \$360 billion State and Local Recovery fund, \$10 billion is earmarked for the states' Coronavirus Capital Improvement Projects Fund, which is intended to increase broadband access for remote work, education and health monitoring. An additional \$7.17 billion Emergency Connectivity Fund will support schools and libraries through the E-rate program.

ARPA continued on 13

Administration announces plans for reopening

By John Ouellette

The Baker-Polito administration on April 27 announced that Massachusetts will reopen additional outdoor activities effective May 10 and is planning for further reopening on May 29 and a full reopening on Aug. 1.

The face coverings order was relaxed for some outdoor settings effective April 30.

The administration said it was taking steps to reopen the Commonwealth's economy because public health metrics are continuing to trend in a positive direction. This includes drops in average daily COVID cases and hospitalizations, and significant growth in the percentage of vaccinated residents.

On the same day, Elementary and Secondary Education Commissioner Jeff Riley announced that he will require all school districts to provide high school students with full-time, in-person learning by May 17.

May 10 reopenings

The following reopening guidelines are scheduled to take effect on Monday, May 10:

- Large venues such as indoor and outdoor stadiums, arenas and ballparks, currently open at 12% capacity under Step 1 of Phase 4, will be permitted to increase capacity to 25%.
- Some outdoor Phase 4, Step 2 industries, including amusement parks, theme parks and outdoor water parks, will be permitted to operate at a 50% capacity after submitting safety plans to the Department of Public Health.
- Road races and other large, outdoor organized amateur or professional group athletic events will be permitted to take place with staggered starts after submitting safety plans to a local board of health or the DPH.
- Youth and adult amateur sports tournaments will be allowed for moderate- and high-risk sports.
- Singing will also be permitted indoors with strict distancing requirements at performance venues, restaurants, event venues and other businesses.

May 29 reopenings

The following changes are scheduled to take effect on May 29 (subject to public health and vaccination data):

- Gathering limits will increase to 200 people indoors and 250 people outdoors for event venues, public settings and private settings.
- Subject to public health and vaccination data, additional Phase 4, Step 2 industries will be permitted to open, including:
 - Street festivals, parades and agricultural festivals, at 50% of their previous capacity and after submitting safety plans to the local board of health
- Bars, beer gardens, breweries, wineries and distilleries, subject to restaurant rules with seated service only, a 90-minute limit, and no dance floors
- Subject to public health and vaccination data, the restaurant guidance will be updated to eliminate the requirement that food be served with alcohol and to increase the maximum table size to 10.

In a call with municipal officials on April 27, Lt. Gov. Karyn Polito said the state will be providing specific guidance for street festivals, parades and agricultural festivals in the coming weeks.

August reopenings

The following changes are scheduled to take effect on Aug. 1 (subject to public health and vaccination data):

- Remaining industries will be permitted to open, including dance clubs and nightclubs; saunas, hot tubs, steam rooms at fitness centers, health clubs and other facilities; indoor water parks; and ball pits.
- All industry restrictions will be lifted, and capacity will increase to 100% for all industries, with businesses encouraged to continue following best practices.
- Gathering limits will be rescinded.

The administration said it may consider re-evaluating the Aug. 1 date depending on vaccine distribution and public health data. The DPH will also continue to issue guidance as needed, including maintaining



During an April 27 press conference, Gov. Charlie Baker announces the schedule for further reopening of the economy over the next several weeks. (Photo courtesy Joshua Qualls/Governor's Press Office)

the mask requirement indoors.

Polito said the lifting of restrictions on Aug. 1 is "separate from a decision on the state of emergency," the end date of which is yet to be determined.

Face coverings

As of April 30, face coverings are only required outside in public when it is not possible to socially distance, and at other times required by sector-specific guidance.

Face coverings are still required at all times in indoor public places. Face coverings also continue to be required at all times at events, whether indoors or outdoors and whether in a public space or at a private home, except for when eating or drinking.

At smaller gatherings in private homes, face coverings are recommended but not required. The \$300 fine as an enforcement mechanism will be eliminated.

Polito indicated that masks may be required beyond Aug. 1 in public indoor settings.

Additional April 30 changes

As of April 30, sector-specific guidance is removed for construction, drive-in theaters, laboratories and manufacturing, all of which will now follow <u>Mandatory Safety</u> <u>Standards for Workplaces</u>.

Golf facilities and libraries should follow <u>Safety Standards and Checklist: Sectors</u> <u>Not Otherwise Addressed</u>.

Guidance from the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs is removed

REOPENING continued on 27

State, local officials look toward a fuller reopening

By John Ouellette

More than a year into the COVID-19 state of emergency, state and local officials were facing forward on April 27 as they discussed changes coming in the weeks and months ahead.

During the 35th regular conference call convened by the MMA, Lt. Gov. Karyn Polito discussed the administration's plans — announced just hours earlier to further <u>reopen businesses and allow</u> <u>more activities</u>, in <u>stages set for April</u> <u>30, May 10, May 29 and Aug. 1</u>, when all restrictions will be dropped if case counts and vaccine rates continue their current trends.

With 5.7 million vaccine doses administered and 2.3 million residents fully vaccinated, Massachusetts remains the per capita leader among the 24 states with populations of 5 million or more, Polito reported. Massachusetts has the lowest vaccine hesitancy rate in the country, and the vaccine rate for Black and Hispanic residents is twice the national average, she said. Vaccines are being administered at a rate of 40,000 to 50,000 per day.

"Look how far we've come, and why we're able to make those announcements," she said.

She urged local officials to continue using their social media and other communications to promote the effectiveness and safety of COVID vaccines.

Polito said the Aug. 1 target for lifting restrictions is not the same as the end of the emergency declaration, which is a separate decision.

She said the administration would form a small working group with the MMA to address issues that arise as city and town halls begin to more fully reopen. She said local legislative bodies, such as town meetings, are exempt from restrictions on gatherings, though masks and distancing are still recommended.

Polito also reminded local officials to take advantage of the <u>Shared Streets</u> <u>and Spaces</u> and <u>Destination Develop-</u> <u>ment Capital</u> grants, both of which are intended to boost business districts and are accepting applications through May 21. Applications are also being accepted for 10 grant programs through the <u>Com-</u> <u>munity One Stop for Growth</u> program.

She also suggested that communities re-examine their zoning to see if they can do more to accommodate outdoor dining, as was done last summer, on a permanent basis.

Heath Fahle, special director for federal funds at the Executive Office for Administration and Finance, said there's <u>no news yet from the U.S. Treasury</u> <u>Department about allocation amounts</u> <u>and usage guidance</u> for the \$1.9 trillion American Rescue Plan Act, but both are expected shortly, as the statutory deadline to disburse the first half of the funding is 60 days after enactment, which was March 11. The ARPA includes \$360 billion for State and Local Government Fiscal Recovery Funds, as well as a range of targeted relief funds.

Fahle reminded local officials that the package contains a lot more than the \$130 billion going directly to municipal and county governments — some \$3.4 billion of which will land in Massa-chusetts. The <u>non-local aid programs</u> include a <u>restaurant revitalization program</u>, <u>shuttered venue operators</u> grants, a number of economic development and business assistance programs, and additional funding for rental, mortgage and child care assistance. Applications



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

opened last week for the broadly defined restaurant program, which includes food trucks, caterers and other food services, and the shuttered venues program.

Fahle added that it is a best practice to make as much use as possible of the <u>Federal Emergency Management Agen-</u> <u>cy's Public Assistance program</u>, which now provides 100% reimbursement for eligible pandemic-related expenses incurred between January 2020 through Sept. 30 of this year. Local leaders are encouraged to contact their Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency field representative about this funding stream, if they haven't already done so.

MSA to hold annual Leadership Conference as webinar series

The Massachusetts Select Board Association will hold its annual leadership conference as a webinar series for the second year in a row.

The four-session series will be held on June 16 and 30 and July 14 and 28. All of the webinars will be held from noon to 1 p.m.

The Leadership Conference series will

feature sessions geared toward both newly elected and more experienced select board members.

An "ask the experts" session with municipal law and finance experts will serve as a follow up to last year's <u>Open Meeting and Public Records Laws 101</u> and <u>Municipal Finance 101</u> sessions offered during last year's virtual conference. The recordings of these two sessions will be sent to all newly elected select board members, along with a number of onboarding materials from the MSA.

Additional information, including a detailed agenda and registration instructions, will be available in mid-May.

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

MassDOT launches new round of Shared Streets

The Massachusetts Department of Transportation has announced a new round of the Shared Streets and Spaces grant program, which is now open for applications.

All municipalities and transit authorities in the Commonwealth are eligible to apply for this new phase of the program, which is intended to help communities gear up for summer amid the ongoing public health crisis.

In light of recent increases in speeding-related crashes and fatalities, MassDOT announced that it is looking to fund projects that improve safety for all road users through interventions that achieve safer conditions and safer speeds.

Shared Streets and Spaces supports municipalities and transit authorities to improve plazas, sidewalks, curbs, streets, bus stops, parking areas and other public spaces in support of public health, safe mobility and renewed commerce. For this new round, bonus points will be awarded to projects seeking to address an identified safety concern through measures such as street reconfigurations and traffic calming.

Bonus points will also be awarded to projects with the following features:

• Environmental Justice communities — projects that are situated in Census Blocks in which the area median household income is below the statewide median household income

- Municipalities designated as a COVID-19 "higher risk" (red) community at the time of application
- Cities and towns that have not previously received a Shared Streets and Spaces grant in either the summer or winter cycles
- Proposed projects with a budget of \$50,000 or less
- Quick-build projects that can be implemented by Sept. 7, 2021
- Projects that are proximate to schools, senior centers, transit and transit connections, and open space and parks

Shared Streets and Spaces will provide cities and towns with grants as small as \$5,000 and as large as \$200,000. The maximum amount that can be requested this spring is lower than previous iterations of Shared Streets and Spaces. Better Bus projects that provide new facilities for public buses may receive up to \$500,000.

Applications will be accepted until May 21, and award notifications will be made by June 25.

The <u>Shared Streets and Spaces grant</u> <u>program website</u> has information on eligible project types and how to apply. Questions may be sent to sharedstreets@dot.state.ma.us.

Shared Streets and Spaces was launched during the summer of 2020 and later extended to address the particular



In Amherst, drivers and diners share the road, thanks to the Shared Streets and Spaces Program. (Photo courtesy Erin Clark/Barr Foundation)

challenges of winter. The program has awarded a total of \$26.4 million to 161 municipalities and four transit authorities to implement 232 projects. Grant-funded projects have ranged from dedicated bus and bike lanes to seasonal parklets, road diets, safer crosswalks, and new bike share stations.

For examples of previously funded Shared Streets and Spaces projects, visit the <u>MassDOT Google Photo Drive</u> or the <u>Metropolitan Area Planning Council</u> <u>Flickr page</u>. The <u>Shared Streets and</u> <u>Spaces Award Announcements</u> page has descriptions of previously funded projects. Prospective applicants may also be interested in viewing the <u>Shared Streets</u> <u>and Spaces resource library</u> for case studies and other evaluation materials.

Mass. School Building Authority seeks statements of interest

The Massachusetts School Building Authority began accepting Statements of Interest for consideration in 2021 on April 20.

Submission of an SOI is the first step in the MSBA's program for school building construction, addition/renovation, and repair grants. It allows districts to inform the MSBA about deficiencies that may exist in a local school facility and how those deficiencies inhibit the delivery of the district's educational program.

The SOI closing date for districts submitting for consideration under the Accelerated Repair Program, which is primarily for the repair and/or replacement of roofs, windows and doors, and boilers in an otherwise structurally sound facility, is June 1 at 11:59 p.m.

The SOI closing date for districts submitting for consideration under the Core Program, which is primarily for projects beyond the scope of the Accelerated Repair Program, including extensive repairs, renovations, addition/renovations, and new school construction, is June 25 at 11:59 p.m.

<u>Visit the MSBA website for more information.</u> ●



The Massachusetts School Building Authority is accepting Statements of Interest for school projects.

Local leaders discuss future of municipal workplace

By Jennifer Kavanaugh

With the help of a futurist and insights from communities that have reimagined their municipal operations, local leaders gathered virtually on April 15 to envision the future of local government work and to plan for a new post-pandemic reality.

During a webinar co-hosted by the Massachusetts Municipal Human Resources association and the Massachusetts Municipal Management Association, futurist and author Rebecca Ryan discussed the evolving workplace, and leaders from Franklin and Lexington described how they are handling the town hall reopening process.

Ryan, also an economist, Zen priest and founder of NEXT Generation Consulting, said local governments can use their pandemic experience to improve operations for citizens, leaders and employees.

"In the 'before times,' we had several defaults that were actually not good for productivity," Ryan said. "They were not good for employee engagement. They were not good for employee happiness. This disruption gives us an opportunity to rethink that entire employer-employee contract and right-size it in a way that actually fits the way work gets done today."

Ryan opened with some current statistics:

- Massachusetts ranked third nationally for remote working during the second half of 2020.
- 56% of jobs can be done remotely.
- 86% of employees want to work from home at least part of the time.
- 17% of employees say they would quit if forced to come back into their workplaces full time.

The past year's upheaval has changed the expectations of government workers, Ryan said, noting that in a recent survey of 710 public-sector employees just 2.5% of respondents said they want to return to workplaces full time. Nearly two-thirds want a hybrid arrangement, and almost one-third want to work full time from home.

Ryan urged municipal leaders to consult administrators, elected officials and em-

ployees to gauge expectations for future working arrangements.

"Experimentation, I think, in these next two years is going to be the key to some of this," Ryan said. "We're going to try some stuff. We're going to see what works and see what doesn't."

Ryan asked participants to identify positions according to the following categories:

- Must be in-person (e.g., first responders, public works employees)
- Public-facing but can be done offsite (e.g., managers, elected officials)
- Must be onsite, but don't typically engage the public (e.g., groundskeepers, wastewater workers)
- Non-public-facing and not requiring a specific location (e.g., payroll processors, webmasters)

During this exercise, officials identified post-pandemic obstacles to operating remotely or as hybrid workplaces, including collective bargaining limitations, citizens' expectations for face-to-face services, open meeting law requirements, spotty Internet service in rural areas, and some state regulations that require in-person services, such as building inspections. Officials also expressed equity concerns, saying they want to ensure fairness among workers with different job requirements and weigh the varied needs of employees for work-life balance.

Ryan urged leaders to address employees' concerns creatively while ensuring quality services, even if it means changing policies. Employers that operate more flexibly can realize significant benefits, including saving \$11,000 per year, on average, for each employee who works at home half-time, maintaining or improving productivity, and having more geographic flexibility to fill critical roles.

"Overall, the expectable future for most local governments, I believe, will be hybrid," Ryan said, "because it's a talent-retention, talent-attraction strategy. It's going to help with your carbon footprint. It's going to help with costs."

Reopening town hall

Franklin Town Administrator Jamie Hellen said his community transformed



During an April 15 meeting hosted by the Massachusetts Municipal Management Association and Massachusetts Municipal Human Resources, Rebecca Ryan, founder of NEXT Generation Consulting, discusses how municipal government work will change in the future.

its Town Council room into a TV production studio in order to restore in-person meetings for most committees.

The town installed additional television monitors, cameras and microphones, and has separate laptops to handle presentations and control Zoom functions. Chairs were spaced to protect people in the room, face masks are required, and custodians disinfect regularly, he said.

Residents can watch the proceedings on local cable access and may participate via Zoom or by phone. For safety reasons, residents can't yet attend meetings in person, but meeting viewership has increased, Hellen said. It took Franklin several months to refine the process, he said, and the experience reaffirmed the importance of addressing the needs and concerns of different groups.

"I've got multiple generations with constituencies in the community that are very diverse," Hellen said. "And the reality is in our community, and I'm sure, for many of yours, it's critical to have flexibility in options for all citizens."

Lexington Town Manager James Malloy said his community has been restructuring the work environment for employees. An analysis of municipal positions concluded that 2% could function remotely, 69% could be partially remote, and 29% needed to be in person. Officials developed a remote-work policy for employees who can work off-site at least part of the time. They consulted with a management analyst, department managers and the Select Board, and

FUTURE WORK continued on 19

New tool helps municipalities boost climate resilience

By Ariela Lovett

On April 21, the Baker-Polito administration announced the launch of a web-based tool that will enable cities and towns to assess the climate change risk level of planned construction projects in their communities.

The <u>Climate Resilience Design Standards</u> <u>Tool</u> will help integrate climate projections and climate resilience design standards into state and local projects. The first-inthe-nation web instrument, developed by the state's <u>Resilient MA Action Team</u>, can provide recommendations to make project design more resilient to severe weather events and changing environmental conditions.

"This tool will make climate resilience analysis more accessible to state and local agencies," said Lt. Gov. Karyn Polito, "and reflects our administration's steadfast commitment to partnering with municipalities to address the impacts of climate change."

The Resilient MA Action Team sought to operationalize the state's <u>Integrated Hazard Mitigation and Climate Adaptation</u> <u>Plan</u> as well as apply consistent and updated design standards across state agencies. The Climate Resilience Design Standards Tool aims to support municipal decision makers through local planning processes and when applying for state grant funding.

Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Kathleen Theoharides noted that the tool could be used by municipalities when

applying for <u>Municipal Vulnerability Pre-</u> <u>paredness</u> program action grants. Nearly 90% of cities and towns are enrolled in the MVP program.

"It is imperative that all projects receiving state funding are planning for future climate risks," Theoharides said.

The <u>tool requires a series of inputs</u>, including the project's location, cost, purpose and expected useful lifetime. The tool incorporates the state's most updated climate data to assess the potential climate



The state's new climate resilience website includes mapping tools, among other features.

change-related risks of the project and to make recommendations for ways the project design could be changed to improve its resilience.

Resilient MA has launched the tool in beta form and is inviting feedback so they can refine the tool based on user experience. Questions and comments can be directed to info.resilientma@mass.gov.

The announcement was part of the administration's celebration of Earth Week in Massachusetts.

Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness program opens FY22 funding

The Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs is seeking proposals for Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Planning Grants, which provide support for Massachusetts cities and towns to complete climate vulnerability assessments and develop action-oriented climate resiliency plans.

The program helps communities define extreme weather and natural and climate related hazards; understand how their community may be impacted by climate change; identify existing and future vulnerabilities and strengths; and develop, prioritize and implement key actions. State-trained MVP providers offer technical assistance to communities in completing the assessment and resiliency plans.

Communities that complete the MVP planning grant program become certified as an MVP community and are eligible for MVP Action Grant funding.

The link to the COMMBUYS website hosting the RFR and required forms

can be accessed through the new <u>MVP</u> <u>program website</u>. Planning Grant applications are due by 4 p.m. on June 4 (via email, see RFR for details) for MVP planning processes that must be complete by June 30, 2022.

Questions can be sent to Program Manager Kara Runsten at kara.runsten@ mass.gov.

Action grants

Energy and Environmental Affairs is also seeking proposals for MVP Action Grants, which provide funding to designated MVP communities to implement priority climate adaptation actions identified through the MVP planning process or similar climate change vulnerability assessment and action planning that has led to MVP designation after EEA review.

Projects are required to use climate data and projections. Projects that propose nature-based solutions or strategies that rely on green infrastructure or conservation and enhancement of natural

systems and that have robust community engagement plans are preferred.

Applicants can request up to \$2 million in funding (regional proposals may request up to \$5 million), and a 25% match of the total project cost is required.

Energy and Environmental Affairs recommends reading the Action Grant RFR in full, as there have been several updates from the last round; significant changes are outlined on page 1.

The link to the COMMBUYS website hosting the RFR and required forms can be accessed through the new <u>MVP pro-</u> <u>gram website</u>. Action Grant proposals are due by 2 p.m. on May 7 (via online form, see RFR for details) for project proposals that must be completed by June 30, 2022, or June 30, 2023.

Questions can be sent to Program Manager Kara Runsten at kara.runsten@ mass.gov. ●

MMA appoints 10 to Opioid Recovery Fund Council

By Brittney Franklin

The MMA has made 10 appointments to serve on the Advisory Council for the Opioid Recovery and Remediation Fund, created by <u>Chapter 309 of</u> the Acts Of 2020.



Marylou Sudders

The 21-member council is charged

with advising the secretary of Health and Human Services on the distribution of funds that the Commonwealth receives from claims arising from the manufacture, marketing, distribution or dispensing of opioids.

The funds are to be expended to mitigate the impacts of the opioid epidemic in the Commonwealth, including, but not limited to, expanding access to opioid use disorder prevention, intervention, treatment and recovery options. The 21-member council is charged with advising the secretary of Health and Human Services on the distribution of funds that the Commonwealth receives from claims arising from the manufacture, marketing, distribution or dispensing of opioids.

The MMA made the following appointments to the council:

- Mary Beth Ogulewicz, Senior Services Director, Amherst
- Jennifer Tracey, Director, Office of Recovery Services, Boston
- Koren Cappiello, Director of Social Services, Brockton
- Suzie Hauptmann, Director of Human Services, Falmouth

- Jason "Jay" Ball, police officer, Framingham
- Jennifer Almonte, public health nurse, Lynn
- Damon Chaplin, Director of Public Health, New Bedford
- Gina Armstrong, Director of Public Health, Pittsfield
- Lindsay Hackett, Deputy Chief Administrative and Financial Officer, Springfield
- Dr. Matilde Castiel, Commissioner of Health and Human Services, Worcester

The secretary of Health and Human Services, Marylou Sudders, serves as the non-voting chair of the advisory council, which includes one person appointed by the Senate president, one appointed by the speaker of the House, one appointed by the minority leader of the Senate, one appointed by the minority leader of the House, three appointed by the governor, and three appointed by the attorney general.

The council's first meeting is scheduled to be held sometime this spring, with an annual report due by Oct. 1 on the activity, revenue and expenditures to and from the fund in the prior fiscal year.

MMA participates in virtual railroad lobbying day on Capitol Hill

By Ariela Lovett

On April 13 and 14, the MMA participated in a virtual Railroad Lobbying Day on Capitol Hill, meeting with Massachusetts members of Congress who serve on the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

Organized by the Association of American Railroads, with support from GoRail, the lobbying day emphasized the importance of the nation's freight railroad system to the U.S. economy. Materials prepared for the lobbying day noted that America's freight railroads are helping the U.S. recover from the COVID-19 pandemic; supporting job creation; combating climate change; and increasing the nation's productivity and competitiveness.

North Adams Mayor Tom Bernard joined the MMA in meetings with staff for representatives Seth Moulton, Jake Auchincloss and Stephen Lynch and



Tom Bernard

.....

Sen. Ed Markey, who serves on the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation.

The MMA expressed support for the Association of American Railroads' opposition to any

provisions that would permit longer and heavier trucks on roadways. Proposed changes to federal law regarding truck length and weight would likely shift traffic off railroads and onto highways, with detrimental impacts on road infrastructure and transportation emissions.

Mayor Bernard emphasized the importance of expanded passenger rail to achieving regional transportation equity in Massachusetts, making the case for East-West/West-East and Northern Tier passenger rail.

In January, the Massachusetts Department of Transportation released its <u>East-West Passenger Rail Study</u> final report, which analyzes options for passenger rail service across the length of the state. The MassDOT is currently reviewing bids for a <u>Northern Tier Pas-</u> <u>senger Rail Study</u>, which would analyze options for passenger rail service from North Adams to Boston along a northern route.

For information about opportunities to engage on federal and state rail policy, contact GoRail Massachusetts State Director Nate Kaplan at nkaplan@gorail. org. ●

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ATFC webinar focuses on 'State of the Town' meetings

The Association of Town Finance Committees held a <u>webinar on April 21</u> <u>focused on developing a "State of the</u> <u>Town" meeting and presentation</u>.

Westford Town Manager Jodi Ross has been presenting a State of the Town at the annual Town Meeting for the past 13 years. She prepares by capturing the top issues and projects in town over the past year and issuing an update on the status and outcome of each.

In addition, in 2010 Ross implemented a town strategic planning retreat open to all residents. The event, held at Kimball Farm, is an opportunity to get resident input and to educate residents on the work of staff, boards and committees. Westford provides refreshments, and staff and town leadership work to keep it fun and interactive. It has grown over the last decade.

Ross suggests that communities start small when implementing a State of the Town or retreat event.

Lincoln holds a State of the Town Meeting each year ahead of the annual Town Meeting. This "meeting before the meeting" is an opportunity to go into more detail on the issues on the warrant and to answer questions, according to Town Administrator Tim Higgins.

Both Higgins and Ross report high attendance at their events. Due to COVID-19, Westford did not hold a retreat in 2020, but Lincoln held one



Westford Town Manager Jodi Ross has been presenting a State of the Town at the annual Town Meeting for the past 13 years.

remotely on Zoom and had a higher turnout than in previous years. ●

MMA Website Weekly Review

Get MMA.org updates in your mailbox

The MMA last spring launched a weekly email newsletter that provides a digest of all the updates posted each week on www.mma.org.

The MMA website is a great source for the latest information related to local government, including timely updates on federal relief aid for municipalities (American Rescue Plan, CARES Act and FEMA).

The email newsletter ensures that subscribers won't miss any website updates, with a summary arriving in their mailbox every Friday morning. The newsletter includes a listing of all the latest news stories, MMA letters of testimony, guidance documents, upcoming member group events and webinars, and additions to the classified ads board.

The email subject line is "MMA Weekly Review."

The MMA also offers a Breaking News email option to provide up-to-theminute news on major stories. Past items have included state budget proposals, reopening phases, and federal funds updates.

To sign up for either or both newsletters, use the short and simple form at <u>www.mma.org/about-mma/</u> <u>newsletter-sign-up</u>.

– Meredith Gabrilska



NLC, panel explores range of ARPA funding streams On April 21 The \$1.9 trillion American Rescue Plan Act includes much more than the \$360 billion in direct aid to statt and local governments across the country......

MMA appoints 10 to Opioid Recovery and Remediation Func Advisory Council On April 22 The MMA has made 10 appointments to serve on the Advisory Council for the Opioid Recovery and Remediation Fund, Recovery and The Apple 302 of the Act



Members get the MMA's latest news in their inboxes each week.

On May 19, ATFC to discuss focusing on larger projects

The Association of Town Finance Committees will hold a free member webinar, "Upping Your FinCom Game: How to Harness and Develop Volunteer Energy," on May 19 from 7 to 8 p.m.

ATFC President Brian Boyle, a member of the Bolton Advisory Board, will lead a presentation on how finance committees and other volunteer boards can set themselves up for success when focusing on larger projects during the



Brian Boyle

slower months. Boyle will share his experiences working on longrange fiscal and master plans as well as adopting a set of financial policies.

The session will be helpful for

smaller communities that often do much of their own research and work, especially on special projects.

Click here to register.

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

MMA's Handbook for Massachusetts Selectmen now available digitally

The MMA's Handbook for Massachusetts Selectmen, a 250-page comprehensive guide to the roles and responsibilities of select board members in Massachusetts, is available to all select board members for free in a digital format.

During the spring town election period, the searchable PDF is sent by email to all new select board members, along with other welcoming materials from the Massachusetts Select Board Association.

The 11-chapter handbook covers subject areas such as administrative and regulatory responsibilities; financial management; human resources, personnel and



labor relations; and land use and community development. It covers topics such as complying with the open meeting and ethics laws, making appointments, holding public meetings and hearings,

town meeting, Proposition 21/2, insurance, tax rates, collective bargaining, legal representation, public safety, public works, and the role of a town manager or administrator.

The handbook is also available as a hard copy, at a cost of \$25 for MMA member communities and \$49 for nonmembers.

To order a hard copy of the handbook, visit the <u>publications page</u> of the MMA website. (There's an additional \$5 charge for postage.) To order a PDF, email Jessica Obasohan at the MMA at jobasohan@ mma.org.

– MMA Member Services Coordinator Isabelle Nichols

Municipal Directory updates begin this month

In May, the MMA will begin gathering updated information from municipalities for the 2021-2022 edition of the Massachusetts Municipal Directory, a comprehensive resource for connecting with colleagues.

Starting in early May, municipalities will begin receiving emails with a link, username and password that they can use to update their community's information. Towns that have already had their spring election will receive the email in the first week of May, as will cities. Towns that have not yet had their spring elections will receive the email following their election.



In most cases, the email will go to the chief municipal official and a selected designee. They will be asked to review and update an online form, which is pre-populated with personnel information that the MMA currently has on file. The form

listings of local officials and contact information, as well as demographic and financial data, for all of the state's 351 cities and towns. The guide also has sections devoted to regional school districts, state and federal government agencies, and relevant professional organizations, as well as a guide to products and services for municipalities.

The new edition of the directory will be published in September.

For more information, contact Directory Editor Jennifer Kavanaugh or Database Administrator Ruby Sadoques at directory@mma.org. ●

ARPA

Continued from page 5

FEMA Public Assistance

FEMA will receive an additional \$50 billion in Disaster Relief and Recovery Effort funding, which will help the FEMA Public Assistance program reimburse municipalities at 100% (rather than the typical 75%) for eligible COVID-related expenses retroactive to January 2020. Additionally, \$650 million will fund programs to ward off cyberattacks on federal, state and local government infrastructure.

Transit

and submit.

The Federal Transit Administration will administer \$30.5 billion in grant programs, primarily for transit agencies to use for operating expenses, including payroll and personal protective equipment expenses. This total includes grants within existing formula grant structures for programs including transit for older adults and adults living with disabilities, as well as support for rural transit agencies.

should take only a few minutes to update

The MMA's annual directory includes

Panelists

The NLC speakers during the webinar were Irma Esparza Diggs, senior executive and director of federal advocacy; Mike Wallace, legislative director for Community and Economic Development; and Yucel Ors, legislative director for Public Safety and Crime Prevention.



MMA-Suffolk programs update

On April 2, the MMA and Suffolk University graduated their fifth class of the MMA-Suffolk Municipal Finance Management Seminar.

The seminar provides an overview of Massachusetts municipal finance, including the operational aspects of finance structure, systems and processes in Massachusetts cities and towns. Topics include budgeting, financial reporting, treasury functions, property assessment, and costing out contracts.

The seminar is for municipal officials interested in furthering their careers in municipal finance as well as for employees who are new to municipal finance. Applicants must be employed by a city or town, and must have the approval of their municipal manager, administrator or mayor to apply.

The program will be held virtually on five Fridays beginning in mid-October. The cost of the seminar is \$825.

The application for the fall 2021 seminar is available on the MMA website. The ap-

plication deadline is July 31.

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

Certificate programs The application

period ended April 30 for the MMA and Suffolk

University's Certificate in Local Government Leadership and Management programs scheduled to begin this fall in Barnstable and Marlborough. These will be the 17th and 18th certificate programs held by the MMA and Suffolk.

The Certificate in Local Government Leadership and Management is a fivecourse, graduate-level program held over



Members of the Spring 2021 MMA-Suffolk Municipal Finance Management Seminar gather online for their April 2 graduation.

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.

Information about the 2022-2023 programs will be available in the fall. •

Management Association accepting applications for Galkowski Fund

May 7 is the <u>application deadline</u> for the Massachusetts Municipal Management Association's 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 admin-

isters 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>application</u> <u>can be completed online</u>. For more information, contact Franklin Town Administrator Jamie Hellen, chair of the Galkowski Fund, at jhellen@ franklinma.gov. ●

MMA continues #MaskUpMA campaign on Twitter

As warmer temperatures arrive, public health experts urge people to remain vigilant about wearing masks indoors, as well as in outdoor public spaces where proper distancing cannot be maintained.

The MMA's mask 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>U.S. Centers for Disease Control and</u> <u>Prevention</u> updated its mask guidance on April 27. The CDC recommends that everyone who is unvaccinated wear a mask in public settings, especially when other social distancing measures cannot be maintained. Those who are vaccinated should wear masks in crowded outdoor venues. Masks can help prevent the spread of respiratory droplets that carry the coronavirus.

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. Nonprofit Locally based Member driven

Massachusetts Interlocal Insurance Association www.emiia.org | 800.374.4405

Serving Massachusetts' communities since 1982

Pandemic pounds: a team approach to weight loss

By Martha Keeley

Although millions of Americans have received vaccines for COVID-19, the nation's health crisis is far from over. Many adults have reported undesired changes to their weight, increased drinking, and other negative behavior changes that may be related to an inability to cope with prolonged stress, according to the American Psychological Association's latest Stress in America poll.

The survey of U.S. adults, conducted in late February, shows that a large majority of adults (61%), experienced undesired weight changes — weight gain or loss — since the pandemic started, with 42% reporting that they gained more weight than they intended.

On average, they gained 29 pounds (the median amount gained was 15 pounds), and 10% said they gained more than 50 pounds, the poll found. Such changes come with significant health risks, including higher vulnerability to serious illness from the coronavirus.

An employers' role in weight loss

Having a goal to lose weight that was gained during pandemic restrictions may seem like a personal one, but employers have a stake in the outcome as well. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, obesity is directly related to higher levels of absenteeism from work.

One of the first steps employers can take is to help educate employees about the dangers associated with a sedentary lifestyle. Provide information detailing the health problems associated with excess weight and strategies to counter them. Above all, the top message should be that the organization is going to actively support those who are trying to lose weight. When employees are happy and healthy, their work product increases dramatically.

Taunton's weight loss challenge

Early this year, essential employees at the Taunton Municipal Light Plant decided to

tackle their 2020 quarantine weight gain with an eight-week weight loss challenge.

The challenge, developed organically by the participants, was considered a success, with 15 employees registering a total weight loss of more than 92 pounds. At the end of the challenge, two participants, a mechanical engineer and general foreman, were each awarded a cash prize of \$150. One prize was for the most pounds lost, and the other was for the largest percentage of weight loss.

The weight loss challenge was developed and run by Eva Henault, a member of the Engineering Department. Henault volunteered to serve as the group's coach and kept the challenge on track by sending motivational emails and reminders to help her fellow team members stay accountable for each week's goals.

To adopt and maintain new habits, wellness research shows, it helps to not do it alone. Participants in the Taunton challenge held each other accountable each week for achieving their goals that they had set for themselves. The accountability and friendly competition helped everyone stay engaged.

Because of COVID restrictions, participants were not able to meet as a group for their challenges and had to resort to activities and contests they could do on their own and then share their results with the team.

Throughout the challenge, participants competed and cheered each other on via emails, photos and text messages, to stay on target as they tracked their steps, walked a mile each day, and completed their Monday weigh-ins each week on two new scales that were purchased for the main offices.

Healthy recipes and photos of what's for dinner were shared. Several employees adopted a vegan approach, and others practiced a low-carbohydrate/low-sugar diet. A Nutri-Bullet blender was added to the staff kitchen to whip up healthy shakes and drinks. Challenge participants are committed to maintaining their results and are already thinking up ideas for their next wellness challenge. And some employees have joined the Mayor's Walking Challenge this spring.

Weight loss-friendly work environment

The following are few examples of simple and effective ways to support employees' goals to lose weight and adopt healthier lifestyles:

- Invest in overhauling break room food sources and vending machines, replacing them with healthy snacks such as fresh fruit, nuts, low-fat yogurt and vegetables. Even the bestintentioned eating plans can be derailed by donuts in the break room. Highlight your organization's commitment to healthy eating by tossing out the junk food.
- Encourage managers and employees to take walking meetings, if possible.
- If possible, make staircases accessible and encourage employees to take the stairs rather than the elevator. Offer incentives or awards for those who climb the most steps during a month.
- Offer a support group for employees, where they can meet other colleagues with similar weight-loss goals. If the budget allows, provide professional coaching to help employees stick to their goals.

In the aftermath of COVID-19, employers have a unique opportunity to address weight loss issues and help to promote better health. Weight loss programs that focus on giving employees the tools they need to implement sustainable lifetime habits to support their health will benefit everyone.

Martha Keeley is a freelance writer.

Around the Commonwealth

Franklin

Town installs ultraviolet lamps to destroy coronaviruses

Using technology both visible and hidden, the town of Franklin has improved the air quality in its municipal and school buildings and reduced the chances of people catching COVID-19.

The town in recent months has been installing ultraviolet germicidal irradiation equipment to destroy pathogens — in air handlers, ductwork and wall-mounted units — and placing hundreds of high-efficiency particulate air purifiers in classrooms and other spaces. Franklin is believed to be the first community in Massachusetts to install UVGI technology in school and municipal buildings.

Scientists have known about the germ-killing benefits of ultraviolet technology for decades, but the pandemic has increased its use, said Michael D'Angelo, Franklin's director of public facilities.

"Everybody I talk to about it, you get the same thing: 'How come I've never heard of this?" D'Angelo said.

But that's changing, he added. "It's becoming mainstream now."

UVGI technology can kill 99.9% of bacteria and viruses, and institutions including universities and the New York Stock Exchange have already embraced it.

Franklin started by placing ultraviolet lamps in 12, 12-foot-high air handlers on the high school's roof. As the air handlers draw air from the building, the ultraviolet light breaks down the molecular bonds of pathogens such as the coronavirus, before the rooftop units send the newly cleaned air back inside. The town finished that installation in late January, D'Angelo said.

Unlike the newer high school building, though, other school buildings lacked central air systems linked to rooftop handlers, and required different approaches. In the older buildings, D'Angelo said, the town installed ultraviolet tubes in the ductwork or mounted upper-air units on walls.



Ultraviolet tubes installed in 12 air-handling units on the Franklin High School roof help destroy viruses and bacteria in the building. (Photo courtesy Michael D'Angelo/Town of Franklin)

Because ultraviolet light can severely damage eyesight, D'Angelo said, Franklin has placed warning labels on the devices, installed automatic-shutoff mechanisms that trigger when people try to open devices, and mounted room units high on walls to prevent people from looking directly into them.

"It was a whole other aspect of this to make sure everybody knew, and everybody was safe," D'Angelo said.

Besides using ultraviolet light to kill germs, the town also bought 650 larger-size HEPA air purifiers and received another 650 smaller purifiers from the state, D'Angelo said. HEPA units don't kill the coronavirus, he said, but the high-quality filtration substantially removes other particles, to which the coronavirus can attach. Reducing particles overall is especially important, he said.

Between municipal and school facilities, Franklin has 19 buildings to upgrade. While the high school, municipal offices and other facilities are done, the next big installation phase, taking care of the senior center, the library and three dual-school complexes, will likely finish in early May. After that, a final phase will cover the remaining school and municipal buildings, D'Angelo said.

To pay for the UVGI, Franklin is using \$900,000 in CARES Act funds, including \$129,000 for the high school installation, D'Angelo said. The HEPA purifiers, at a cost of \$429,000, came from a separate CARES Act allocation.

D'Angelo, who is also president of the Massachusetts Facility Administrators' Association, said many communities are now pursuing ventilation upgrades and UVGI installations, and he expects that forthcoming federal funds will encourage additional projects.

At a Feb. 23 School Committee meeting, Town Administrator Jamie Hellen explained why Franklin has prioritized federal funding for this work, and said this will remain a priority.

"This is an anxious time; we understand that," Hellen said. "It's anxious because of COVID, but it's also anxious after COVID, we believe, in terms of the light that this has shined on public health and viruses and bacteria and air quality, particularly in school buildings."

– Jennifer Kavanaugh

Amherst

Town launches online engagement platform

The town of Amherst has developed a new prong in its online engagement strategy with the launch of a new interactive platform, <u>Engage Amherst</u>.

The March launch comes a year after the COVID-19 pandemic forced cities and towns across the state to pivot from in-person meetings and hearings to remote, online engagement with residents.

The new platform provides an opportunity for the community to learn about and offer feedback on projects and initiatives taking place in town, an alternative to attending traditional public, in-person meetings.

"This is something we have had on our roadmap for a while," said Amherst Communications Manager Brianna Sunryd. "With COVID-19, people were more willing to engage in new ways, and we had a CARES Act funding opportunity."

Each town project gets its own page on the Engage Amherst platform, where the community can learn more, ask questions and weigh in. The individual

Around the Commonwealth



Engage Amherst includes individual project pages where community members can learn and provide comments.

project pages include various staff members involved as project administrators — not just Sunryd or a member of the IT team, who respond to questions and feedback.

In developing the platform, Sunryd stressed the importance of getting buyin from staff members who might not be familiar with navigating this type of digital space, as well as having an "internal champion" to help guide and teach other departments.

"We are trying to make it everyone's job to be thinking about engagement and community connection," Sunryd said. "And this tool allows that in a user-friendly way, to get closer to that goal. It's not a high-tech solution."

The platform currently features a couple projects for active engagement, including intersection improvements at Pomeroy Village, renovations at the North Amherst Library building, and potential future capital building finance projects. Sunryd said a few more pages will launch shortly, and the town is planning a budget page that will deliver digestible information and accept questions.

Once the public consultation period for a project ends, the town will provide full reports to various town boards and stakeholders, and the community, creating a full-circle feedback loop. The project page will be archived and will still be available on the platform.

"We did our first reporting out to a committee of the council, and we were able to provide them with various reports," Sunryd said. "They found it very helpful when it was nested in with the more traditional forms of communication we have."

Amherst Planner Ben Breger said Engage Amherst "has been an incredibly powerful digital tool to engage community members in the planning processes," particularly during the pandemic.

"The ability to share information with the public, receive survey data and insights, and provide a forum for residents to communicate with each other has helped empower residents and inform our decision-makers," he said.

Sunyrd highlighted the town's multifaceted approach to foster two-way communication with the community. The town also used CARES Act funding to install solar-powered signs downtown.

"They are mostly one directional, but we can poll community members from the signs," she said. "It is another way to access people who may not be engaged with us but who spend time in our downtown."

The Engage Amherst platform, powered by Bang the Table, includes an administrative analytics dashboard that shows how many people are interacting with the individual pages and what they are doing while on the page. Users can choose to register for an account, which provides the town with additional demographic information, but registration is not required to use the platform.

"So far the feedback has been positive, from the Town Council and the public," Sunryd said. "Amherst is a very involved community and vocal about things that are going on in town."

– Meredith Gabrilska

Hamilton

Town mandates food waste composting

Following a years-long period of pilot and opt-in programs, the town of Hamilton passed a mandated food waste composting program in November of last year, the first municipality in the state to do so.

Spearheading the process has been Gretel Clark, chair of the Waste Reduction



Hamilton stocks curbside organic waste bins and countertop kitchen bins for its composting program.

Committee.

"You just need to provide people with the equipment and say do it!" Clark said.

The ban on food waste and compostable paper in the town's solid waste stream went into effect on Feb. 1, though a grace period through May 1 gave residents time to acquire or replace missing compost bins free of charge.

"The main reason we are doing this is for environmental reasons," Clark said. "It is huge to remove food from solid waste. ... By taking it out of the waste stream we are putting carbon back into the earth."

The town's solid waste is incinerated, while the collected food waste and compostable paper goes to Brick Ends Farm, a composting facility in Hamilton that has been with the program since the beginning, in 2009.

The cost to dispose of the food waste and compostable paper is \$40 per ton, less than half the cost of solid waste disposal, according to the Town Manager's Office.

The level of compost tonnage has fluctuated over the 10-plus years of the program, but Clark expects the mandate to make a difference.

"The heavy stuff in the bin is the wet food material, so we are expecting to see a real change back to much higher tonnage going into the compost," she said.

The pilot program was launched in 2009

COMMONWEALTH continued on 19

Mass Innovations

Salem launches online portal about gas leaks

By Jennifer Kavanaugh

Addressing a longtime concern of both leaders and residents, the city of Salem recently created the state's first <u>online</u> <u>municipal portal</u> providing detailed information about the location and status of gas leaks.

Launched about two months ago, the online <u>portal</u> offers data, maps and analyses of gas leaks, historical information, and safety tips. The portal represents a collaboration among the city's GIS department, the Salem Alliance for the Environment, and the Home Energy Efficiency Team, said Jack Nessen, Salem's GIS administrator.

Arlington now also has a portal, and other communities are exploring similar efforts, but Salem's site was the first in the state to integrate Home Energy Efficiency Team data, according to HEET Director Dominic Nicholas. Salem has focused on gas leaks for a number of years, Nessen said, but concerns intensified after the 2018 Columbia Gas explosions that killed one person and damaged homes and property in three Merrimack Valley communities.

"When the Columbia Gas disaster happened, that just sort of really ramped up everything in the city," Nessen said. "We're an older city — old infrastructure, old buildings. People were really afraid of something happening in Salem."

Legislation enacted in 2014 requires gas companies to report gas-leak information annually to the state. Through those disclosures, HEET has been analyzing, geocoding and mapping National Grid's information, making the raw data more accessible. Nessen has been working on Salem's portal since last spring, and said the effort benefited greatly from the involvement of HEET, SAFE and other groups.

"So it's seen a lot of eyes, it's been across a lot of desks, and so we've gotten a lot of good input from various stakeholders," Nessen said.

The portal includes data summaries, downloadable datasets and maps. Dots on the maps correspond to individual



Thanks to a new online portal, Salem residents can learn a great deal more about gas leaks in their city.

gas leaks — blue dots for repaired leaks, and red dots for leaks not repaired as of Dec. 31, 2019. Clicking on a dot reveals the leak's address, the reporting date, the repair date (if any), and the leak's severity.

Salem Mayor Kim Driscoll said the portal reflects Salem's goals to make broader use of GIS and other tools for planning purposes, provides "a data-driven resource for our own infrastructure and public safety activities," and gives the public the knowledge they need to advocate for better gas-system upkeep and improvements.

The site includes background information about natural gas and explains how Salem has addressed leaks.

"There's a sort of informational side, and a storytelling side of it," Nessen said.

The portal's data ends on Dec. 31, 2019, so it's possible that National Grid has since repaired some of the leaks, Nessen said. But as of that date, Salem had 71 gas leaks that had not been repaired. He said the more concerning areas often overlap with the city's older sections.

Nessen said he is working on 2020 data, and expects to update the portal annually. Because the city receives the data for free, and uses its own staff and GIS software, the project is fairly low cost, he said.

The gas-leak data work has essentially created two products: the public-facing portal, and an internal portal for departments to consult before undertaking projects.

"It's really helped collaboration within the departments and alignment of work there," Nessen said.

Salem Mayor Kimberley Driscoll said the portal reflects Salem's goals to make broader use of GIS and other tools for planning purposes, and that the portal provides "a data-driven resource for our own infrastructure and public safety activities." She said it also gives the public the knowledge they need to advocate for better gas-system upkeep and improvements, and informs city operations that intersect with natural gas infrastructure.

"One of the most important take-aways has been having a larger and more clear picture and perspective on what progress is being made by National Grid to address the very serious issue of gas leaks in our neighborhoods," Driscoll said. "It can serve to better shape our own thoughts around infrastructure projects, tree planting, fire and emergency response, and so much more."

For more information about Salem's gas leaks portal, contact Jack Nessen at jnessen@salem.com

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

COMMONWEALTH

Continued from page 17

with 74 volunteer households. By 2013, all Hamilton residents were allowed to opt-in to the program. The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection provided grant funding to help supply equipment for the town-wide rollout. Every household is provided with a 13-gallon green curbside bin and a 2-gallon kitchen countertop bin.

Starting with a pilot program may not be necessary for communities that are now considering composting programs, Clark said.

"No one was doing it at the time [we started], and we wanted to find some things out about the possibilities," she said.

The program initially involves a significant amount of community education and outreach, Clark said. The Waste Reduction Committee does a comprehensive annual mailer to remind residents of the program and to introduce any new families that have moved to town. The committee is also available to answer any questions.

The Board of Selectmen had previously instituted an EOW program — or every other week — for solid waste pick up. Clark said this important decision resulted in higher composting rates.

"After we instituted EOW, people found that they could reduce their solid waste buildup by consistently using the compost," she said. "And then solid waste went down and compost went up."

At the start of the pandemic, the town returned to a weekly pickup schedule in anticipation of increased waste output.

The town does not impose fines for noncompliance with the food waste program. Beginning with the first week of May, however, trash haulers are instructed not to pick up the black solid waste bins from households that do not have their green compost bin at the curb. Those black bins will receive a rejection sticker notifying the household that their solid waste was not picked up because of the missing compost bin. This does not affect recycling pickup.

Households that already compost on their property can apply for an exemption from the Department of Public Works.

"It does save money," Clark said. "Not a bundle, but in a small town like this any amount makes a difference. And in this day and age, in the crisis we are in, the townspeople feel like they are making a difference."

– Meredith Gabrilska

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

BUDGET

Continued from page 1

one-seventh, as originally proposed by the governor in January, providing a total of \$5.5 billion for Chapter 70 aid. The joint agreement also would provide \$40 million for a one-time, targeted grant program for school districts adversely affected by student enrollment decline during the COVID-19 public health emergency and \$15 million for summer school and student mental health support. The MMA is asking lawmakers to address the enrollment issue by appropriating direct Chapter 70 funding based on previous enrollment levels, so that cities and towns can be confident that their Chapter 70 aid will reflect actual enrollment in the coming year.

The House budget would increase the Special Education Circuit Breaker account by \$22.5 million, level-fund regional school transportation, and add \$1 million for the McKinney-Vento transportation program for homeless students.

The House added another \$37 million for charter school mitigation payments, but did not adopt an amendment supported by the MMA to fund charter school mitigation payments using the original Student Opportunity Act schedule (which would have made fiscal 2022 year two of the original three-year schedule). Rising charter school assessments are continuing to present major issues for many school districts.

The House included an additional \$1 million for public libraries and added \$1 million for regional public libraries. Pay-

FUTURE WORK

Continued from page 9

reached agreements with the collective bargaining units. The town expects to implement the policy before the new fiscal year begins on July 1, Malloy said.

"Prior to the pandemic, I believe it would have been very difficult for us to come forward with a flexible work schedule that included a permanent remote-work policy," Malloy said. "However, after several months of working remotely, it became pretty evident that our staff stepped up, and provided the same high-quality services they were providing before the pandemic."

Malloy said the new arrangement will make Lexington a more attractive

ments in lieu of taxes for state-owned land (PILOT) would increase by \$2 million.

The Division of Local Services posted preliminary Cherry Sheet numbers for cities, towns and regional school districts based on the House Ways and Means budget.

The preliminary Cherry Sheets provide estimates for Chapter 70 aid, charter school assessments and mitigation payment amounts, but the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education has not yet provided updated Chapter 70 calculations for each district, which means that specific required local contribution amounts are not yet available.

The state budget bill is now before the Senate, where the Ways and Means Committee is expected to release its recommendation in mid-May.

employer, reduce employee commuting times, allow the town to ease overcrowding, and potentially save Lexington millions of dollars in renovation and expansion costs.

Resilient Mystic Collaborative recognized for work on climate resiliency

The <u>Resilient Mystic Collaborative</u> has received the Environmental Business Council of New England's Award for Leadership by a Nonprofit Organization.

The Environmental Business Council of <u>New England</u> presents annual awards to recognize companies, organizations and individuals for outstanding accomplishments in environmental management, energy resources and management, and climate change.

The 20 communities of the Resilient Mystic Collaborative were recognized for their work to mitigate climate change risks in the Mystic River watershed. The collaborative raised more than \$2.5 million in 18 months to support stormwater flood management and storm-hardening infrastructure in the region, next-generation coastal flood management, and to support work to address disparities in the impact of climate change.

The Resilient Mystic Collaborative is a partnership among neighboring communities in Greater Boston's Mystic River Watershed working to protect people and places from climate-intensified risks. Collaborative member communities are Arlington, Belmont, Boston, Burlington, Cambridge, Chelsea, Everett, Lexington, Malden, Medford, Melrose, Reading, Revere, Somerville, Stoneham, Wakefield, Watertown, Winchester, Winthrop and Woburn.

Oliver Sellers-Garcia, director of Somerville's Office of Sustainability and Environment, said, "Our climate change analyses and action plan make clear that Somerville's greatest coastal flooding threats originate outside of Somerville's boundaries. We need to collaborate with our neighbors in order to protect Somerville. But we also recognize that our economies, infrastructure and well-being are closely tied together as a region. That's why it's been so important to form a close partnership with the other municipalities in the Mystic River watershed."

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Continued from page 2

slowly and make decisions based on the health data that accumulates after other regions open up.

In the case of public events, the outdoor gathering limits will soon increase to 250, and festivals and parades can be allowed at 50% capacity. But many of these caps will be unenforceable, such as limiting the number of people who line up on sidewalks to watch parades, or show up to attend large block parties or cultural festivals. It may be infeasible to allow Memorial Day and July 4 events to move forward, depending on the format and density in many cities and towns.

Are communities really going to have a fireworks display if only 250 people can attend, or if the crowd needs to be pared back to 50% of those who showed up in 2019? And even if you try to go ahead, how will you deny access to the overflow if they show up anyway? Regardless of your decision locally, there will be people on both sides of the issue, and lots of opportunities for flare-ups.

Beyond public events, there will be lots of questions about how and when to reopen senior centers, libraries, and city and town halls for normal operations, public hearings, and other events. You will make these decisions based on input from your local health staff, the comfort level of your employees, the concerns and desires of your residents and businesses, and other factors. Yet developing consensus may be difficult, especially since many communities may adopt different timelines and protocols, which is expected when local decision-making is empowered.

Vaccine delivery is another area where the pandemic challenge will become more difficult in the coming weeks and months. It's likely that the 80-20 rule will apply here. After a slow and balky rollout, the vaccine delivery process is now humming along in most regions of the state, and Massachusetts is on pace to vaccinate almost everyone who wants a shot (or two) in the arm before summer. It may turn out, however, that vaccinating the final 20% of eligible individuals will take as much effort and resources as vaccinating the first 80%. This will move the public conversation beyond "vaccine hesitancy" into "vaccine resistance," or even outright opposition.

Right now, the governor and president are saying that they do not envision vaccine requirements or mandates, yet many members of the public, local employees, businesses and others may ask you to make different decisions or establish local rules to reduce the risk of exposure to the virus. These are highly charged issues, and there is no gold standard or established best practice to guide us other than public health and science. Yet, as we have seen in so many other settings, the public can be quite polarized even when the facts are not in dispute.

The best practice is to engage in these local conversations now, in advance of when you need to make these decisions, agree on the factors that will guide your decisions, consult with peers in other communities to share information, and build consensus on your process as early as possible. The MMA will be doing our best to be a resource on these thorny issues, as we have throughout the pandemic, yet the ultimate decisions and hard choices will be in your hands.

The good news is that we may get our lives back to near-normal in a few months — although the road that will get us there will certainly include some tricky hills, curves, bumps and potholes along the way.

This next stage of the pandemic will provide further proof of how essential municipal leaders are to the well-being and success of our communities and our nation. That's because local leaders are the ones who will smooth out the path ahead and get us there safe and sound.

People



Mark Hawke

2019 and grants administrator from 2001 through 2007.

Hawke has been working in Westminster since December 2019. He will leave his job there on June 4 and begin his new job in Gardner the following week.

In June.

Westminster Town

Mark Hawke will

director of finance

and operations for

the Gardner Public

Schools, returning

he served as mayor

from 2008 through

to the city where

become the new

Administrator

Hawke served on the MMA Board of Directors for a number of years, and was the MMA's president in 2018.



Justin Casanova-Davis

Justin Casanova-**Davis**. Brookline's assistant town administrator, has won a publicfinance scholarship to complete his master's degree.

On April 2, Casanova-Davis won a \$20,000 Goldberg-Miller Public **Finance Scholarship**

from the Government Finance Officers Association, an organization that promotes excellence in public finance and represents more than 20,000 public finance officials in the United States and Canada.

Casanova-Davis received the largest of 11 awards announced by the GFOA. The scholarship, funded by the Girard Miller Foundation, will help Casanova-Davis complete his master's degree in public administration at Suffolk University, with an expected graduation this fall.

Casanova-Davis has been Brookline's assistant administrator since October 2018. He previously worked as the principal budget analyst for the city of Cambridge, from 2016 to 2018, and as a state budget analyst. He earned a bachelor's degree in political science

from Boston College, and an MMA-Suffolk Certificate in Local Government Leadership and Management in 2020.



Stephen Ford

on April 9 at age 68. Ford was elected

Harwich Selectman

Stephen Ford died

to the Board of Selectmen in 2019. Earlier in his life, he had worked in the federal government, for former U.S. Sen. Abraham Ribicoff

of Connecticut and former U.S. Rep. Gerry Studds of Massachusetts.

Ford's brother, Michael Ford, is the town moderator in Harwich.

Former Nahant Selectman Perry Barrasso died on April 15 at age 56.

Barrasso was elected to the board in 2012 and served until 2015. He also served on the Board of Assessors and was its chair at the time of his death.

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 from March 29 through April 15.

This listing is meant to highlight first-time 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.

Acton: Francesca Arsenault **Arlington:** Eric Helmuth Athol: Andrew Sujdak Barre: Maureen Marshall Blackstone: Tanya Polak Chelmsford: Mark Carota Dighton: Leonard Hull Freetown: Jared Zager Hadley: Amy Parsons Hardwick: H. Robert Ruggles Holbrook: David Reilly **Lakeville:** Lorraine Carboni Lynnfield: Joseph Connell Milford: Paul Mazzuchelli Millville: Adrienne Pettit, Todd Trottier Needham: Lakshmi Balachandra, Marcus Nelson North Andover: Janice Phillips

North Attleborough: Mark Gould, Andrea Slobogan **Norton:** Christine Deveau **Oak Bluffs:** Emma Green-Beach **Reading:** Christopher Haley **Rehoboth:** Michael Deignan, George Solas Sr. Rockland: Tiffanie Needham

Seekonk: Michael Healv **Somerset:** Allen Smith South Hadley: Carol Constant **Stoneham:** David Pignone Jr. Stoughton: Scott Carrara **Sturbridge:** Jamie Goodwin Tewksbury: James Mackey Ware: Caitlin McCarthy Winchester: Richard Mucci Wrentham: Christopher Gallo

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MMCA holds webinar on school finance issues

The Massachusetts Municipal Councillors' Association held a <u>webinar on April</u> <u>8 focused on school finance</u>.

The Lunch and Learn session featured Mark Abrahams, president of The Abrahams Group, and Jack McCarthy, executive director of the Massachusetts School Building Authority.

The speakers provided an overview of school budget basics and the building project process. Questions ranged from predicting district numbers to issues around regional transportation.

More than 50 councillors attended the webinar.

– Denise Baker



Jack McCarthy, executive director of the Massachusetts School Building Authority (top left), MMA Legislative Analyst Jackie Lavender Bird (top right) and Mark Abrahams, president of The Abrahams Group, discuss school finance during an April 8 webinar hosted by the Massachusetts Municipal Councillors' Association.

RESCUE PLAN

Continued from page 1

identifies four eligible use categories for State and Local Government Fiscal Recovery Funds:

- 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

The covered period runs from March 3 of this year through Dec. 31, 2024.

Once the Treasury issues its guidance,

Heath Fahle, special director for federal funds at the Executive Office for Administration and Finance, said his office will produce a document highlighting key items for Massachusetts cities and towns.

The American Rescue Plan Act will provide direct assistance to municipalities in the form of two payments, with the first half coming shortly after enactment and the second half arriving 12 months after the first. Federal assistance is being made available to all municipalities nationwide through this non-competitive grant program.

Local officials do not need to apply for funding, or outline their intended expenditures in advance, but they do need to ensure that the proper systems are in place to receive the funds, as <u>outlined by</u> <u>the Treasury on April 15</u>. Metropolitan cities will need a valid DUNS number, which is used by the federal government to track fund expenditures. Metropolitan cities should also have an active SAM registration, which allows entities to register to do business with the federal government. Payment information, including an Entity Identification Number, contact information, and information about the municipality's financial institution will be required as well.

Non-entitlement communities also need a valid DUNS number, but they do not need an active SAM registration, as they will receive their funds through the state.

The <u>MMA has a dedicated website area for</u> <u>federal funding resources</u> and will share information from the Treasury as soon as it becomes available.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Firefighter/Paramedic Town of Wavland

Union/Grade: International Association of Firefighters/F-1E. Salary Range: \$59,573-\$65,546. Date posted: March 29. Closing date: Open until filled. Description of position: Professional, operational and technical work associated with combating, extinguishing and preventing fires; professional, administrative, and technical work associated with services as an Emergency Medical Technician; professional work associated with rescue operations; all other related work as required. The schedule of work is rotating 24-hour shifts that result in an average 42-hour workweek over an eight-week cycle. Recommended Minimum Qualifications: High school diploma. A degree or courses in fire service related subjects are highly desirable. A fire science degree is preferred. Experience: Experience as a call firefighter, medical technician or dispatcher working in a fire-emergency service environment is preferred. Licenses/Certificates: Prior to date of hire shall possess and subsequently maintain during employment: Valid Massachusetts Emergency Medical Technicians License; Valid Massachusetts driver's license; Consideration given in the following order: Current Massachusetts Paramedic certification and having graduated the full-time Massachusetts Firefighting Academy Recruit Program; and/or current Massachusetts Paramedic certification, and as a condition of employment, complete the full-time Massachusetts Firefighting Academy Recruit Program within one year of hire; Enrolled in a Paramedic Program to be complete within one year of hire, be certified to the Paramedic level, and as a condition of employment, complete the full-time Massachusetts Firefighting Academy program within one year of hire; and/ or Basic EMT certification, complete the full-time Massachusetts Firefighting Academy Recruit program within one year of hire, and be certified as a Paramedic within two years following the current collective bargaining agreement process. 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.

Town Accountant Town of Townsend

The town of Townsend has a vacancy for the position of Town Accountant. The position is appointed by and takes policy direction from the Board of Selectmen and under day to day administrative direction of the Town Administrator. Position is 40 hours/week and is a contractual position. Responsibilities: Maintain and reconcile the town's financial records; prepare financial reports, including balance sheets, income statements, monthly spending reports, Schedule A, and the Tax Recap; exercise budgetary control over town funds; prepare payroll and vendor warrants; prepare regular reports and adhere to statutory duties according to M.G.L. Ch. 41, Sec. 55, the Town Charter, bylaws, and policies, and federal regulations; ensure procurement compliance;

assist in operating and capital budget preparations; supervise one part time employee; and similar duties as assigned. Qualifications: Bachelor's degree in accounting plus three to five years of experience in public or private sector accounting, or equivalent combination. Certification by Massachusetts Municipal Auditors & Accountants Association (MMAAA) as a governmental accountant is desirable; familiarity with VADAR software and Uniform Massachusetts Accounting Standards (UMAS) is desirable. Applications shall be submitted to James M. Kreidler, Town Administrator, 272 Main St., Townsend, MA 01469 or by email selectmen@townsendma.gov. Applications will be accepted until such time as the position is filled. Townsend is an EOE/AA.

Town Planner Town of Acushnet

The town of Acushnet (pop. 10,303) seeks a qualified, motivated and experienced candidate for the position of Town Planner to provide professional community planning and development. Responsible for reviewing applications and advising the Planning Board concerning the development of land, comprehensive planning, and the Subdivision Control Law as it relates to the Board's Rules and Regulations on development. Reviews the town's zoning bylaws and assists in recommending updates. Assists with the implementation of the Master Plan. This is a 35 hour per week position with a salary range of \$47,000-\$57,000, commensurate with experience. Bachelor's degree or higher in geography, planning, public administration, landscape or architecture preferred. The preferred candidate would be a current member of the American Planning Association, or has the ambition to work toward becoming a member. Send letter of interest and resume to the Town Administrator, 122 Main St., Acushnet, MA 02743. See the town website for a complete job description and qualifications: www.acushnet.ma.us. Open until filled, with preference given to applications

received by April 23. EOE/AA employer.

Administrative Assessor Town of Wavland

Union/Grade: AFSCME 1/G-3. Full-time: 35 hours/ week. Starting Salary: \$46,974-\$49,795. Salary Range: \$46,974-\$62,371. Date posted: March 25. Closing date: Open until filled. Description of position: Skilled routine to complex administrative, support, clerical, and record keeping work relating to the operations of the Assessing Department in accordance with State and local statutes and regulations and the policies of the Board of Assessors; all other related work as required. Required Qualifications: Education: Associate's degree in a related field of endeavor. Completion of assessing courses offered by the Massachusetts Association of Assessors preferred. Experience: Over two years of progressively responsible administrative experience in a real estate or assessing environment; experience in a municipal setting and working with the public is strongly preferred. Substitution: An additional two years of experience may be substituted for the degree requirement. License/Certificate: Must possess a valid driver's license. Must obtain a Massachusetts Association of Assessors (MAA) certification within 24 months of appointment; certification must be maintained throughout appointment. To apply: Please submit a resume and cover letter to the Human Resources Manager, Kathleen Buckley, Town of Wayland, 41 Cochituate Road, Wayland, MA 01778 or hr@wayland.ma.us. The town of Wayland is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

Conservation Agent Town of Townsend

The town of Townsend has a vacancy for the position of Conservation Agent which performs assistance to the Conservation Commission in the administration and enforcement of the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act and Townsend wetlands bylaw. Position is a union

CLASSIFIEDS continued on 24

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

June Beacon

Deadline: May 26 Publication: June 2

Summer Beacon

Deadline: July 18 Publication: July 22

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.

CLASSIFIEDS

Continued from page 23

position, anticipated to be between 15 and 20 hours per week. TBD. Responsibilities: The position works independently and under the policy direction of the Conservation Commission, reviewing all project applications, providing technical assistance relating to the Wetlands Protection Act, local Wetlands Bylaw, and regulations requirements on all phases of construction in relation to public and private projects. The Agent also provides technical assistance in relation to land preservation and conservation activities. Incumbent also aids the Commission in research, enforcement, and working directly with constituents and other municipal/ state/federal personnel. Also serves as Stormwater Agent and Permit granting Authority for Minor Projects under the Townsend NPDES Phase II Stormwater Regulations Bylaw. Qualifications: Should have working knowledge of botany, soils, hydrology, stormwater, and wildlife; ability to read, understand and interpret technical specifications and plans; ability to interpret wetlands laws and regulations; ability to organize time and work independently; ability to communicate effectively both verbally and in writing; and the ability to respond with tact and courtesy when dealing with the public. Requires night meetings a minimum of two nights per month and field inspections in all weather conditions, occasionally on weekends. Must have a valid driver's license. Bachelor's degree in environmental science, conservation biology, or related field and three to five years of experience in wetlands management, land conservation, or related field; or any equivalent combination of education and experience. Applications to James Kreidler, Town Administrator, 272 Main St., Townsend, MA 01469 or by email selectmen@ townsendma.gov. AA/EOE. Applications will be accepted until such time as the position is filled. Townsend is an EOE/AA.

Assessor

City of North Adams

The Assessor manages the assessment and appraisal function for the city of North Adams, including establishing property valuations, preparing taxable property inventory lists, insuring timely Department of Revenue certification to establish the city tax rate, preparing and defending assessments before the appellate Tax Board, maintaining and enhancing city based records, providing appraisal support to city administration, in accordance with state and local statutes and regulations, and the policies of the Board of Assessors. See complete job description here: cms9files.revize.com/northadamsma/ employment/2021.03.31 Assessor%20job%20 description%20and%20posting.pdf.

Instrument Technician/Repairman Upper Blackstone Clean Water

Upper Blackstone Clean Water is searching for an Instrument Technician/Repairman. The position will be responsible for executing highly skilled work in the inspection, troubleshooting, maintenance and repair and rebuilding of a variety of plant instruments and equipment associated with modern wastewater treatment facilities. Work involves maintaining process control instrumentation including phosphorus analyzers, ammonia analyzers, bisulfite analyzers, dissolved oxygen, pH, ORP, nitrate in-situ, suspended solids probes and associated equipment. Requirements: Associate's degree related to environmental science. A minimum of 10 years' experience in the maintenance of field instrumentation preferred. Send resume to: Liz Mailhot, Upper Blackstone Clean Water, 50 Route 20, Millbury, MA 01527, emailhot@ubcleanwater.org.

Human Resources Assistant Upper Blackstone Clean Water

Upper Blackstone Clean Water is looking for an HR Assistant to perform routine administrative duties related to the filing and record keeping of personnel files, computer data entry, and other work as required. This person will be the first point of contact for employees and candidates so must be approachable, articulate, and compassionate and provide excellent customer service. Discretion and tact are essential skills for this role as much of the work is confidential. This role will work closely with the HR Manager and oversee the key areas of benefits, HRIS, recruiting and onboarding and be responsible for the day-to-day execution of HR issues. Requirements: Three to five years of experience in HR policy and practice. Must be able to assess problems, problem solve, and communicate issues clearly. Familiarity with state laws including EEOC, payroll and leave policies. Excellent written and verbal communication skills. Must be organized, detail oriented and have strong analytical skills. Ability to work independently and reprioritize work on a regular basis. Send resume to: Liz Mailhot, HR Manager, Upper Blackstone Clean Water, 50 Route 20, Millbury, MA 01527.

Town Administrator Town of Cheshire

Cheshire, Mass. seeks qualified applicants for the position of Town Administrator. Located in central Berkshire County, Cheshire has a population of approximately 3,200 and an annual operating budget of \$6.7 million. Primary consideration will be given to those with a working knowledge of all phases of municipal government operations. This is a full-time position and requires attendance at weekly Tuesday evening meetings. For additional information related to the position, the town and the application process visit the town website at www.cheshire-ma.gov under "Employment Opportunities." Send resume, cover letter and town of Cheshire employment application in a single PDF via email, in confidence, no later than 5 p.m., April 30 to: admin@cheshire-ma.gov. However, the position will remain open until filled.

Board of Health Agent Town of Freetown

Notice is hereby given that the Board of Selectmen are seeking applications for the position of Board of Health Agent. The Agent will work under the general direction of the Town Administrator and the Freetown Board of Health for the interpretation, enforcement and compliance with all federal, state and local laws, rules, regulations and codes. The Agent is responsible for developing new regulations in compliance with federal, state and local laws and regulations, and to carry out all necessary inspections to issue permits, Certificates of Compliance, etc. Qualifications: BS degree in

public health, engineering or environmental science (preferred). Experience may be substituted by the Board of Selectmen as the Board of Health. Minimum of three years' experience as a Health Agent and/or five years' experience in the field of public health or, environmental sanitation or an equivalent combination of education and experience. Be a Massachusetts Registered Sanitarian. Benefits include vacation, sick leave, health and life insurance. This is a full-time position (36 hours) and may require occasional evening meetings. Salary is dependent on qualifications. The application can be found at freetownma.gov/jobs. Resume, cover letter and application may be mailed (address below) or emailed (lsouza@freetownma. gov). Position will remain open until filled, but priority will be given to applications received by Thursday, May 6. Town of Freetown, P.O. Box 438, 3 North Main St., Assonet, MA 02702.

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 three 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 ranges from \$74,100 to \$83,800 DOE. This position will remain open until filled. Submit a cover letter, resume, and town of Douglas application for employment to Matthew J. Woicik, Town Administrator at 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.

Director of Amherst Recreation Town of Amherst

The town of Amherst seeks a Director of Amherst Recreation to oversee the planning, development, and implementation of its self-supporting, recreational programming that serves a diverse community. Amherst Recreation offers a wide range of programming and facilities including new playgrounds, large parks, two pools, and a golf course. We are looking for a community minded, and innovator to create and build on our successful programming. For more information and to apply online please visit our career portal at <u>www.</u> <u>amherstma.gov/jobs</u>. Amherst seeks a workforce that reflects the diversity of its community all are encouraged to apply. AA/EEO

Building Inspector/Zoning Enforcement Officer

Town of Sturbridge

The town of Sturbridge is recruiting for a full-time Building Inspector/Zoning Enforcement Officer in the Building Department. This is an exempt position and the successful candidate will be responsible for reviewing plans for building construction, alterations, or any designated structures, issuing building permits, calculating/ collecting fees, supervising the maintenance of associated records, and inspecting buildings, among other responsibilities. A unrestricted Massachusetts Construction Supervisor's License, certification as a Local Inspector and must be able to obtain certification as a Building Commissioner or Inspector of Buildings within 18 months of hire is required. This also requires a valid Massachusetts Class D Driver's License. The pay range for the position is between \$67,774 to \$94,884 per year. For a copy of the complete job description and an application please go to www.sturbridge. gov/your-government/pages/job-opportunities. Interested parties should send a letter of interest and completed application to Alex McConnon, 308 Main St., Sturbridge, MA 01566 or amcconnon@ sturbridge.gov. Position open until filled. The town of Sturbridge is an EOE.

Sewer Division Foreman Town of Saugus

The Sewer Division Foreman repairs, maintains and tests the sewer lift stations and sewer collection system by performing the following duties personally or through subordinates. Must be available for emergency services twenty four hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days of the year. Supervises the operation of the Sewer Division including organizing work of town staff as well as vendors and contractors including planning, setting up and overseeing this work. Associate's degree or equivalent from two-year college or technical school; or one year related experience and/or training; or equivalent combination of both. Please email all cover letters/resumes to the Human Resources Department at HR@saugus-ma.gov.

Assistant General Manager Town of Norwood

The town of Norwood is seeking an experienced financial professional to fill the position of Assistant General Manager. Under the general direction of the General Manager, the Assistant General Manager serves as a member of the senior management team. The Assistant General Manager is responsible for providing strategic and administrative direction. For a full job description, please visit the town of Norwood link: www. norwoodma.gov/jobposting_detail_T18_R239. php. This is an FLSA Exempt, 40 hours per week, non-union position. Salary Range: Grade M20, \$2,783.49-\$3,041.74 paid weekly (salary range exceeds hiring range), excellent benefits. A 5% stipend will be added for applicants with a master's degree in a related field. Interested candidates should submit a cover letter and resume, referencing Requisition #2021-031 on all materials, to the email address listed below no later than Friday, May 21, at 4 p.m.. Molly Kean, Human Resources Director: jobs@norwoodma.gov. The town of Norwood is an equal opportunity employer. M/F/D/V and does not discriminate based on

race, creed, gender, national origin, age, disability, marital or veteran status, sexual preference or any other legally protected status.

Town Certified Planner

Town of Windham, New Hampshire

Provides technical/professional planning services to the Planning Board and public. Reviews permits, applications for subdivision and site plans, makes decisions based on technical judgment of federal, state and local laws and regulations. Performs site inspections for approved plan compliance for nonresidential developments prior to financial releases. Must be able to keep accurate records; effectively communicate verbally/written form; establish/ maintain effective working relationships; be able to multi-task/prioritize work with multiple deadlines. Salary: \$61,390.09 - \$74,599.96/annually. Bachelor's degree in city, town or regional planning, with at least four years, of progressively responsible experience with work experience emphasizing planning and land use law. AICP certification required. For more information, visit: windhamnh. gov/Jobs.aspx?UniqueId=100&From=All&Commu nityJobs=False&JobID=Town-Certified-Planner-37.

Retirement Board Administrator Greater Lawrence Sanitary District Employees

Retirement System The Greater Lawrence Sanitary District Employees Retirement System is seeking qualified candidates for the position of Retirement Board Administrator. The Administrator is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the Retirement Board Office located in North Andover, Mass. This is a full-time position. The system has 41 active members and 38 retirees. Salary range is \$65,000-\$78,000 commensurate with experience. A detailed description is available at <u>www.glsd.org</u>. Job will remain open until filled. Please email a letter of interest and resume by close of business on May 19 to: Laurie Elliott, Chairperson, Greater Lawrence Sanitary District Employees Retirement System, lelliott@glsd.org.

Conservation Agent Town of Newbury

The town of Newbury (pop. 6,587) seeks candidates for the position of Conservation Agent. The position reports to the Town Administrator, and works as the technical advisor in assisting the Conservation Commission and the Town Planner as it relates to environmental issues. This position is responsible for the administration and enforcement of the Wetlands Protection Act and applicable regulations along with town bylaws. The Conservation Agent serves as the liaison to the Conservation Commission, accepts permit applications, assists applicants, provides information and serves on various committees as needed. Candidates should have a degree in environmental science or a related natural science or five years' experience in implementing, administering and enforcing the Wetlands and Rivers Protection Act. Position is 35 hours per week (Monday, Wednesday, Thursday 8 a.m.-4 p.m. and Tuesdays 8 a.m.-7 p.m.) with benefits package, salary negotiable based on experience. Complete job description and qualifications at www.townofnewbury.org. Please send resume and letter of interest to: Town of Newbury, Town Administrator, 12 Kent Way, Byfield, MA 01922. AA/EOE

Laborer Town of Abington

The Abington DPW is accepting applications for a full-time Laborer. Under general supervision of the DPW Director and/or Highway Foreman, performs manual work and operates motorized equipment in support of construction, maintenance, and repair operations for the DPW. Preference will be given to job candidates with current Class B CDL and Hoisting License. Salary range: \$20.03-\$22.03 per hour. Applicants, please submit a resume and letter of interest to the DPW, c/o Jeanne White, Abington DPW, 350 Summer St., Abington, MA 02351 or email jwhite@abingtonma.gov. Position is open until filled.

SERVICES

Municipal Energy Services

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

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.

CLASSIFIEDS continued on 26

CLASSIFIEDS

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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 <u>www.GovHRusa.com</u> 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 <u>www.govhrjobs.com</u>.

Management, Human Resources and Executive Search

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

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 <u>www.spatial-relationships.com</u>.

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 <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.

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 <u>www.themediationgroup.org</u>, 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@miyaresharrington.com or 617-489-1600.

Tax Title Legal Services

KP | Law has been providing a full range of legal services to municipal treasurers and collectors for more than 30 years. Our experienced tax title attorneys draft collection letters and payment agreements; prepare all instruments relative to tax takings and tax sales; draft pleadings for Land Court foreclosures; and provide full representation of municipalities in Land Court actions. We also provide assistance with disposition or reuse of tax parcels. The breadth of our experience, volume, use of experienced paralegals, state-of-the-art computer and informational services, and close proximity to the Land Court enables us to provide prompt, cost-effective services. For additional information, please visit <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.

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 <u>www. VADARsystems.com</u>. 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 <u>www. erickinsherfcpa.com</u>.

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.

DHCD issues guidance for town-appointed tenant members

The <u>economic development package</u> <u>signed into law by Gov. Charlie Baker on</u> <u>Jan. 14</u> (Ch. 358 of the Acts of 2020) includes a provision providing for a town-appointed tenant board member on local housing authority boards in towns.

This provision, which becomes effective on May 15, requires towns to appoint a tenant member to a local housing authority board from a list of names submitted to the town by a recognized local tenant organization. If there is no local tenant organization, then the local housing authority is required to notify its public housing residents of the opportunity to submit their names to the town for consideration for appointment.

The Department of Housing and Community Development has issued a Public Housing Notice (<u>PHN 2021-01: Changes</u> <u>Pertaining to Town Appointed Tenant</u> <u>Board Members</u>) to provide guidance to local housing authorities related to this provision. The notice includes information on identifying and filling the town-appointed tenant board member seat and details how local housing authorities can apply for a temporary waiver from this requirement. Towns that do not have a housing authority may disregard this notice.

Public housing notices on the DHCD

<u>website</u> provide guidance, extensions, instructions, clarifications, announcements and other policy information.

For more information, contact maura. baldiga@mass.gov. ●

REOPENING

Continued from page 6

for the following recreational activities effective April 30, and replaced by <u>Mandatory Safety Standards for Workplaces</u>:

- Mountain biking
- White water rafting
- Recreational boating (charter boat guidance remains in place)
- Parks, open space, and outdoor education programs
- Coastal and inland beaches
- Playgrounds, spray decks and outdoor fitness areas
- Hunter education
- EEA outdoor recreation facility restroom cleaning
- Campgrounds

School reopenings

All high schools must return fully in-person by May 17 unless the district receives a waiver from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Waivers will be considered only in a limited set of circumstances, and any district that does not receive a waiver will be required to make up any missed structured learning time.

Districts and schools are being asked to make every effort to have high school students with significant and complex disabilities or high school students who are English learners return to full-time, in-person learning prior to the deadline.

In March, the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education gave Commissioner Riley the authority to decide when remote and hybrid learning models no longer count toward required Student Learning Time regulations. Riley has used a phasedin approach to bring schools back fully in-person, which began with elementary schools on April 5 and middle schools on April 28.

Currently, there are 146 school districts already fully in-person in grades K-12, according to the DESE. By May 17, a total of 198 school districts plan to be back fully in-person in grades K-12, representing two-thirds of all high schools in the Commonwealth.

Visit the $\underline{\text{DESE website}}$ for more information.

Calendar

MAY



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

6 Massachusetts Municipal Human Resources, HR101 Boot

Camp webinar #2, 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Contact: Member Services Coordinator Isabelle Nichols

11 Massachusetts Municipal Councillors' Association,

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

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

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

12 Massachusetts Select Board Association and Massachusetts Interlocal Insurance Association.

webinar on codes of conduct, 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. Contact: Member Services Coordinator Isabelle Nichols

- 13 Massachusetts Municipal Human Resources, HR101 Boot Camp webinar #3, 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Contact: Member Services Coordinator Isabelle Nichols
- **19** Association of Town Finance Committees, webinar, 7-8

p.m. Contact: Senior Member Services Coordinator Denise Baker

20

visit

Massachusetts Municipal Human Resources, HR101 Boot

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



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.

21 MMA Human Services Council, COVID-19 myth busting and vaccine hesitancy webinar, 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. Contact: Member Services Coordinator Isabelle Nichols

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

27 Massachusetts Municipal Human Resources, HR101 Boot Camp webinar #5, 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Contact: Member Services Coordinator Isabelle Nichols

JUNE

3 Massachusetts Municipal Management Association, remote meeting. Contact: Senior Member Services Coordinator Denise Baker

8 Massachusetts Municipal Councillors' Association,

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



8

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

16 Massachusetts Select Board Association, remote leadership conference #1, 12-1 p.m. Contact: MMA Member Services Coordinator Isabelle Nichols

Online registration is available for most of these events.

17 M

Massachusetts Municipal Councillors' Association,

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



Massachusetts Mayors'

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

25 Women Leading Government and Women Elected Municipal Officials, joint remote meeting, 10 a.m.-

noon. Contacts: MMA Senior Member Services Coordinator Denise Baker or MMA Member Services Coordinator Isabelle Nichols

30 Massachusetts Select Board Association, remote leadership conference #2, 12-1 p.m. Contact: MMA Member Services Coordinator Isabelle Nichols

JULY

14 Massachusetts Select Board Association, remote leadership conference #3, 12-1 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,