

Vol. 49, No. 1

A Publication of the Massachusetts Municipal Association | www.mma.org

January 2022

MMA Annual Meeting is around corner

By John Ouellette

The 43rd MMA <u>Annual Meeting & Trade</u> <u>Show</u>, which is expected to set a new standard for safe indoor gatherings, is just more than two weeks away. (But there's still time to <u>register at the early rate</u>.)

The largest regular gathering of local officials in Massachusetts returns in-person this year, at Boston's Hynes Convention Center, after being held virtually in 2021. The event will feature a <u>comprehensive</u> <u>COVID Safety Plan</u> that includes vaccination and mask requirements, as well as daily on-site rapid testing.

"We have designed a safe and secure Annual Meeting with the ultimate protection for all attendees," said MMA Executive Director Geoff Beckwith. "Our conference will be a safe place to gather, connect, and plan for the challenges ahead. Everyone who attends will help to set the gold standard for conferences and meetings across the country."

Inside

Fiscal experts offer FY23 revenue outlook3
Mass. delegation seeks ARPA rule changes 4
Administration boosts COVID test access5
App offers guide to MMA Annual Meeting7
Mass Innovations13
Around the Commonwealth 18
People24
Classifieds26
Calendar 31

"This year," said MMA President and Arlington Town Manager Adam Chapdelaine, "in light of the ongoing pandemic, the MMA staff has put together a vaccination, testing and masking strategy that is aimed at keeping all attendees safe and healthy."

"Thank goodness for the MMA Annual Meeting."

said MMA Vice President and Newton Mayor Ruthanne Fuller, "as all of us have a critical need to connect! From across the Commonwealth, we can support each



Everett Legislative Aide Michael Mangan, Everett City Clerk Sergio Cornelio, Waltham Councillor Jonathan Paz, and Everett Councillor Stephanie Martins (l-r) gather during the 2020 MMA Annual Meeting & Trade Show. Attendees will be able to connect in person again at this year's conference on Jan. 21 and 22.

other and share our experiences, and come back to our individual towns and

ANNUAL MEETING continued on 11

Gov. Baker, Lt. Gov. Polito to speak at Annual Meeting

By John Ouellette

Gov. Charlie Baker and Lt. Gov. Karyn Polito, who have made it a standard practice to speak with local officials from across the state at the <u>MMA Annual Meeting & Trade Show</u>, will return on Jan. 21 and 22.

Polito will address the opening session, and Baker will be a special guest at the MMA Annual Business Meeting on Saturday, Jan. 22. Since they have announced that they will not be on the ballot in November, this will be their last Annual Meeting appearance as governor and lieutenant governor.

The visit with local officials comes just days before the governor is scheduled to file his fiscal 2023 state budget, on Jan. 26, and the administration typically offers a preview at the MMA conference.





Gov. Charlie Baker

Lt. Gov. Karen Polito

Both Baker and Polito speak frequently of their own experience as local officials, and have made the partnership between state and local government a top priority. This was particularly true during the COVID pandemic, when they held scores of regular conference calls with local officials, solicited their feedback about the

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

Executive Committee

Adam Chapdelaine, MMA President Town Manager, Arlington

Ruthanne Fuller, MMA Vice President Mayor, Newton

Cecilia Calabrese, MMA Immediate Past President Councillor, Agawam

Michael Bettencourt, MSA President Select Board Member, Winchester

Lisa Blackmer, MMCA President Councillor, North Adams

Brian Boyle, ATFC President Finance Committee, Bolton

George "Bud" Dunham, MMMA First Vice President

Town Manager, Sandwich

Scott Galvin, MMaA President Mayor, Woburn

Julie Jacobson, MMMA President Town Manager, Auburn

Jeovanny Rodriguez, MMCA First Vice President Councillor. Lawrence

John Trickey, ATFC First Vice President Finance Committee, Pelham

Linda Tyer, MMaA First Vice President Mayor, Pittsfield

Michael Walsh, MSA First Vice President Select Board Member, Westwood Geoff Beckwith (non-voting)

MMA Executive Director

Brian Arrigo, Mayor, Revere Steve Bartha, Town Manager, Danvers Lisa Braccio, Selectman, Southborough Ralph Figy, Councillor, Westfield Andrew Flanagan, Town Manager, Andover Claire Freda, Councillor, Leominster Jill Hai, Select Board, Lexington Andrew Hogeland, Select Board, Williamstown Donna Holaday, Mayor, Newburyport Thomas Hutcheson, Town Manager, Dalton Diane Kennedy, Select Board, Cohasset Afroz Khan, Councillor, Newburyport John McLaughlin, Councillor, Waltham Dan Matthews, Select Board, Needham David Narkewicz, Mayor, Northampton Moises Rodrigues, Councillor, Brockton Alan Slavin, Selectman, Wareham Peter Spellios, Select Board, Swampscott Eric Steinhilber, Councillor, Barnstable Kevin Sweet, Town Administrator, Wrentham Arthur Vigeant, Mayor, Marlborough Kristi Williams, Town Manager, Westborough Michelle Wu, Mayor, Boston

Executive Director's Report

It WILL be a happier and healthier New Year

2022 has finally arrived. Thank goodness.

Despite this year's inauspicious start (yes, I'm referring to the latest COVID surge), the good news is that better days are ahead, and the next 12 months will reveal the remarkable longterm benefits of the outstanding programs, initiatives and public health interventions that cities and towns have delivered for the people of Massachusetts.

Switching out the old calendar and

replacing it with a fresh one has not

changed the pandemic's dynamic or ar-

tificially leapfrogged us over present-day

difficulties. That process will be a transi-

tion without a distinct start or end date,

with many of last year's ordeals endur-

ing as acute challenges for some weeks

I'm sure there are some who will dis-

agree with my optimistic outlook, that

than to its beginning. Yet we can agree

see that the coronavirus has turned out

opponent than we originally hoped. And

that hindsight is much better than

foresight. Looking back, we can now

to be a more dangerous and slippery

understanding that can give us a new

Nations developed and distributed ef-

and last year at this time, in the early

fective vaccines at unprecedented rates,

we are closer to the end of the pandemic

or even months to come.



By Geoffrey Beckwith

weeks of 2021, we predicted a turning point around the corner. It turns out that this was premature, as mutations delta followed by omicron — altered the equation and lengthened the battle.

The more deadly and contagious delta variant hit the U.S. this past fall, and numbers started to rise again, including

some breakthrough cases. Although vaccinated individuals remained well-protected, optimism about vanguishing the virus stalled, as the public health threat and tragic deaths remained stubbornly persistent. Public leaders became understandably frustrated by a low but chronic level of vaccine resistance that has left too many residents vulnerable.

The next step was the deployment of boosters and the extension of vaccines to younger populations, powerful tools to provide high protection from delta for vaccinated individuals and further protect households, lighting a path forward to withstand the surge.

And then, in the space of weeks, not months, the omicron variant started its late-year sweep around the globe. This highly mutated version is much more contagious than earlier strains, yet in general produces milder illness, especially among vaccine-protected people. Almost overnight, the new surge moved

DIRECTOR'S REPORT continued on 20

eBeacon

January 2022 | Volume 49, Number 1 Copyright © 2022, Massachusetts Municipal Association

Communications &

Candace Pierce

Geoffrey Beckwith

Publisher

Design

Membership Director

Manager of Publications & Digital Communications John Ouellette **Associate Editor** Jennifer Kavanaugh Digital Communications Full Circle Design

perspective.

Specialist Meredith Gabrilska

Massachusetts Municipal Association

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

Periodicals Postage Paid at Boston, MA, and additional mailing offices.

TheBeacon (ISSN 0199-235X) is published monthly, except for a combined July-August issue, by the Massachusetts Municipal Association, 3 Center Plaza, Suite 610, Boston, MA 02108. The MMA is composed of the Massachusetts Selectmen's Association, the Massachusetts Mayors' Association, the Massachusetts Municipal Management Association, the Massachusetts Municipal Councillors' Association, and the Association of Town Finance Committees. Subscription rate for TheBeacon is \$36 per year. An \$18 subscription fee is included in dues payments for members. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to TheBeacon, 3 Center Plaza, Suite 610, Boston, MA 02108.

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

Budget outlook is strong, but there's also uncertainty

By Jackie Lavender Bird

Despite a persistent public health emergency, the Commonwealth's fiscal outlook for the remainder of fiscal 2022 and fiscal 2023 remains strong, but not without some uncertainty.

Tax collections far exceeded benchmarks in fiscal 2021, leading to a substantial state surplus, and they are on track to do the same in fiscal 2022.

Still, during the annual Consensus Revenue Hearing convened on Dec. 21 by the House and Senate Ways and Means committees and the governor's budget office, the Department of Revenue and other fiscal experts and economists offered cautious outlooks for the economy and state revenues over the second half of fiscal 2022 and for fiscal 2023.

For the current fiscal year, the Department of Revenue projects total tax collections to be in the range of \$35.7 billion to \$36.6 billion, or somewhere around \$6 billion higher than last year's \$30.1 billion consensus revenue figure that was used to build the governor's fiscal 2022 budget. Revenue Commissioner Geoffrey Snyder said the current projection represents an increase of between \$1.3 billion and \$2.2 billion over the revised fiscal 2022 benchmark set by Administration and Finance Secretary Michael Heffernan on Aug. 27.

For fiscal 2023, the Department of Revenue forecasts a tax collection range of \$36.5 billion to \$37.7 billion, representing an increase of 2.1% to 2.9% over the revised fiscal 2022 forecast.

The outlooks presented for next year at the

hearing were all heavily qualified with discussions of uncertainty due to the ongoing public health emergency, global supply chain issues and labor shortages, inflation, interest rates, and other factors.

The annual revenue hearing marks the start of the budget season and is important for municipal officials because it provides insights into the direction of the economy and anticipated state revenues available to fund municipal and school aid programs next year, particularly Unrestricted General Government Aid, which



Revenue Commissioner Geoffrey Snyder discusses tax collection projections during the annual Consensus Revenue Hearing on Dec. 21.

in recent years (with the exception of fiscal 2021) has increased at the same rate as the "consensus" projection for the growth of state tax collections.

Legislative leaders and the administration are expected to reach agreement on a tax revenue forecast for fiscal 2023 sometime next month. The forecast will be used in the governor's budget recommendation, due to be filed by Jan. 26, and the House and Senate budget plans that are customarily released in April and May, respectively.

Legislature, MMA see several priorities for 2nd year of session

By Dave Koffman

A year ago, Massachusetts legislators had *just* ended a marathon and unprecedented legislative session that virtually never ended. At that time, the outlook for the new 192nd General Court was cautiously optimistic amid an ongoing pandemic.

As 2022 kicks off, the forecast sees familiar challenges, though some of the conditions on the ground have changed.

The first half of the two-year legislative session saw investments through the fiscal 2022 state budget, buoyed by an increasingly rosy revenue picture, as well as a multi-billion COVID recovery package supported by both American Rescue Plan Act funds and the fiscal 2021 state surplus.

The second half of the session begins this month, and members of the Massachusetts House and Senate are poised to tackle many priorities before they recess later this summer. This segment of the legislative session will be shorter, with formal deliberations scheduled to end on July 31.

The first priority will be the fiscal 2023 state budget process. Gov. Charlie Baker is expected to release his budget recommendation, known as House 2, in late January, with the Legislature planning to finalize a bill by July.

Despite anxiety and a series of COVID-19 surges, state tax receipts are maintaining a record-breaking pace. To further invest the results of economic growth over the past few years, the MMA will be advocating for a significant increase to Unrestricted General Government Aid to support key services for the 351 municipalities in Massachusetts.

Cities and towns have and will continue

to lean on predictable and adequate state revenue sharing to support essential municipal services and maintain local infrastructure, especially with the tight cap on local property taxes.

For the MMA Legislative Division, other key areas early in 2022 will be an overdue increase in funding for local roads via the Chapter 90 program and much-needed extensions to many vital pandemic-related provisions, such as remote meeting participation, vote by mail, expanded local licensing authority, and remote Town Meetings, among others.

Other top policy priorities for the House and Senate are expected to include bills related to elections, mental health, health care, and sports betting. Legislators are also expected to tackle another COVID recovery bill to spend the more than \$2.5 billion remaining in state ARPA funds.

Delegation asks Treasury to adjust ARPA rules

By John Ouellette

The Massachusetts congressional delegation sent a <u>letter to the U.S. Depart-</u> <u>ment of the Treasury</u> on Dec. 21 calling for the final rules governing expenditures under the American Rescue Plan Act to reflect circumstances that are unique to Massachusetts.

The letter addresses ARPA's revenue loss category and identifies calculation complications related to education aid under the Student Opportunity Act, grants from the Massachusetts School Building Authority, and local debt exclusions for capital projects.

The letter resulted from discussions with the MMA, and the effort was co-led by U.S. Sen. Edward Markey and Congressman Jake Auchincloss. Every member of the state's congressional delegation signed the letter, which was addressed to Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen. funding public education that have distorted cities' and towns' calculations of revenue loss for ARPA reimbursement," the letter states. "If counted as part of COVID-19 related revenue losses, the once-in-a-generation investments in education [under the Student Opportunity Act] will falsely offset COVID-19-related revenue losses reimbursable under ARPA."

The letter continues: "Many Massachusetts municipalities received increased earmarked revenue through Chapter 70, MSBA grants, and debt service exclusions after the ARPA Baseline Revenue Year. Those increases are expected to continue throughout the ARPA reimbursement period. During the same time period, municipalities are contending with downturns in revenue from traditional sources available for critical government services, including public safety and public works. Because of the timing of these long-needed, vital investments to correct the state's underfunding of education or to support debt

service payments for necessary capital projects, municipalities are reporting they cannot calculate any lost revenue for 2020 and future ARPA years if the additional funds are counted as 'intergovernmental transfers' or Actual General Revenue as specified in Treasury's Interim Final Rule.

"We urge you to clarify in the final rule that these earmarked funding streams should not be included in municipalities' calculations of revenue loss."

Finally, the letter asks the Treasury to hold one or more public virtual events, in collaboration with the delegation, for Massachusetts municipal leaders to learn how to navigate the implementation of ARPA "and to achieve ARPA's full intended benefits at the local level."

The Treasury issued a 151-page "<u>interim</u> <u>final rule</u>" shortly after the ARPA was signed into law in March. Since that time, the Treasury has been working on the final set of rules. ●

"Massachusetts has distinct systems for

DHCD releases draft zoning guidelines for MBTA communities

By John Ouellette

On Dec. 15, the Department of Housing and Community Development released draft guidelines for a new multifamily zoning requirement for "MBTA communities."

The guidelines are available online and public comment is being accepted through March 31. The DHCD is planning to host <u>an informational webinar</u> <u>on Jan. 12</u> at 1 p.m.

Enacted as part of the <u>2021 economic</u> <u>development bill</u>, a new section (3A) of the Zoning Act (Ch. 40A) requires the 175 MBTA communities to have a zoning ordinance or bylaw that provides for at least one district of reasonable size in which multifamily housing is permitted as of right.

The law requires the DHCD, in consultation with the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority and the Massachusetts Department of Transportation, to promulgate guidelines to determine if an MBTA community is in compliance with Section 3A.

<u>A web page with the newly released</u> <u>guidelines</u> includes draft compliance



On Dec. 15, the Department of Housing and Community Development released draft guidelines for a new multifamily zoning requirement for "MBTA communities."

criteria, information about technical assistance, and other supplemental information.

The DHCD will now conduct a public engagement process to gather input and feedback from interested parties, including MBTA communities, developers, planners and other interested stakeholders. The draft guidelines may be modified as appropriate based on this additional public input.

Section 3A of the Zoning Act requires an MBTA community to have at least

one zoning district of reasonable size in which multifamily housing is permitted as of right, with the district meeting the following criteria:

- Minimum gross density of 15 units per acre
- Not more than one-half mile from a commuter rail station, subway station, ferry terminal or bus station, if applicable
- No age restrictions
- Suitable for families with children

MBTA communities that fail to create a zoning district that complies with Section 3A would be ineligible for funds from the MassWorks Program, the Housing Choice Initiative, and the state's Local Capital Projects Fund.

Housing and Economic Development Secretary Michael Kennealy, Massachusetts Housing Partnership Executive Director Clark Ziegler, and Chris Kluchman, deputy director of the DHCD's Community Services Division, will discuss <u>compliance with Section 3A of</u> <u>the Zoning Act during an MMA Annual</u> <u>Meeting workshop</u> on Jan. 21.

Administration seeks to boost access to COVID tests

By John Ouellette

With the emergence of a highly transmissible COVID-19 variant and gatherings moving indoors due to colder weather, the Baker-Polito administration last month launched two programs to boost access to at-home rapid tests.

On Dec. 13, the administration announced that it would provide <u>2.1 million</u> free at-home test kits to <u>102 targeted</u> high-need communities. And on Dec. 29, the administration announced that municipalities and other eligible entities may begin placing orders for test kits at lower, state-negotiated prices.

In a Dec. 13 briefing with local officials convened by the MMA, Health and Human Services Secretary Marylou Sudders said the four-step rapid antigen tests are non-invasive and produce reliable results in 15 minutes without having to send a sample to a laboratory. The over-thecounter tests enable residents to catch COVID cases early in order to reduce spread.

A test kit, which contains two tests, costs anywhere from \$12 to \$38 at stores, pharmacies and online retailers, and the administration has been urging federal officials for several months to do more to bring down the cost of COVID tests, which are widely available in Europe for a nominal cost.

Free test kits The state purchased 2.1 million tests directly from a California manufacturer and distributed them to the 102 <u>communities</u> with the highest percentage of families below the poverty level. The 102 communities account for 3.7 million residents.

The free tests

were to be distributed to the public by each municipality, with an emphasis on increasing access for individuals and families who are facing financial hardship. The Executive Office of Health and Human Services set up a <u>website to provide</u> <u>information about the program</u>.

Reduced-cost tests

Tests ordered through state-negotiated contracts with three manufacturers will cost from \$5 to \$26 per test. Sudders said additional manufacturers are expected to be awarded contracts in the coming weeks as the rolling contracting period



The administration holds a briefing for local officials on Dec. 13 about plans to make COVID tests available to communities. Pictured are (top row, l-r) MMA Executive Director Geoff Beckwith; Health and Human Services Secretary Marylou Sudders; Lt. Gov. Karyn Polito; and (bottom row, l-r) Metropolitan Area Planning Council Executive Director Marc Draisen and MMA President and Arlington Town Manager Adam Chapdelaine.

continues through March.

The administration has assurances from each manufacturer that there is significant supply, but given the high demand across the country and the level of interest from a wide range of organizations in purchasing test kits, interested municipalities and eligible entities are advised to review their options quickly and take steps toward placing orders. In a communication to municipal and other buyers, the Operational Services

TESTING continued on 17

Gov. Baker updates mask advisory, announces hospital support

By John Ouellette

On Dec. 21, with the holidays around the corner, Gov. Charlie Baker announced additional measures to address the rise in COVID-19 cases and to bolster the capacity of acute care hospitals.

The measures include deployment of National Guard troops to support the health care system and an updated <u>mask advisory</u>, which recommends, but does not require, that all individuals, regardless of vaccination status, wear a mask or face covering in indoor, public spaces.

The Department of Public Health particularly urges this recommendation for individuals who have a weakened immune system, or are at increased risk for severe disease because of age or an underlying medical condition, or if someone in their household has a weakened immune system, is at increased risk for severe disease, or is unvaccinated.



During a State House press conference on Dec. 21, Gov. Charlie Baker announces new measures to address a rise in COVID-19 cases. (Photo courtesy Joshua Qualls/Governor's Press Office)

All people in Massachusetts (regardless of vaccination status) are <u>required to</u> <u>continue wearing face coverings in certain</u> <u>settings</u>, including transportation and health care facilities. These rules have not changed since May 29. The governor said the Commonwealth's nation-leading vaccination rate, widely available testing, and solid understanding of COVID and effective precautions make a mask mandate unnecessary. Along these lines, the <u>administration last week</u> <u>announced a plan to make free and lowcost test kits available</u> to communities statewide.

Baker was adamant that the state would not tell individual cities and towns what COVID precautions are appropriate for them, and municipalities are welcome to set more stringent rules based on local conditions.

A number of communities — such as Lowell, Chelsea, Boston, Somerville and Salem — have implemented indoor mask mandates, while others are contemplating them. The <u>city of Boston updated its</u> <u>COVID public health policy</u>, effective Jan.

MASK ADVISORY continued on 30

MMA to present fiscal policy resolution to members

By John Ouellette

Local leaders from across Massachusetts will consider a resolution on the state-local fiscal partnership during the MMA's Annual Business Meeting on Jan. 22 in Boston.

The proposed "Resolution Supporting an Enduring Fiscal Partnership Between Cities and Towns and the Commonwealth in Fiscal 2023 and Beyond" was drafted by the MMA Fiscal Policy Committee this fall and approved by the MMA Board of Directors on Nov. 9.

The resolution lays the groundwork for an effective revenue-sharing program, identifying municipal needs in areas such as unrestricted aid, education and charter schools finance, employee benefits liabilities, capital needs such as road maintenance and municipal and school facilities, water and wastewater systems, climate resilience, broadband and cyber preparedness.

The proposed resolution (below) was also printed in the December issue of



Framingham Councillor Tracey Bryant speaks during the MMA Annual Business Meeting in 2020.

The Beacon, and <u>complete Annual Business Meeting information is available on</u> <u>mma.org</u> and the MMA Annual Meeting app. In advance of the meeting, municipal officials may submit any comments to the MMA's Legislative Division at 3 Center Plaza, Suite 610, Boston, MA 02108 or achampion@mma.org.

The MMA's Annual Business Meeting is a key component of the <u>MMA Annual</u> <u>Meeting & Trade Show</u>, which is held each January in Boston.

Voting at the business meeting

Voting at the Annual Business Meeting is open to all municipal members of the MMA through voting delegates as defined by the MMA's bylaws.

Individuals eligible to vote at the meeting are:

- In the case of a city, its chief executive or a councillor designated in writing by the chief executive
- In the case of a town, the chair of the select board or town council, or another select board member or councillor designated in writing by the chair, or the manager designated in writing by such chair

In early January, the MMA will be sending a letter about voting procedures to chief municipal officials in each community.

Those who will be voting on behalf of their community should visit the credentials table outside of the business meeting between 9 and 10 a.m. Only one voting card will be issued per member community.

Proposed Resolution Supporting an Enduring Fiscal Partnership Between Cities and Towns and the Commonwealth in Fiscal 2023 and Beyond (2022)

Whereas, the well-being and success of the residents and businesses of the Commonwealth depends on the fiscal health of cities and towns and the ability of local government to provide efficient and progressive public services and adequately invest in reliable and resilient public infrastructure;

Whereas, cities and towns are highly reliant on the tightly capped property tax to fund local budgets and capital programs, and this heavy reliance on the property tax severely limits the ability of cities and towns to respond to new challenges and opportunities, or implement necessary investments to benefit the public;

Whereas, adequate and sustained state support for local public schools is essential to student success and the health of the Massachusetts economy;

Whereas, the state's charter school finance statute imposes significant financial and program challenges for public school districts, particularly in regions where there is a large concentration of charters; and

Whereas, to avoid becoming overly reliant on the property tax and to ensure that municipalities have the fiscal capacity to deliver the high-quality municipal and school services that are essential to support local economies and families in every corner of the Commonwealth, it is imperative that cities and towns receive an adequate share of state revenues, have an effective and fair municipal tax system, have the tools necessary to plan for and fund long-term liabilities and make investments in people and capital, and receive full funding for any new or existing state mandates;

Therefore, it is hereby resolved that the members of the Massachusetts Municipal Association support the

following essential policy positions to ensure a strong partnership between cities and towns and the Commonwealth in fiscal 2023 and beyond:

In the Area of Municipal and School Aid

 In fiscal 2023, unrestricted municipal aid should grow by at least the same rate as the growth in state tax collections, and be distributed without earmarks, conditions or restrictions to all cities and towns, so that local officials and residents can adequately fund public safety, public works and all basic municipal and school services while avoiding overreliance on the property tax;

• The full share of Lottery and gaming revenue dedicated to help pay for municipal services should be used to help fund unrestricted municipal aid;

• Chapter 70 school aid should be increased in fiscal 2023 consistent with the Commonwealth's constitutional obligation to ensure adequate funding in all schools, at a minimum following the updated spending standard and original phase-in schedule adopted in the 2019 Student Opportunity Act, with each city, town and school district receiving a minimum increase of \$100 per student;

The governor and the Legislature should review the calculation of the required local contribution under Chapter 70, including the "target local share," and adopt changes to mitigate reliance on the property tax to fund local schools, and should review and address fiscal challenges facing rural schools;

• The governor and the Legislature should amend charter school finance law, consistent with MMA legislation, to bring transparency and accountability to the law by limiting charter school tuition assessments placed on local govern-

ment and providing a means for direct state appropriation of additional tuition payments to charter schools, funded in the state budget;

 Pending passage of charter school finance reform legislation, the full amount of the schedule in the Student Opportunity Act to fund charter school mitigation payments should be appropriated for fiscal 2023 so that each district is reimbursed in full according to the schedule in the Student Opportunity Act;

 Full funding of the Commonwealth's commitments to the Special Education Circuit Breaker Program, as provided by state law, should be appropriated, adhering to the funding timeline outlined in the Student Opportunity Act;

 Full funding of the Commonwealth's obligations to the program for payments-in-lieu-of-taxes for state-owned land, as provided by state law and including a hold-harmless provision, should be included in the fiscal 2023 budget;

 Full funding of the Commonwealth's obligations to reimburse the costs of regional school transportation, regular school transportation, out-of-district vocational education and the transportation of homeless students under the McKinney-Vento unfunded mandate should be included in the fiscal 2023 budget;

 Full funding of the Commonwealth's obligations and commitments to Chapter 40S "smart growth" reimbursements, regional and municipal libraries, anti-gang grants, innovation and regionalization grants, and other effective municipal and school aid programs should be included in the fiscal 2023 budget; and

RESOLUTION continued on 7

RESOLUTION

Continued from page 6

In the Area of Timely Notice of Local Aid for Good Planning and Implementation

 To ensure orderly and efficient financial planning at the local level and implementation of balanced and adequate local operating and capital budgets, the governor and the Legislature should reach early agreement on unrestricted municipal aid and Chapter 70 school aid and local contribution amounts so that a consensus local aid resolution can be approved and reliable Cherry Sheets can be released by March 1; and

In the Area of Local Taxing Authority and Other Revenues

 Cities and towns should be granted new local-option flexibility to adopt local taxes and other revenues to help pay for municipal and school services and the construction and maintenance of local capital projects; and

In the Area of Long-Term Liabilities and Sustainability

 In order to allow cities and towns to manage current costs and ensure fiscal sustainability over the long term, the Legislature, the governor and state agencies should determine, report and review the actuarial liability of post-employment benefits for public employees and undertake a comprehensive reform of the laws and practices related to post-employment benefits for public employees, with an immediate focus on Other Post-Employment Benefit (OPEB) liabilities related to health insurance for retired public employees. Reform should include ways to manage liabilities and finance benefits, and should not impose any new unfunded mandates or preempt any existing decision-making authority that cities and towns currently use to manage their OPEB liability;

 The governor and the Legislature should determine and report the long-term cost to cities and towns as part of the evaluation of all legislative proposals to amend public employee benefit programs, and no legislation to expand benefits should be acted upon until this cost analysis is complete and made public; and

In the Area of Capital Budgeting

 The governor and the Legislature should work together early in 2022 to ensure enactment of a multiyear transportation bond bill that provides at least \$300 million annually for local road projects, including notice of allocations for fiscal 2023 by March 1, 2022, and includes separate allocations for the Complete Streets and small municipal bridge programs;

 The governor and the Legislature should strengthen the Massachusetts School Building Authority by adjusting reimbursements to reflect the actual costs of construction;

 The state's fiscal 2023 capital plan should include funding for the MassWorks program to help pay for local economic development projects, including housing, development and road safety programs;

 The state's fiscal 2023 capital plan should include additional funding for water infrastructure projects, including basic drinking water capital and water contamination mitigation (PFAS), wastewater capital and Combined Sewer Overflow mitigation, and stormwater management;

• The governor and the Legislature should support

programs in the fiscal 2023 state budget and capital plan to help cities and towns assess and respond to challenges related to climate change, including the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness program, Coastal Resilience Grant Program, Green Communities Program, GreenWorks, and others;

 The governor and the Legislature should continue to make the installation of high-speed internet access in unserved and under-served cities and towns a high priority;

 The governor and the Legislature should deploy federal American Rescue Plan Act funding for water, sewer, environmental, broadband, and housing infrastructure in a timely manner so that communities can leverage these funds to address critical local needs;

 The governor and the Legislature should work with cities and towns to identify the scope of investment needed to ensure that municipal information technology systems are modernized and resilient from cyberattacks, and enact a state funding mechanism and program to provide the resources needed to implement these investments across the state;

 The governor and the Legislature should work with cities and towns to identify the scope of investment needed to ensure that municipal buildings critical to the delivery of essential public services are safe and modern, and enact a state funding mechanism and program to provide the resources needed to implement these improvements across the state; and

It is further resolved that a copy of this resolution shall be provided to the Governor and Members of the General Court of the Commonwealth.

Get the most out of Annual Meeting by using our app

By Meredith Gabrilska

The MMA Annual Meeting & Trade Show app is the primary resource for navigating the two-day conference.

In order to reduce paper waste, the MMA is no longer providing a printed program book. But the full complement of Annual Meeting information is available in the comprehensive app. This includes the schedule of events, speaker and workshop information, exhibitor listings and a Trade Show map, MMA Annual Business Meeting materials, and links to important information about the MMA.

Attendees can use the app to make their own schedule, access workshop handouts and presentations, connect with colleagues, and receive up-to-the-minute social media posts, updates and alerts.

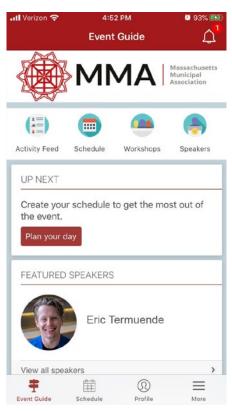
How to get the app

Pre-registered attendees: An email will be sent to all pre-registered attendees beginning the week of Jan. 10 from "crowdcompass" titled "There's an app for the 43rd MMA Annual Meeting & Trade Show!"

Attendees can use the app to make their own schedule, access workshop handouts and presentations, connect with colleagues, and receive up-to-the-minute social media posts, updates and alerts.

This email contains instructions for accessing the app. It will walk you through a two-step process. Attendees should complete both steps in advance of the start of the event to gain full access to everything the app has to offer.

On-site attendee registrants: Stop by the App Help Desk after registering to have full access credentials emailed to you immediately. There will be dedicated staff next to the registration area throughout the event to help you download and log in to the app so you don't miss a thing. ●



EPA announces \$7.4B in water infrastructure funding

By John Ouellette

On Dec. 2, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Michael Regan announced water infrastructure funding that states, tribes and territories will receive in 2022 through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act.

Regan said the funding, provided through the EPA's State Revolving Fund programs, will create jobs while upgrading aging water infrastructure and addressing key challenges like lead in drinking water and per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) contamination.

Massachusetts will receive \$188.9 million in 2022.

In a <u>letter to governors</u>, Regan urged states to maximize the impact of water funding to address disproportionate environmental burdens in historically underserved communities. He said the infrastructure law "created a historic opportunity to correct long-standing environmental and economic injustices across America."

He highlighted three priorities:

- Target resources to disadvantaged communities.
- Make rapid progress on lead-free water for all.
- Tackle forever chemicals.

The EPA will allocate \$7.4 billion to states, tribes and territories for 2022, with nearly half of this funding available as grants or principal forgiveness loans that remove barriers to investing in essential water infrastructure in underserved communities across rural America and in urban centers.



Michael Regan

The 2022 allocation is the first of five years of nearly \$44 billion in dedicated EPA SRF funding that states will receive through the infrastructure law. For more than 30 years, the SRFs have provided low-cost financing for local projects.

Visit <u>www.epa.gov/infrastructure</u> for more information, including allocations by state, a breakdown of EPA funding by SRF program, and additional funding available through the \$1.2 trillion <u>Infrastructure Investment and Jobs</u> <u>Act, which was signed by President Joe</u> <u>Biden on Nov. 15</u>. The package includes \$60 billion for programs and initiatives implemented by the EPA.

Regan said the EPA's Office of Water will soon be issuing national program guidance to state primacy agencies for the use of water infrastructure funding through the IIJA.

Mass. gears up to spend federal transportation dollars

By Ariela Lovett

In the weeks since <u>President Joe Biden</u> <u>signed the Infrastructure Investment</u> <u>and Jobs Act</u>, the policy conversation has shifted to how much federal transportation money will flow to the Bay State and how it will be spent.

While an appropriations bill is still pending in Congress, the Baker-Polito administration anticipates, based on federal guidance, that Massachusetts will receive \$8.6 billion in formula funding over five years. Of that, about \$5.3 billion will go toward highways and bridges, and \$2.8 billion will go toward public transit improvements.

A large component of the new law is the reauthorization of several federal transportation funding programs under the Obama-era Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act, known as the FAST Act.

In federal fiscal 2022 alone, Massachusetts should see an increase of approximately 19% in formula funding for highways, from \$687.7 million to \$804.6 million, and an increase of about 23% for transit, from \$483 million to \$575.5 million.

Michelle Ho, director of capital planning



The Baker-Polito administration anticipates that Massachusetts will receive \$8.6 billion in formula funding over five years, with about \$5.3 billion going toward highways and bridges. (Photo courtesy Massachusetts Department of Transportation)

for the Massachusetts Department of Transportation, recently told the State House News Service that it may be "challenging" for Massachusetts to program all of the new funding it can expect to receive in the 2022 federal spending year, which runs through the end of next September.

In addition to large formula funding increases, Massachusetts will be eligible to compete alongside other states for both new and expanded competitive grant funds. The <u>U.S. Department of Transportation</u> <u>prepared state-specific memos about</u> <u>the new law</u>, which include currently available details about these grant opportunities.

For example, the new PROTECT Program would allocate \$1.4 billion in competitive grants (in addition to formula funding) to eligible entities to increase the resilience of our nation's transportation system and protect against natural disasters and other weather events.

Legislators and advocates are already discussing the impact that this once-in-a-generation infusion of federal infrastructure dollars could have on regional projects that have proven too costly or complex to get off the ground.

Sen. Eric Lesser of the Pioneer Valley, a vocal supporter of expanding rail service to Western Massachusetts, told the State House News, "For a new project like East-West Rail, it's going to be the competitive grant formula that really makes the difference because the formula funding is likely to go to existing and legacy projects that have maintenance backlogs."

\$4B COVID recovery law makes major investments

By Jackie Lavender Bird

On Dec. 13, Gov. Charlie Baker signed a \$4 billion COVID recovery bill that includes major investments in a range of municipal priorities, including water and sewer infrastructure, environmental infrastructure, HVAC improvements for public school facilities, broadband access, and cybersecurity initiatives.

The spending package, <u>Chapter 102 of the</u> <u>Acts of 2021</u>, is funded by two revenue sources: nearly \$1.5 billion from the fiscal 2021 state budget surplus and close to \$2.5 billion from the state's allocation under the American Rescue Plan Act.

The Legislature passed the package on Dec. 3.

Local and regional boards of public health

The law includes \$200 million for local and regional boards of public health, focused on standardizing data systems, increased training, software upgrades and technical assistance. The MMA views this as an important step to build and strengthen the capacity of municipal public health departments.

Water and sewer infrastructure

To assist municipalities with critical shovel-ready projects, the law includes \$100 million for water and sewer infrastructure investments. Municipalities have been struggling to maintain, rebuild and replace aging infrastructure, a problem made worse by increasingly severe weather events that bring more stormwater, flooding and drought. And as more and more communities identify PFAS contaminants in their public drinking water supplies, and PFAS is detected in other sources such as rivers and turf fields, funds for water and environmental treatment are expected to be put to quick use. The spending package, Chapter 102 of the Acts of 2021, is funded by two revenue sources: nearly \$1.5 billion from the fiscal 2021 state budget surplus and close to \$2.5 billion from the state's allocation under the American Rescue Plan Act.

Environmental infrastructure

The law provides \$100 million for environmental infrastructure investments, including the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness program.

More than 90% of Massachusetts municipalities are enrolled in the MVP program, and more than \$20 million was distributed through planning and action grants in the most recent funding round this past fall. With such a high engagement rate and thousands of priority projects identified through the planning process in communities across the Commonwealth, requests for action grants have far exceeded the available funding in the Global Warming Solutions Trust Fund.

Additional funding for the MVP program will enable more projects to be approved in each grant round and provide a stable source of long-term funding as the program expands its reach.

HVAC improvements for public school facilities

The law includes \$100 million for heating, ventilation and air conditioning investments to improve indoor air quality and support healthy learning environments in districts with schools with high concentrations of economically disadvantaged students, English language learners, and communities disproportionately affected by the public health emergency.

Broadband access

To help close the digital divide, the law includes \$50 million intended to facilitate broadband and internet access with investments to the Broadband Innovation Fund.

Cybersecurity

The COVID recovery package includes \$15 million for cybersecurity initiatives to protect against and mitigate cyberattacks. Cities and towns appear to be prime targets for cyberattacks, likely due to two central factors: the essential role of local government and the challenge of maintaining modern IT systems.

Housing, workforce and economic development

The law includes major investments in housing, workforce and economic development, including \$600 million for housing initiatives such as homeownership assistance, the CommonWealth Builders Program, rental housing production, supportive housing, and maintenance for public housing.

The funding will support municipal efforts to address housing affordability, work-force training and skill development, and economic growth in every region of the state. ●

DIA extends deadline for Workplace Safety Training Grant applications

The Department of Industrial Accidents has extended the application deadline to Jan. 31 for Workplace Safety Training Grants.

The program's goal is to promote safe and healthy conditions in the workplace through training, education and other preventative programs. Companies and organizations of any size operating within the Commonwealth of Massachusetts covered by state's workers' compensation law (Chapter 152) are eligible for funding.

The Department of Industrial Accidents and partner organizations can set up an information session via Zoom or telephone at a municipality's request to discuss its eligibility for the Workplace Safety and Training Grant. This is an opportunity for the city or town to discuss its training needs.

In these sessions, the DIA will provide an overview of the grant and its benefits, including the amount of available funding, program guidelines, and how to apply.

Organizations whose training need is not large enough to justify a maximum grant can apply jointly with other organizations that have similar training needs (Consortium Grant).

For complete information, including a copy of the application, visit <u>www.mass.gov/dia/safety</u> or email safety@mass.gov. ●

MMA seeks members for its five policy committees

By Alandra Champion

Local officials are invited to fill a limited number of positions available on the MMA's five policy committees for 2022.

More than 100 local officials from communities across Massachusetts serve on MMA policy committees, which advise the MMA Board of Directors, staff and MMA members on legislative, regulatory and public policy issues. The committees also draft resolutions for the MMA's Annual Business Meeting, municipal best practices for the MMA's Best Practices series, and bills (biannually) for the MMA's legislative package.

This year, the greatest need is for the following openings:

- Fiscal Policy Committee: councilors and managers
- Energy and the Environment Policy Committee: mayors, managers and councillors
- Municipal and Regional Administration Policy Committee: mayors
- Personnel and Labor Relations Policy Committee: councillors and mayors
- Public Works, Utilities and Transportation Policy Committee: councillors, mayors

Members who don't fit these categories are still encouraged to apply for vacancies in presidential and technical appointments.

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

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

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

The MMA president names the chair

and members of the committee, subject to approval by the MMA Board of Directors.

Online application on mma.org

Those with the interest and time to serve on a policy committee are asked to fill out the <u>application</u> form on www. <u>mma.org</u> by Jan. 27. The form provides space to list

areas of interest and expertise so that a good match can be made between volunteers and the work of the committees.

The committees are as follows:

Fiscal Policy Committee

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

Policy Committee on Energy and the Environment

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

Policy Committee on Municipal and Regional Administration

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



Local officials who serve on MMA policy committees advise on policy issues and help draft resolutions, bills and municipal best practices.

Policy Committee on Personnel and Labor Relations

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

Policy Committee on Public Works, Transportation and Public Utilities

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

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

For more information, contact Alandra Champion at achampion@mma.org or 617-426-7272, ext. 121, or visit <u>www.</u> <u>mma.org/advocacy</u>. ●

ANNUAL MEETING

Continued from page 1

cities with new tools and connections, better equipped to get to work."

The dynamic, timely and engaging MMA conference, to be held on Jan. 21 and 22, is a forum for learning and a celebration of the innovations and best practices in community governance. The 2022 conference theme is "Recover. Renew. Reimagine."

Here are some highlights:

- 18 <u>informative and timely workshops</u> on pertinent municipal issues like cybersecurity, climate change, housing and economic development
- <u>Compelling and inspiring speakers</u>, including keynote <u>Eric Termuende</u>, State Auditor Suzanne Bump, NLC Executive Director <u>Clarence Anthony</u>, and "Chronicle" host <u>Anthony Everett</u>
- Special appearances by <u>Gov. Charlie</u> <u>Baker and Lt. Gov. Karyn Polito</u>
- A lively <u>Trade Show</u> featuring more than 160 companies, government agencies and nonprofits offering the latest services and solutions for Massachusetts cities and towns
- Countless opportunities to connect with peers and share thoughts and ideas

First-time Annual Meeting attendees will get a special welcome during an <u>event-opening orientation session</u> from 8 to 9 a.m.

The MMA's <u>Annual Meeting website</u> has all the details, including <u>workshop titles</u>, <u>descriptions and panelists</u> and descriptions of the eight <u>Learning Lab</u> sessions that will be held on the Trade Show floor.

COVID Safety Plan

The MMA is taking precautions in order to host a safe, in-person event, and is closely monitoring health and safety guidance from public health officials. (<u>Click</u> <u>here for the full MMA Annual Meeting</u> <u>COVID Safety Plan</u>.)

In compliance with <u>city of Boston policy</u>, all Annual Meeting attendees will be required to provide proof of vaccination before entering the Hynes Convention Center. Attendees are advised to take a photo of their CDC vaccination record with their mobile phone so they can be sure to have it on hand when needed.

Attendees will also be required each day to take a rapid antigen test provided by

the MMA and administered by health staff. And attendees will be required to wear a mask at all times when not eating or drinking.

Registrants and exhibitors must agree that they will not attend should they have COVID-19 or have any symptoms of COVID-19. Attendees will be asked to attest to their health status when they arrive, and will commit to informing MMA staff immediately if their status changes. Those who cannot attend due to COVID symptoms may request a COVID-related refund of their registration fee up to the start of the meeting.

The MMA will be using larger rooms at the Hynes Convention Center for general sessions and workshops to allow attendees to spread out, and hand-sanitizing stations will be placed throughout the Hynes and Sheraton.

The Hynes Convention Center has very high ceilings, a hospital-grade ventilation system, and high-quality cleaning services that adhere to CDC and Massachusetts DPH guidelines. <u>Click here for more ven-</u> <u>ue safety information</u>.

Registration

<u>Online registration</u> takes only three minutes. Just log in, make your selections, and either pay with a credit card or opt to receive an invoice.

The special early registration rate of \$195 for members ends on Jan. 12 — just a little more than a week away. After Jan. 12, all registrations will be done on-site at a rate of \$245.

Reservations are also being accepted for the Women Elected Municipal Officials Leadership Luncheon on Friday, Jan. 21, which costs \$45, and the Friday evening dinner and entertainment, which costs \$49.

Only online registrations will be accepted. No registrations can be accepted by mail or over the phone. The MMA accepts credit cards for Annual Meeting transactions, or we will invoice your municipality after the meeting. MMA staff are happy to help anyone who needs assistance. Attendees may use their unique username and password to register. Those who don't have a username and password, or who have forgotten them, may email amregistrations@mma.org.

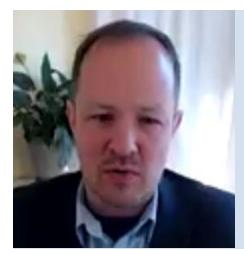
MMA Partnership Program members qualify for member rates. All Partnership Program members must have renewed membership with payment by Jan. 1 in order to register for and attend the MMA Annual Meeting & Trade Show. Partnership Program renewals or applications will not be accepted during the Annual Meeting.

Hotel information

The host hotel is the Sheraton Boston Hotel, conveniently located adjacent to the Hynes Convention Center. The MMA negotiated a reduced room rate of \$196 per night for a single or \$206 per night for a double, but the special rate expires on Jan. 6.

Hotel reservations must be made directly with the hotel. To make reservations, call the Sheraton at 800-325-3535 or <u>register</u> <u>online using a special MMA link</u>.

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



Pollster discusses political climate

During a Massachusetts Municipal Management Association webinar on Dec. 9, Steve Koczela, president of the MassINC Polling Group, speaks about several current issues, including the announcement that Gov. Charlie Baker and Lt. Gov. Karyn Polito would not be running for another term. More than 70 MMMA members participated in the webinar. Nonprofit Locally based Member driven

Massachusetts Interlocal Insurance Association www.emiia.org | 800.374.4405

Serving Massachusetts' communities since 1982

MIIA celebrates 40th anniversary, and 30th for HBT

By Kathy Geller Myers

MIIA reaches a significant milestone this month, celebrating 40 years of service and coverage to Massachusetts cities, towns and municipal entities.

Formed by the MMA in 1982, when local governments were struggling under the weight of unprecedented financial turmoil resulting from Proposition 2½, the goal was to provide better services and coverage for less cost than the commercial sector could offer.

"What we did in 1982 wasn't necessarily revolutionary, but it certainly was unique," said MIIA Executive Vice President Stan Corcoran. "The MMA believed that if you provide the cities and towns with the tools, they will avail themselves of those tools and will improve their risk. That's always been the case."



Now serving more than 400 cities, towns and public entities, MIIA has brought stability to the municipal insurance marketplace while providing innovative products and services to help reduce overall insurance costs.

"The MMA had the foresight to help cities and towns with an alternative to the unstable insurance coverage and services that were the norm at the time," said Corcoran.

MIIA first began providing workers compensation coverage in 1982, added property and liability insurance in 1984, and then added health insurance in 1992. As MIIA celebrates its 40th anniversary, the Health Benefits Trust also reaches a notable milestone with its 30th anniversary.

At this year's MMA Annual Meeting & Trade Show, MIIA will recognize its longtime partners that help support MI-IA's mission of stability, value, service, innovation and trust. MIIA's most valued partnerships are with Boston-based Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts, Aon Risk Services (previously Frank B. Hall); and Cabot Risk of Woburn (evolved from the former Hastings Tapley Insurance Agency).

Aon Risk Services has partnered with MIIA since the beginning, handling workers compensation workplace injury

■ MIIA continued on 21

Annual Meeting features MIIA Rewards-eligible workshops

Attendees of the MMA Annual Meeting & Trade Show in January will have an opportunity to choose from 10 MIIA Rewards-eligible workshops, including "Building a Culture of Cybersecurity: Minimum Baseline for Municipalities."

Cyberattacks on municipal governments and education systems are on the rise nationwide, according to the Executive Office of Technology Services and Security, as cyber threat actors are using common threat actions such as phishing, smishing, hacking and ransomware to gain access to an organization's IT networks and sensitive data.

The "Culture of Cybersecurity" workshop will examine cyberthreats to municipalities and provide guidance and resources to address them. The workshop will be moderated by Stephanie Helm, director of the MassCyberCenter, a division of the Massachusetts Technology Center.

What do municipalities need to know

about ransomware, a high-profile cyberthreat? How can they build a healthy culture of cybersecurity that protects systems and data by using people, process and technology?

The MassCyberCenter partnered with the MMA in October to survey the state's 351 cities and towns about cyberattack incident response plans. Only 76 municipalities responded, and only eight reported having plans in place.

Helm's participation in the Annual Meeting workshop is part of MassCyberCenter's strategy to host workshops across the state for municipalities to build cohesive cyber incident response plans.

Helm will stress the importance of maintaining cybersecurity best practices during remote operations, and encourage municipal "see something, say something" policies to promote vigilance.

Rewards workshops

The following workshops qualify for MIIA Rewards:

Session 1: Friday, Jan. 21, 2-3:15 p.m.

- Advancing Diversity in the Workplace
- Building a Culture of Cybersecurity: Minimum Baseline for Municipalities
- Municipal Law Update
- Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Tools and Tales

Session 2: Friday, Jan. 21, 3:30-4:45 p.m.

- Building for a Clean, Resilient Energy Future
- Cultivating Board/Manager Relations
- Labor Law Update: New Laws, Recent

■ MIIA REWARDS continued on 21

Chelsea develops microgrid for public buildings

By Jennifer Kavanaugh

Taking its energy destiny into its own hands, the city of Chelsea is developing what is possibly the nation's first cloudbased, solar-powered microgrid to power several buildings during peak energy periods and electrical outages.

The city plans to connect three buildings — City Hall, the central police station, and an affordable housing complex to an independent microgrid battery system that will allow the buildings to disconnect from Eversource's electrical grid when needed. Cloud-based software will control the system, and the virtual setup means the buildings don't have to be physically connected to participate in the microgrid.

Expected to come online by summer 2023, the microgrid is expected to keep the buildings running during storms and boost Chelsea's overall climate resiliency efforts.

Chelsea has several reasons to pursue more affordable and resilient energy alternatives. In a city where nearly one in five residents lives below the poverty line, this Environmental Justice population of roughly 40,000 faces climate challenges, as well as pollution health risks related to Chelsea's proximity to highways, industrial facilities and Logan Airport. Microgrid proponents view the technology as providing cleaner energy and more reliable service during severe weather and peak electricity demand.

"There definitely are huge risks, as the climate is changing, for Chelsea," said City Manager Thomas Ambrosino. "So we're prepared to invest in any and all kinds of efforts to make the city more resilient. We have a very vulnerable population here, and our goal is to protect them."

Recent storms have underscored Chelsea's vulnerability to climate change. A "bomb cyclone" snowstorm in January 2018 caused widespread flooding and significant disruptions for officials and residents.

"Chelsea, being a coastal community, is going to get hit with climate crises," said Fidel Maltez, the city's public works

commissioner. "It is obvious why we need this."

Maltez, who will become the town manager in Reading on Feb. 14, has been leading Chelsea's microgrid effort. Under the plan's first phase, the city will equip City Hall, the police station and the housing complex with rooftop solar panels that generate and feed electricity to battery storage units at each location. During peak hours, the city could switch off the buildings' connections to the main grid and activate the microgrid. It would recharge the batteries overnight when rates are the lowest, or use excess energy from the solar panels for recharging.

Chelsea will also be able to activate the microgrid during outages, meaning that City Hall could become an emergency energy hub for residents.

"Certainly, microgrids are really attractive because of their resiliency when the bigger grid goes down," Maltez said. "But we envision this as using the battery every day."

Chelsea has been working with several nonprofits, including the Green Justice Coalition and Chelsea-based Green-Roots. Maltez said GreenRoots had originated the idea for a local microgrid, and the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center provided funding for a feasibility study.

This past fall, Chelsea selected Ameresco to set up and maintain the microgrid, and the city must submit its plan to Eversource for its approval.

Chelsea is funding the setup costs for the three buildings, largely with \$650,000 from the state's Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness program and a \$200,000 grant from the state's Green Communities program. The city anticipates a funding gap of around \$500,000, Maltez said, but might be able to close it with funds from the American Rescue Plan Act. Ambrosino said he anticipates including a funding request in Chelsea's proposed fiscal 2023 capital plan.

Officials are now anticipating a second phase, which would extend the microgrid to additional municipal buildings



Microgrids are just one way that the city of Chelsea is improving its climate resiliency and energy efficiency.

and a public housing building for seniors and people with disabilities, Maltez said. In addition, Chelsea hopes to involve private entities that provide critical services, such as local hospital facilities.

Maltez estimates a \$5 million price tag to connect the additional buildings, and said Chelsea may apply for a grant in 2023 through Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities, a Federal Emergency Management Agency program.

.....

■ INNOVATIONS continued on 25

Recover. Renew. Reimagine.



ረ ጋ

MMA ANNUAL MEETING AND TRADE SHOW January 21 and 22, 2022 | Hynes Convention Center, Boston

NETWORKING

The MMA Annual Meeting provides countless opportunities to discuss the challenges you face and to learn what your peers are doing to move their communities forward.

Networking activities include receptions and business meetings specifically for mayors, councillors, select board members, and town managers and administrators.



TRADE SHOW

The MMA's Trade Show is a great opportunity to find out what's new in the municipal marketplace! More than 200 exhibitors will be showcasing the latest in products and services tailored to Massachusetts cities and towns.

The Trade Show also features a series of 8 Learning Lab workshops.

WORKSHOPS

18 Annual Meeting workshops will cover the latest developments affecting local government:

- Advancing Diversity in Public Safety
- Best Practices in Police
 Reform
- Building a Culture of Cybersecurity: Minimum Baseline for Municipalities
- Building for a Clean and Resilient Energy Future
- Community One Stop: One Year Later
- Creative Placemaking in Your Community
- Cultivating Board-Manager Relations
- Fiscal Outlook
- The Future of Work: 8 Key Insights and Collaborative Solutions
- Labor Law Update: New Laws, Recent Cases and Agency Decisions

- Marijuana: New Regulations and Best Practices
- Municipal Law Update
- Municipal Strategies for Online and In-Person Engagement
- Municipal Vulnerability
 Preparedness: Tools and
 Tales
- Overview of Draft Zoning Rules for MBTA Communities
- Paving the Way for Success in Municipal Public Works
- Re-entering a New Work
 World: Energizing Your
 Workforce
- The State of Waste and Recycling



Join hundreds of local leaders at this inspiring, can't-miss event devoted to learning, problem solving and idea sharing!

For the latest and most complete MMA Annual Meeting information, visit www.mma.org and follow #MassMuni22 on Twitter and massmunicipal on Facebook.

SPEAKERS



Keynote: Eric Termuende

A globally recognized speaker, author and podcaster on the future of work, Eric Termuende knows what it takes to build incredible teams that are resilient, innovative and ready for tomorrow.



WEMO: Suzanne Bump

The first woman to serve as auditor of the Commonwealth, Suzanne Bump has been working to improve accountability and public trust in government in that role since 2011. Previously, she had served as secretary of labor and workforce development and as a state representative.

Closing Session: Clarence Anthony

A former mayor of a small Florida community who quickly emerged as a leading voice for local government, National League of Cities Executive Director Clarence Anthony will address the importance of cities and towns engaging in racial equity work.

Friday Dinner: Anthony Everett

Longtime "Chronicle" host Anthony Everett, known for his "Main Streets and Back Roads" segments, will share stories of some of the hidden and not-so-hidden gems of the Bay State.



Governor Charlie Baker Special guest speaker at Annual Business Meeting



Lt. Governor Karyn Polito Special guest

speaker at opening session

COVID Precautions

The MMA is taking precautions in order to host a safe, in-person event, and is closely monitoring health and safety guidance from public health officials. Precautions include a vaccination requirement, a mask requirement, and on-site rapid antigen testing for all participants.

On each morning of the meeting, attendees must attest that they have no COVID symptoms. Registrants and exhibitors must agree that they will not attend should they have COVID-19 or have any symptoms of COVID. Those who cannot attend for these reasons may request a COVID-related refund of their registration fee up to the start of the meeting.

The MMA will be using larger rooms at the Hynes Convention Center for general sessions and workshops to allow attendees to spread out, and hand-sanitizing stations will be placed throughout the Hynes and Sheraton. The Hynes Convention Center has very high ceilings, a hospital-grade ventilation system, and high-quality cleaning services that adhere to CDC and Massachusetts DPH guidelines.

See our full COVID safety plan

Make the most of your MMA Annual Meeting experience with our official app. Find out how to get it in this issue (p. 7).

Select Board Association to hold Business Meeting

The Massachusetts Select Board Association will discuss legal and policy implications of virtual and hybrid public meetings during its Annual Business Meeting, to be held during the <u>MMA Annual Meeting</u>. <u>& Trade Show</u> on Saturday, Jan. 22, from 8:30 to 9:30 a.m.

MSA President and Winchester Select Board Member Michael Bettencourt will give opening remarks, followed by a report from the MSA Nominating Committee and a vote on the MSA officers for 2022.

Lauren Goldberg, managing partner at KP Law, will give a presentation on the future of virtual and hybrid public meetings. For



Lauren Goldberg



Michael Bettencourt

many municipal boards and committees, virtual and hybrid meetings have become a standard method of conducting business. Goldberg will discuss the legal and policy implications of these types of meetings and what municipal officials can expect going forward.

All members of select boards in Massachusetts are considered members of the MSA and are invited to attend the MSA Annual Business Meeting, provided they are registered for the MMA Annual Meeting. Attendance at the MSA Annual Business Meeting is limited to MSA members.

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

Special session helps new attendees get most from Annual Meeting

By Denise Baker

For those who are attending the MMA Annual Meeting & Trade Show for the first time — as well as those who'd like some new tips — the MMA will hold a first-time attendee session on Friday, Jan. 21, from 8 to 9 a.m.

Fellow members who have attended Annual Meeting regularly will share their insights and advice in an informal setting.

Speakers will include Maynard Assistant Town Administrator Meg Zammuto, East Bridgewater Town Administrator Charlie Seelig, Waltham Councillor John McLaughlin, Malden Councillor Amanda Linehan, Needham Select Board Member Dan Matthews, Cohasset Select Board Member Diane Kennedy and Sandwich



Annual Meeting attendees hear tips during a first-time attendee session in 2020.

Human Resources Director Marie Buckner.

MMA President and Arlington Town Manager Adam Chapdelaine will serve as moderator. MMA Senior Member Services Coordinator Denise Baker will kick off the session with a brief overview of the conference and answers to logistical questions.

Attendees will learn how to find networking opportunities, what to expect in the educational workshops, and how to best navigate the Trade Show floor. They'll also hear: where to find complimentary coffee, which sessions are a must and why, the best places for lunch without having to go outside, and tips and tricks the panelists have learned over the years.

Overall, the session will help attendees make the most out of their first MMA Annual Meeting.

Coffee will be provided at this session, sponsored by VHB. •

Meet MMA staff and members at Trade Show booth

By Alandra Champion

MMA staff are excited to be back in-person for the 2022 Annual Meeting & Trade Show. Local officials will be able to talk about the important issues facing cities and towns with MMA staff and representatives from member groups at the MMA's Trade Show booth on Jan. 21 and 22.

Keynote speaker Eric Termuende is looking forward to spending some time with members at the MMA booth following his address.

MMA Legislative Division staff, including Dave Koffman, the MMA's new legislative director, will be available to discuss a variety of policy issues and the MMA's policy committees, resolutions, upcoming bills,



Timothy Evans, the Northeast Mid-Atlantic Region member engagement manager for the National League of Cities, greets local officials at the MMA's Trade Show booth in 2020.

and other priorities.

Members from Massachusetts Municipal

Human Resources and the MMA Human Services Council will be at the MMA booth throughout the conference to discuss issues pertinent to their members and their priorities for 2022.

Also available at the booth will be information about MMA programs and events, such as annual award winners and membership meetings.

Details about the <u>MMA-Suffolk University</u> Certificate in Local Government Leadership and Management Program and the MMA-Suffolk Municipal Finance Management Seminar will also be available.

For the full MMA Trade Show booth schedule, see the MMA Annual Meeting & Trade Show mobile app. ●

8 Learning Lab sessions set for Trade Show

The MMA Annual Meeting & Trade Show will feature eight <u>Learning</u> <u>Lab exhibitor workshops</u>, providing opportunities to hear from experts on a variety of topics.

The 30-minute Learning Lab sessions will be held in two locations in the Hynes Convention Center Auditorium on Saturday, Jan. 22, between 10:30 a.m. and 1 p.m.

The Learning Labs will cover the following topics:

- How to Spend It: How Leading Cities are Preparing to Track and Spend ARPA Funds, presented by OpenGov
- Real-World Lessons: What Should You Know About Remote Software Implementations?, presented by Tyler Technologies
- New Approaches to Addressing Unfunded Liabilities, presented by Public Agency Retirement Services (PARS)



The MMA Annual Meeting & Trade Show offers eight Learning Labs on the Trade Show floor.

- Successfully Undergrounding Utilities: A Case Study in Weston, presented by Nitsch Engineering
- Controlling Health Care Costs for MIIA Health Benefits Trust Cities, Towns and Public Entities, presented by Abacus Health Solutions
- Investing of Municipal Funds, presented by Bartholomew & Company

- Navigating the Changes to the GFOA's Distinguished Budget Presentation Award Criteria, presented by ClearGov
- How Municipalities Can Better Understand and Manage Their Utility Costs More Easily, presented by Constellation

All Learning Lab presenters also have booths at the <u>Trade Show</u>.

The MMA website has the latest information about the <u>2022 MMA</u> <u>Annual Meeting & Trade Show,</u> including the list of <u>Trade Show</u> <u>exhibitors</u> and <u>descriptions of each</u> <u>Learning Lab session</u>. Complete information will also be available in the MMA Annual Meeting & Trade Show app.

Contact: MMA Advertising and Trade Show Manager Karen LaPointe at 617-426-7272, ext. 154, or klapointe@mma.org

Trade Show to feature 160-plus exhibitors

More than 160 exhibitors are looking forward to meeting local officials during the in-person MMA Annual Meeting & Trade Show at the Hynes Convention Center on Jan. 21 and 22.

The annual <u>Trade Show</u> features the latest products and solutions tailored to the challenges facing local governments in Massachusetts today, with exhibitors including <u>companies</u>, <u>nonprofits and</u> <u>government agencies</u>.

The Trade Show will be open on Friday, Jan. 21, from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., and on Saturday, Jan. 22, from 9:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.

One highlight is the series of <u>eight</u> <u>educational Learning Labs</u> held in the



Attendees can interact with exhibitors and learn about their products and services during the MMA Annual Meeting & Trade Show.

exhibit hall on Saturday, Jan. 22.

The exhibit hall will also feature the new MIIA Simulator, with new training mod-

ules — an entertaining and educational opportunity to test your driving skills.

The MMA is taking precautions to host a safe, in-person event and will closely monitor health and safety guidance from public health officials. (See <u>MMA</u> <u>Annual Meeting website</u> for details.) By signing the MMA Contract for Exhibit Space, exhibitors agree that they will not attend should they have COVID-19, any symptoms of COVID-19, or recent contact with someone who has tested positive.

For more information, contact MMA Advertising and Trade Show Manager Karen LaPointe at 617-426-7272, ext. 154, or klapointe@mma.org. ●

TESTING

Continued from page 5

Division outlined other options available for purchasing rapid test kits, including purchasing them through previous statewide contracts with distributors.

Municipalities may use federal COVID recovery funds to purchase these test kits.

The Operational Services Division has set up a <u>web portal with contract details</u>.

Testing information

Massachusetts performs more COVID tests than almost any other state in the country thanks to the hundreds of testing locations across the Commonwealth, including 38 free, state-sponsored Stop the Spread testing sites. All testing sites are listed at <u>mass.gov/gettested</u>.

The at-home tests do not automatically report results to any government agency. Those who test positive are advised to contract their primary care physician and the local board of health and follow <u>COVID-positive protocols</u>.

The <u>U.S. Centers for Disease Control</u> and Prevention has issued guidance on <u>self-tests</u>, with information on when to consider self-testing, how to complete the tests, and how to react to a positive or negative result.

Around the Commonwealth

Deerfield, Greenfield, Montague and Sunderland

Communities receive shared public health grant

Four communities have received a grant through the Department of Public Health to strengthen local nursing and COVID contact tracing efforts.

The \$250,000 grant, which will be administered over two years and managed through the city of Greenfield's Health Department budget, helps to formalize a collaborative work structure developed between the communities during the pandemic.

"We've been working together since the height of the pandemic, but this way is much better because our nurses are communicating immediately instead of all of us having to reach out separately to each other," said Deerfield Board of Health Chair Carolyn Shores Ness. "Now it will be formalized and will happen on a day-to-day basis. We will have paid staff and not just volunteers on boards. ... It's a long-term solution."

The grant will support the hiring of new public health nursing staff to serve all four communities and assist with public outreach and communication efforts, including contract tracing and case investigation.

"Our municipalities share resources such as schools and employers," said Greenfield Health Director Jennifer Hoffman, "and it makes sense for our towns to be unified."

Shores Ness said the grant will enable contact tracing within a few hours and communication of that information to all of the towns.

"I'm very pleased the state is willing to support us and allow us to have public nurse staff to do that, especially with the shortened CDC quarantine guidelines," she said.

The four Franklin County communities have been collaborating on solutions to a range of pandemic health issues.

Major regional challenges include finding solutions for residents who have difficulty getting to vaccine and testing sites due to their remote location and lack of transportation, as well as limited internet and cable access.

"We collaborated with the Franklin Regional Transportation Authority to provide transportation to some residents and with the sheriff's office to hold vaccine clinics in schools," Hoffman said. "We also did home visits for testing and vaccination."

Hoffman and Shores Ness said their communities are not yet seeing infections from the new omicron variant, but they have been seeing an increase in demand for testing and vaccinations, and are currently determining how to maximize the impact of state-provided at-home test kits.

"The most important thing is that the pandemic changes constantly," said Shores Ness. "So it's wonderful to have us all talking together about how to protect our communities and proactively about the next best step to take. Having the immediate data helps us make better decisions.

"Working together we have a better impact than if we are acting individually. ... COVID does not know where town boundaries are."

– Meredith Gabrilska

Gardner

City program addresses blight, home ownership

A Gardner house that sat abandoned for a decade will get a second life this spring under a regional effort to acquire and renovate vacant homes in North Central Massachusetts.

The construction project on Osgood Street is Gardner's first as part of the Liabilities to Assets program, a partnership among the Department of Housing and Community Development, Fitchburg-based community development corporation NewVue Communities, and the communities of Gardner, Athol, Clinton, Fitchburg and Leominster. The first of its kind in the state, the program



Gardner Mayor Michael Nicholson (left), Community Development and Planning Director Trevor Beauregard (center), and NewVue Communities Executive Director Marc Dohan stand outside a renovation project on Gardner's Osgood Street. (Photo courtesy NewVue Communities)

seeks to stabilize neighborhoods by restoring vacant, blighted homes and promoting home ownership.

With its title problems and physical defects, the Osgood Street property would have sat vacant indefinitely if not for the program's intervention, according to Gardner Mayor Michael Nicholson.

"The costs, legal procedures, and investment needed for a private sector developer to undertake the project alone would have been too prohibitive to even consider," Nicholson said. "This program allows us to find new ways to spruce up neighborhoods, support home ownership, and revitalize rundown areas of the city."

The program is in the third year of a three-year partnership with DHCD, with DHCD providing funding of up to \$2.5 million annually. Program leaders said they hope the state renews the program, since proceeds from the sale of the houses aren't enough to pay for the renovations and ensure affordability for homebuyers.

"If it were self-sustaining, the private market would be doing it," said Marc

COMMONWEALTH continued on 19

Around the Commonwealth

COMMONWEALTH

Continued from page 18

Dohan, NewVue's executive director.

Before undertaking projects, the partnership set up a board representing the five communities and a housing corporation under a state law (Ch. 121A), which addresses blighted areas. NewVue oversees the acquisition, renovation and sale of the homes.

The Osgood Street property is the program's fourth project. Three more projects are lined up in Leominster, Athol and Fitchburg.

The program tries to identify neighborhoods with clusters of distressed properties. The idea is to inspire others to invest in a neighborhood when they see homes turning around, said Trevor Beauregard, Gardner's director of community development and planning.

"Going out to these properties, and

Let us know about your local news

Every day across the Commonwealth, municipal leaders are figuring out ways to deliver services more efficiently, save taxpayers money, engage more citizens in the vital work of local government, and improve the effectiveness of the laytalking with the neighbors, they seem to be excited about the fact that the house will get rehabbed and put back to use," Beauregard said. "Certainly, it's a positive momentum for those neighborhoods, definitely."

Liabilities to Assets can break through barriers that stymie private developers. In Gardner, no one knew who actually owned the Osgood Street house, and title problems made a normal sale impossible. The program took the property by eminent domain, said Anne Reitmayer, director of Liabilities to Assets and NewVue's director of acquisition and finance.

The Osgood Street property requires numerous upgrades, including the removal of an unstable porch and an unsafe addition. Reitmayer said the home requires all new systems. Liabilities to Assets is committed to energy efficiency and climate resiliency, and renovations include new windows and insulation. When the rehabilitation finishes in the spring, a property that was considered a neighborhood eyesore will be a modern-looking, single-family home with three bedrooms and one-and-a-half baths.

Completed homes are sold to buyers who earn up to 110% of area median income, and who agree to live in the homes for at least seven years. The program heavily subsidizes the projects and works to help buyers afford the homes. For instance, the Gardner renovation pricetag will exceed \$400,000, but the home's market price will likely be closer to \$260,000, Reitmayer said.

– Jennifer Kavanaugh

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

If your community has launched a new program or initiative, or has found a unique solution to a common problem, please let us know by filling out our new Local News Tips form on the MMA website.

BAKER AND POLITO

Continued from page 1

challenges at the local level, and then sought to address those concerns.

Baker, a former selectman in his home town of Swampscott, was first elected governor in November 2014, took office in January 2015, and was re-elected in November 2018. He served as secretary of Health and Human Services under Gov. Bill Weld and later served as secretary of Administration and Finance under Weld and his successor, Gov. Paul Cellucci. He then became CEO of Harvard Pilgrim Health Care for 10 years.

Raised in Needham, Baker earned a bachelor's degree at Harvard University and a master's degree in business administration at Northwestern University.

er of government that has the most di-

rect impact on people's lives. The MMA

wants to recognize and help spread the

word about these local creative solu-

tions.

Polito serves as the administration's liaison to municipalities and has visited all 351 cities and towns in Massachusetts. She typically presides over meetings of the Local Government Advisory Commission to discuss the intersections of state and local government, and has developed close relationships with the MMA and with mayors, town administrators and managers, and other municipal officials. Polito demonstrates the administration's belief that the Commonwealth's success is driven by the strength of its diverse people and places.

Polito has been a champion of the Community Compact Cabinet, which has signed agreements with every city and town to partner with state government on nearly 1,000 smarter ways to deliver services.

A lifelong resident of Shrewsbury, where she owns and operates a commercial real estate development firm, she has served as a Town Meeting member, a member of the Zoning Board of Appeals, and a selectman. She was the commissioner of the Massachusetts Lottery from 1999 to 2000, and in 2001, she was elected state representative for the 11th Worcester District (Shrewsbury and Westborough), serving five terms.

She is a graduate of Boston College and the New England School of Law.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Continued from page 2

into Massachusetts. Breakthrough cases are more common, and due to community spread, more unvaccinated individuals are being exposed to the virus and getting sick. Thankfully, a much smaller percentage of the ill require medical treatment or hospitalization (again, especially among the vaccinated), although the sheer numbers are straining our health care facilities and stretching resources in exhausting ways.

As I wrote last month, communities have navigated through this public health crisis because of two remarkable traits that are on display in every one of our 351 cities and towns: *perseverance*, the quality that allows someone to continue moving forward even though it is difficult, especially if the outcome or timeline is uncertain; and *resilience*, the ability to become strong, healthy or successful again after something bad happens, the ability to absorb, adjust and rebound from hard times.

There are no better words to explain how local government officials have led the way for their residents during the past 22 months. Over the course of the pandemic, you, your fellow municipal leaders, and your colleagues in state and federal government have taken extraordinary steps to put in place unprecedented resources and interventions that are making it possible for most parts of society to function during this latest stage.

Again, hindsight is much better than foresight. Looking back, we can see that this latest surge is not a step backward in the fight against the virus. This latest challenge demonstrates that all the gains, advances and interventions that have been put in place since March 2020 have moved us forward to a better position.

If omicron had hit as the first wave in February 2020, without the production and delivery of vaccines and boosters, without accurate testing (at-home, lab-based and pooled), without contact tracing and public awareness of how to respond, without virtual communication platforms to keep operations open, without health protocols and policies in place, without emergency funding packages and massive new resources, omicron's impact would have been unfathomably deeper and more tragic.

Today, in the face of this surge, governments, schools and businesses are open and functioning. Using vaccines, testing, masking, distancing and other adaptations, people are figuring out how to move forward.

It is in this spirit of determination and adaptation that we look forward to the MMA's Annual Meeting later this month, on Jan. 21 and 22. While we are very proud of the virtual conference we produced last year, our team is putting in place the gold-standard of practices and protocols to enable the return to a fully in-person experience. Just as city and town halls are open for business with residents, and as schools are operating with students and teachers in classrooms, it is important for local leaders to get back together and show that we can adapt and move ahead in difficult times.

Following the city of Boston's vaccine requirement for public facilities, every attendee at Annual Meeting will be required to provide proof of vaccination to enter the Hynes Convention Center and must wear a mask indoors. Then, everyone will be screened daily by onsite staff using a high-quality rapid antigen test (the type used by Homeland Security) before entering the meeting. The Hynes has the best ventilation and air purification systems in place and is allowing us to shift sessions and workshops to larger spaces for greater distancing. In short, everyone at the meeting will be vaccinated, negative for COVID, masked, and distanced.

Why would hundreds and hundreds of people want to gather in this way? The answer is obvious: Annual Meeting is a time for public servants to connect and learn, to inspire and inquire, to share and borrow ideas, and develop a common agenda to propel our communities and neighborhoods forward even in the most stressful times.

Looking back, the trail that local government has blazed is deeply inspiring. You've stood up massive public health and safety programs and initiatives, protected and saved thousands of lives, prioritized the most vulnerable among us, redesigned public services, streamlined your governance processes, informed and calmed the public — all while enduring the same stress in your own personal lives.

This is my New Year's reflection: Many years from now, with the benefit of future hindsight, I am convinced that we will be able to see the historical growth trajectory of our communities' resiliency and protection against COVID, and recognize that in January 2022 we were much closer to the end of this battle than to the beginning, because of the relentless efforts of public leaders at every level.

For this, and everything you do, all of us on the MMA staff are deeply grateful for your service and leadership.

May 2022 be safe and bountiful for you and your loved ones. ${ \bullet }$



State officials discuss state, local funding

Senior Deputy Commissioner of Local Services Sean Cronin explains the basics of municipal and state finance during a Massachusetts Municipal Councillors' Association training for newly elected councillors on Dec. 4 in Marlborough. Also presenting was Brendan Sweeney, a newly elected city councillor in Beverly and the state's assistant director of federal funds. More than 90 city and town councillors attended the event.

MIIA

Continued from page 12

claims. For almost as long, Cabot Risk has partnered with MIIA in providing risk management, training and claims management with a similar commitment to MIIA's goals and mission.

"The expertise and guidance of both companies have prevented much unnecessary hardship, in addition to saving Massachusetts communities hundreds of thousands of dollars every year in premiums and claims costs," Corcoran said.

Health Benefits Trust

When the Health Benefits Trust was formed, the municipal health market was fractured, with many cities and towns having multiple health insurers. Contrary to the idea that more carriers are better for keeping costs down, cities and towns were paying more in health insurance as the number of carriers in each municipality increased. Moreover, healthier, younger employees often selected the less costly HMOs, while employees in greater need of health services selected the costlier indemnity-type plans.

"MIIA's premise was to 'reaggregate the risk pool' with one carrier that offered multiple types of plans, and Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts was the company that fit that need," Corcoran said. "The immediate result was greater cost savings and a more integrated and coherent strategy for providing cities and towns with high-quality health care."

MIIA was the first in the municipal space to pilot and offer Select Network, a provider network that includes doctors, facilities and specialty hospitals recognized for providing lower-cost care. According to Andrew Dreyfus, CEO of Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts, MIIA was also the first to offer Learn to Live, a new and innovative mental health solution that provides online support to people struggling with anxiety, stress, depression and other conditions.

"Blue Cross is committed to partnering with MIIA to deliver quality *affordable* health care, and over the years we have worked hard to find savings for the cities and towns we serve together," Dreyfus said. "MIIA members enjoy a lower administrative rate and are able to purchase 'stop loss' insurance at a preferred rate. With its larger scale, MIIA can spread the cost of large claims across a larger pool, which in turn provides stability and savings."

Dreyfus credits Corcoran for leading MIIA to partner with Blue Cross 30 years ago, and says his leadership today continues to be the key to shared success.

"We are also fortunate to have a team of people on both sides who have worked together for many years, who trust and respect one another, and are committed to our shared goal of providing quality affordable and equitable health care to each municipality we serve," Dreyfus said.

All MIIA partnerships have stood the test of time while evolving their services and products to serve the growing needs of its members. All three insurance programs began at a time of crisis, but by joining together for a common purpose through a municipal-focused, mission-driven organization, the strength of the combined cities and towns overcame those adverse conditions.

That is a lesson for today and the future as local governments continue to face new challenges.

Kathy Geller Myers is a freelance writer.



Veteran councillors advise the newly elected

Randolph Councillor Katrina Huff-Larmond leads a roundtable discussion with veteran councillors during a Massachusetts Municipal Councillors' Association training for newly elected councillors on Dec. 4 in Marlborough. The discussion covered issues such as constituent services, the "new normal" of remote and hybrid meetings, and working with school committees. More than 90 city and town councillors attended the event.

MIIA REWARDS

Continued from page 12

Cases and Agency Decisions

• Re-entering a New World: Energizing Your Workforce

Session 3: Saturday, Jan. 22, 1:15-2:30 p.m.

• Marijuana: New Regulations

• Paving the Way for Success in Municipal Public Works

Visit the MMA Annual Meeting & Trade Show website for complete information about all 18 workshops.

MIIA's Rewards program was developed to help reduce municipal and pool loss experience, educate members, establish best practices, and make it financially worthwhile for members to implement cost-saving measures. Participation in the program can earn premium credits toward the next policy year. MIIA awards more than \$2 million in premium annual credits to the membership, with credits of \$40.3 million to date.

Mass. withdraws from TCI, pursues other plans

By Ariela Lovett

In mid-November, the Baker-Polito administration announced that it was withdrawing from the multi-state transportation emissions reduction compact known as the Transportation Climate Initiative.

Citing waning regional support for the initiative and an anticipated influx of federal funds dedicated to transportation infrastructure, the administration said the TCI was no longer viable, nor was it necessary in order to meet the state's emissions reduction goals.

In a press release, the administration explained that it "always maintained the Commonwealth would only move forward with TCI if multiple states committed."

Further, the state's revenue surplus and the estimated \$10 billion it will receive from a federal infrastructure bill "make the Commonwealth better positioned to upgrade its roads, bridges and public transportation systems, while also making investments to reduce transportation emissions, deliver equitable transportation solutions and benefits,



and meet the state's ambitious climate goals."

A landmark climate law signed by Gov. Charlie Baker earlier this year requires the state to cut its carbon emissions from all sources to 50% below 1990 levels by the end of the decade and achieve net zero emissions by 2050. Transportation-related emissions represent about 40% of total emissions in this part of the country.

The TCI was to be structured as a "capand-trade" system for transportation fuels, with a cap set on the total amount of carbon dioxide allowed to be emitted from vehicles across the multistate region. Within the cap, participating jurisdictions would sell carbon "allowances" to wholesale fuel suppliers, at a certain rate per ton of greenhouse gas emissions produced by their fuel. Individual fuel suppliers would then choose whether to pass the cost of the carbon allowances along to fuel retailers, and whether retailers would pass them on to customers.

The participating jurisdictions, across the New England and the Mid-Atlantic region, would have been required to invest all revenue from the sale of carbon allowances, estimated at billions of dollars over the next decade, in state or local initiatives that reduce or eliminate transportation-based emissions.

Critics expressed concerns about higher gas prices, and when the final agreement was announced in December 2020, only Connecticut, Rhode Island and Washington, D.C., joined Massachusetts in signing on.

The governors of Connecticut and Rhode Island also announced their states' withdrawal from TCI this past fall, effectively dooming the compact.

The MMA had expressed its support for the TCI in a 2020 <u>transportation policy</u> <u>resolution</u> and a <u>fall 2019 column</u> by MMA Executive Director Geoff Beckwith. ●

MMA and Suffolk University to host information sessions in spring

By Katie McCue

The MMA and Suffolk University will hold an information session for their Municipal Fellowship Program on Feb. 10 at 3 p.m. To register for the Zoom session, visit www.mma.org/events.

The Municipal Fellowship Program was launched last year by Suffolk University in partnership with the MMA to offer significant support to municipal managers and professionals to attend Suffolk's master's in public administration program at its Sawyer School of Business.

The fellowship program will provide a scholarship of up to \$28,000 while the recipient's municipality commits to continuing their salary and position while they attend the program parttime. The application will be available on the <u>MMA-Suffolk programs web page</u> in early January. The application deadline is May 1 at 5 p.m.

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

Certificate Program

The MMA and Suffolk University will hold Zoom information sessions for upcoming Certificate in Local Government Leadership and Management programs on March 9 at 10 a.m. and March 16 at 2 p.m.

The two sessions will cover the same information. To register, <u>visit www.mma.</u> <u>org/events</u>.

In September 2022, the MMA and Suf-

folk University will launch the 19th and 20th Certificate programs.

The graduate-level academic program provides a solid grounding in municipal management, and covers topics such as human resources management, budgeting and financial management, and strategic leadership.

The program is held over the course of 25 Fridays from September through May. The MMA expects to be back in-person in September 2022.

The program application will be available on the <u>MMA website</u> on Feb. 1, and the deadline to apply is April 30.

For more information on any of the MMA-Suffolk programs, visit <u>mma.org/</u> <u>suffolk</u> or contact Katie McCue at 617-426-7272, ext. 111, or kmccue@mma.org. ●

Applications due Jan. 15 for Municipal Finance Seminar

By Katie McCue

The MMA and Suffolk University are offering three Municipal Finance Management Seminar programs in 2022, and the application deadline is approaching for the spring session.

The seminar is designed to provide an overview of municipal finance in Massachusetts, 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 seminars will be held via Zoom over the course of five Fridays, with tentative start dates as follows:

- Winter 2022: Jan. 7
- Spring 2022: March 4
- Fall 2022: Oct. 21

The deadline to apply for the winter session has passed, while the deadline for the spring session is coming up on Jan. 15. Applicants must be currently employed by a city or town, and must have the approval of their municipal manager, administrator or mayor to apply. The application is available at <u>mma.org/</u> <u>suffolk</u>.

For more information on any of the MMA-Suffolk programs, visit <u>mma.org/</u> <u>suffolk</u> or contact Katie McCue at 617-426-7272, ext. 111, or kmccue@mma.org. ●

Massachusetts Municipal Directory available online

By Jennifer Kavanaugh

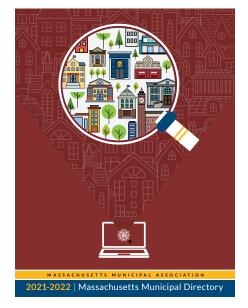
The 2021-2022 Massachusetts Municipal Directory, a comprehensive resource that helps municipal officials connect with colleagues, is available online as an easy-to-use PDF.

The MMA published the most recent edition on Oct. 13. MMA members and those who pre-ordered the 2021-2022 directory received emails with login information and instructions for accessing the document. Members and those who have purchased the directory can <u>log in</u> <u>here to view it</u>.

The Massachusetts Municipal Directory PDF has live web links, allowing users to access online state, federal and association resources that are important to the work of local government. The guide includes contact information for local officials and demographic and financial data for each Massachusetts city and town. There are also sections devoted to regional school districts, state and federal government agencies, and relevant professional organizations, as well as a guide to products and services for municipalities.

All recipients of The Beacon receive access to the directory. For members, the cost is covered by their MMA dues. Others interested in gaining access to the Massachusetts Municipal Directory can <u>order it online</u>.

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



Get MMA.org updates in your mailbox

The MMA's weekly email newsletter provides a digest of all the updates posted each week on <u>www.mma.org</u>.

The MMA website is a great source for all the latest developments related to local government in Massachusetts.

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 testimony to the Legislature, guidance documents, upcoming member group events and webinars, the newest resources in the website's extensive Resource Library,

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-the-minute news on major stories.

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



MMA Website Weekly Review

A digest of all the latest updates we've posted this week on MMA or

The Weekly Review will be taking a break over the next two weeks for the holidays. We'll be back In your inbox on Jan. 7 with all the latest municipal news. Happy Holidays!

DHCD releases draft multifamily zoning guidelines for MBTA communities On Dec. 15 The Department of Housing and Community Development today released draft guidelines for a new multifamily zoning requirement for "MBTA communities."...



Administration making free and low-cost COVID tests widely available On Dec. 13 In the midst of holiday season gatherings and an emerging



People

Jeff Bridges became the new town administrator in Spencer on Dec. 27.

Most recently, Bridges had been the town administrator in Sturbridge for more than two years. Previously, he served as the interim city manager in Seward, Alaska, from 2018 to 2019; as the town manager in Wethersfield, Connecticut, from 2009 to 2018; as the city clerk in Andover, Kansas, from 1997 to 2008; as a budget analyst for the state of Kansas from 1996 to 1997, and as the town supervisor in Wawayanda, New York, from 1992 to 1996.

Bridges earned a master's degree in public administration from Marist College, and a bachelor's degree in history and international studies from State University of New York at Plattsburgh.

In Spencer, Bridges replaces Thomas Gregory, who became Hudson's new executive assistant in June.

Orlando Pacheco became the town administrator in Georgetown on Jan. 3.

Previously, Pacheco had served as Lancaster's town administrator over two separate periods, from 2005 to 2014, and then from May 2017 until just recently. He also spent three years as a purchasing agent and energy manager for the city of Haverhill, and three years as an aide to the mayor in Amesbury.

He earned a master's degree in public administration from the University of New Hampshire, and a bachelor's degree in political science from UMass Amherst.

In Georgetown, Pacheco replaces Mike Farrell, who recently retired after more than a dozen years as town administrator. Earlier in his career. Farrell worked as a senior consultant for Municipal Resources Inc., from 2003 to 2010; and in several municipal management roles in New Hampshire for two decades, in Lebanon, Hooksett, Littleton and Goffstown.

In November, Rebecca Oldham became Groveland's first town administrator.

Oldham has been working for the town



since September 2018. first as Groveland's town planner and then as its director of economic development, planning and conservation. The Board of Selectman chose Oldham as administrator in

Rebecca Oldham

October and finalized her contract on Nov. 22. Oldham will continue to work on economic development until her replacement is hired.

Previously, Oldham had worked as a senior planner and program coordinator for the city of Methuen, as a staff planner for the town of North Andover, and as an office administrator for TEC Inc. in Lawrence. She had also served in state legislative and congressional staff roles, and worked as an administrator in the Division of Professional Licensure.

Oldham earned a master's degree in public administration and a bachelor's degree in political science and history, both from Suffolk University.



On Nov. 1, **Kathleen Buckley** became Holliston's first assistant town administrator/ human resources

Kathleen Bucklev

Senate.

director. Until recently, Buckley had been the human

resources manager in Wayland, a role that she had held since March 2019.

Before that, she had served for more

than two years as a payroll and benefits

coordinator for the Massachusetts State

Buckley has also worked in a number of

marketing roles for employers including the Boston University School of Law, Hollister Staffing and the Franciscan

Hospital for Children. She was also the

founder of BizPR Consulting.

communications, public relations and

Buckley earned a master's degree in business administration from Fitchburg State University, and a bachelor's degree in journalism from Emerson College.

David Ellis was elected to the Washington Select Board on Dec. 4. He is filling a seat left vacant by the July 22 death of **Richard Grillon**, whose term would have ended in 2023. At the time of his death. Grillon had been serving on the board for four consecutive years, and had previously served as a selectman in the 1990s and early 2000s.

Jeffrey Levanos was elected to the Clarksburg Select Board on Dec. 7. He is filling a seat left vacant by the resignation of **Ronald Boucher** in early September. Levanos had previously served on the board.

Jamie Belsito of Topsfield was sworn in on Dec. 8 as the new state representative for the 4th Essex District, which includes Hamilton. Ipswich, Manchester-by-the-Sea, Rowley, Topsfield and Wenham.

A women's health advocate. Belsito began a grassroots effort to educate women and families about postpartum depression, served on a state postpartum commission, and organized advocacy days at the State House and on Capitol Hill to focus attention on maternal mental health and family support services. She is also the founder and former policy director of the Maternal Mental Health Leadership Alliance. In addition, she served four years as a trustee of her alma mater Salem State University, where she earned a bachelor's degree in political science.

Belsito succeeds **Bradford Hill**, who resigned in September to fill a seat on the Massachusetts Gaming Commission. Hill had represented the district for more than two decades.

The U.S. Senate confirmed Rep. Claire **Cronin** of Easton on Dec. 18 as U.S.

People

PEOPLE Continued from page 24



Claire Cronin

University.

and has previously co-chaired the Joint Judiciary Committee. Cronin has practiced law and served as a mediator in Brockton. She earned a political science degree from Stonehill College and a law degree from Suffolk

Ambassador to

Cronin, who has

represented the

11th Plymouth

District for the

past nine years,

is the House's

majority leader

first woman

Ireland.

President **Joe Biden** had nominated

Cronin over the summer, and the nomination cleared the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in October.

As of late December, the Massachusetts House was expected to schedule a special election to fill the remainder of Cronin's term. The 11th Plymouth District includes Brockton and Easton.

assistant at Forest

After leaving the

MMA, he wrote a

blog about his ex-

periences dealing

with Alzheimer's.

called the Dimin-

ishing Window,

and served as a

the Alzheimer's

Association of

Board member for

Hills Cemetery



Anjanique Allison

for almost a year. She has also worked as a human resources assistant at the Museum of Science, as a project management associate and alumni network coordinator at State Street Corporation, and as a guest relations ambassador at Eataly, among other positions in retail and food service.

Allison is working toward a bachelor's degree in communication and media studies from Southern New Hampshire University, with an expected graduation later this year.

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.

Former MMA associate editor Mitch Evich dies at 60

By John Ouellette

Mitch Evich, who served as associate editor at the MMA for more than 10 years, died on Christmas morning of complications due to Alzheimer's. He was 60.

Evich wrote hundreds of stories for The Beacon and the MMA website, with many spotlighting communities and local leaders in every corner of Massachusetts. He was also the editor of the Massachusetts Municipal Directory, among other projects. His work reflected a deep respect for those involved in local government.

Evich was diagnosed with early-onset Alzheimer's in the summer of 2015 and retired from the MMA at that time.



Mitch Evich

MA/NH and the Dementia Friendly Massachusetts Advisory Committee.

Always curious and engaging, Evich was known for his kindness and his love of baseball and writing. A Washington State native and longtime resident of

INNOVATIONS

Continued from page 13

Using a \$25,000 grant from the Metropolitan Area Planning Council, Chelsea is also examining possible ownership and governance structures for the system. Intent on owning the microgrid assets, Chelsea might consider creating a board, similar to ones governing the state's 41 municipal light departments,

Maltez said.

Several nearby communities have expressed interest in Chelsea's efforts, and the Green Justice Coalition and Green-Roots have been working with nonprofits in Boston's Chinatown to explore microgrid technology in that neighborhood, which faces its own environmental challenges and flooding threats.

For more information about Chelsea's

Somerville, Evich published two novels and a memoir along with short stories for the Fenway Fiction series. He read from his works at local bookstores, particularly Porter Square Books in Cambridge.

The son of a fisherman, in his youth he fished for a few years in southeastern Alaska, on a small boat in sometimes extreme conditions. He earned a bachelor's degree at Western Washington University and moved to New England to work as a journalist. He earned his master's degree in literature at Northeastern University, where he met his wife, Paula Woolley. He is also survived by their two children, Andryc and Iris. 🔵

microgrid project, contact Housing and Community Development Director Alex Train at ATrain@chelseama.gov.

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, send it to innovations@mma.org.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Firefighter

Town of York, Maine

The town of York, Maine, a coastal community comprising the villages of Cape Neddick, York Harbor, York Village and York Beach, is accepting applications for the position of Firefighter in the York Village Fire Department. The town has a year-round population of 12,500 but regularly increases to 40,000 during the peak summer season. The position is responsible for both areas of Advanced Emergency Medicine and Firefighting. The incumbent performs technical work providing advanced emergency medical services for patients who experience medical problems in the field and combating, extinguishing, and preventing fires, in answering emergency calls, and in operating and maintaining Fire Rescue Department equipment, apparatus, and quarters. Work is performed under the direction of the Fire Chief or designee. High school diploma or equivalent, Firefighter I and II certifications required. Advanced EMT or Paramedic License preferred with Basic EMT License required with achievement of EMT-A within 18 months of service. A Maine Commercial Drivers License (CDL) or ability to obtain a CDL within six months of hire required. Prior experience is desirable. The position is non-exempt, union, working 56 hours per week, on average, schedule including nights, weekends and holidays. Starting salary dependent upon EMT License Level. After successful completion of one year of service, candidate will be promoted to Fire Officer with rank to be determined by the Fire Chief. Requirements outlined in department standard operating guidelines. A complete list of duties, responsibilities and requirements can be provided upon request. The deadline for applications is Jan. 17. The town of York is an Equal Opportunity Employer. Please submit resume, cover letter, completed application, and training certificates to: Town of York, Kathryn Lagasse, Director of Human Resources, 186 York St., York, ME 03909; klagasse@yorkmaine.org.

Town Collector/Asst. Treasurer Town of Hardwick

Performs professional and administrative work in the day to day management of the Collector's Office. This role performs a range of municipal finance functions including, but not limited to, tax collections, tax and utility billing, tax title, treasury, local revenue collections, cash management; performs all similar or related duties. Annually appointed by the Board of Selectmen. Full description at <u>www.townofhardwick.</u> <u>com</u>. Please send a cover letter with resume and three professional references to admin@townofhardwick. com or Attn: Town Administrator, P.O. Box 575, Gilbertville, MA 01031, or in person at 307 Main St. in Gilbertville during normal business hours. Posting will close Jan. 17.

Finance Director Town of Brattleboro, Vermont

We are searching for someone who feels called to make the world a better place through public service. A dynamic financial management professional who will manage the town's Finance Department, strengthen the rest of our town government team through strong leadership on financial matters, and be a key member of the town's interdisciplinary senior management team. Offering a robust benefits package and a salary range of \$80,269.06-\$90,179.79. Accepting applications through Jan. 15, position is open until filled. To apply and to view the full job description, please visit <u>secure4.saashr.com/</u> <u>ta/6155296.careers?CareersSearch</u> or by visiting the Employment Opportunities tab on our home page, <u>brattleboro.org</u>.

Town Administrator Town of Peru

The town of Peru, located in Berkshire County with a population of 840 and a \$2.3 million budget, is seeking qualified applicants to serve as its Town Administrator. The position is up to 25 hours a week. Applicants must have a valid drivers license, ability to pass a CORI background check, excellent communication skills, financial management, budgeting, procurement and grant writing experience. Knowledge of smalltown government and Massachusetts laws and regulations. Bachelor's degree plus five years municipal administrative experience or equivalent combination of education and experience. Salary up to \$30,000 with benefits. Send cover letter and resume to townadmin@townofperuma.com. Position is open until filled. To obtain a job description please go to www.townofperuma.com. Town of Peru is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

Human Resources Administrative Assistant Town of Lakeville

Position: Full job description is available at <u>www.</u> <u>Iakevillema.org/human-resources/pages/job-openings</u>. All interested parties should apply in writing with application attached, resume and cover letter to: John Viarella, Human Resources Director, 346 Bedford St., Lakeville, MA 02347. Email: jviarella@ lakevillema.org. Hours: 40-hour work week Monday through Friday to be determined by the Human Resources Director, and depending on various circumstances, start and finish times may vary. Wages: \$22.58-\$26.11 per hour. Non-Union, Level 1. Duties: The Human Resources Assistant is the primary person who processes the bi-weekly payroll as well as the daily work related to the administration of town benefits to town employees and retirees. Qualifications: Bachelor's degree in related field with four years municipal government experience preferred; or an equivalent combination of education, training and work experience that provides the requisite knowledge, skills and abilities for this position. At least one year of payroll experience in a municipality is preferred. Posting Closing: Open until filled. The town of Lakeville provides equal employment opportunities to all employees and applicants for employment and prohibits discrimination and harassment of any type without regard to race, color, religion, age, sex, national origin, ancestry, disability status, genetics, pregnancy or pregnancy-related conditions, protected veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or any other characteristic protected by federal and state laws. Applicants with disabilities needing reasonable accommodation to participate in the job application or interview process, to perform essential job functions, and/or to receive other benefits and privileges of employment, please contact John Viarella, Human Resources Director, jviarella@ lakevillema.org, 508-946-8808.

Town Manager

Town of Enfield, Connecticut

Requirements for the Town Manager position are: bachelor's degree or higher from an accredited college or university, with the major field of study in public administration or government; minimum of five years' experience in public administration; candidates should have the proven ability to establish and maintain strong working relationships and possess knowledge of public personnel and finance methods and procedures; the ability to write technical reports and to express ideas effectively in written and oral form. Salary range is \$160,000-\$200,000. Submit resume, cover letter, and contact information for five

CLASSIFIEDS continued on 27

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.

February Beacon Deadline: January 25

Deadline: January 25 Publication: February 1

March Beacon

Deadline: February 22 Publication: March 1

Placing an ad

You may use our convenient online form at www.mma.org/municipal-marketplace/ add-listing/.

For more information, call Jessica Obasohan at the MMA at 617-426-7272.

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

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

CLASSIFIEDS

Continued from page 26

professional references by Jan. 10, online to GovHR USA, LLC – <u>govhrusa.com</u>.

Wastewater Treatment Plant Operator/ Mechanic Town of Warren

The Warren Board of Sewer Commissioners is accepting applications for its Wastewater Treatment Plant Operator/Mechanic position. Salary is in accordance with the town's current wage classification and applicant's training and experience. Applicants must possess a high school diploma or GED and be able to obtain a Massachusetts Certified Grade 4 Operator Certification within six months of hire. A class D Driver's License is required. Visit <u>www.</u> <u>warren-ma.gov</u> to view the job description or contact the Sewer Commission at 413-436-7438 for more information. Candidates should submit a cover letter and resume to Warren Sewer Department, P.O. Box 1537, Warren, MA 01083 or via email to sewer@ warren-ma.gov. Deadline for applications is Jan. 31.

Conservation Agent Town of Lancaster

Lancaster (population 8,000) seeks an experienced full-time Conservation Agent. This critical position provides support, coordination and professional management for the Conservation Commission in carrying out its mission to protect the town's natural resources, including its biodiversity, unique natural areas, wetlands and other water resources. The Agent shall also act as the staff liaison between the Commission and other town departments and boards. Lancaster, a historic town in North-Central Massachusetts, is experiencing sustained residential and industrial growth, due to its location on the Route 2 corridor. Lancaster is also a community that prioritizes protecting its open space as well as its scenic character, high quality schools, and geographic, labor, and economic attributes. The successful candidate will have the opportunity to work on a wide range of significant projects with long-term impact. Qualified applicants will understand the importance of biodiversity, water resources and open space protection and will be committed to the principles of land protection and management. A bachelor's degree in environmental science, conservation biology, ecology or a related field, at least two years' experience in wetlands protection, land conservation, environmental management or a related field, or an equivalent combination of education and experience is preferred. The town offers a comprehensive benefit package and a professional work environment. Salary is commensurate with qualifications, with an anticipated hiring range of up to \$62,000. Complete job description available by emailing scharton@ lancasterma.net (please include "Description -Conservation Agent" in the subject line of your email). Interested applicants should send a cover letter and resume to scharton@lancasterma.net. Please include "Conservation Agent" in the subject line of your email. The deadline for applications is Jan. 14 at 5 p.m. Please note that applications will be reviewed beginning Dec. 27. Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer.

Town Administrator

Town of Wayland

Department: Town Administrator. Full-time/hours: 35 hours per week. Union/Grade: Non-union/N-8.

Starting Salary: \$71,314-\$75,656. Salary Range: \$71,314-\$93,051. Description of Position: Under the direction of the Town Administrator, the HR Manager evaluates and recommends options to address a wide variety of human resources issues. The Human Resources Manager administers HR functions in accordance with applicable federal and state laws, town bylaws, and town policies. The HR Manager coordinates with the Town Administrator and Benefits Manager to administer key HR functions, including employee benefits, insurance, department budget, and other projects, as assigned. Recommended Minimum Qualifications: Education: Bachelor's degree in human resources, public administration, business administration or related field. Master's degree preferred. Experience: Over two years of related professional experience, preferably in a municipal setting. Substitutions: An equivalent combination of education and experience. Licenses/Certificates: Must have a valid license to operate a motor vehicle. Date posted: Dec.14. Closing date: Open until filled. Apply to: Please submit a resume and cover letter to the 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.

Full-Time CDL Truck Driver/Laborer Town of Westminster

The town of Westminster Department of Public Works is accepting applications for full-time CDL Truck Driver/Laborer. License requirements include Massachusetts CDL Class B with air brake endorsement, Massachusetts 2B Hoisting Engineer's License or ability to obtain within three months. High school graduate or equivalent with two years of experience in public works construction and maintenance or an equivalent combination of education and experience. Normal work hours: Mon.-Fri., 7 a.m.-3:30 p.m., 40-hour workweek. Position requires working some weekends and on-call responsibilities. Starting pay rate is \$21.40 per hour depending upon qualifications. New hires eligible for stipend(s) for license held after working 12 months. \$500 for Mass Commercial Driver's License (CDL). \$250 for Mass Hoisting Engineering License Type Class held. Ideal candidates will also have the ability to carry out oral and written instructions, follow proper methods, procedures and safety precautions, and perform heavy manual labor under varying weather conditions. Overtime hours are required during snow removal operations. For complete job description and application, visit www.westminster-ma.gov/humanresources. Please submit resume and application to HR@westminster-ma.gov or mail to Human Resources, Town Hall, 11 South St., Westminster, MA 01473. Position will remain open until filled.

DPW Labor/Driver Town of Sturbridge

The town of Sturbridge has two immediate full-time openings for Laborer/Drivers in the Department of Public Works. These positions are union positions and the successful candidates will be responsible for operating light equipment and driving trucks equipped with dump bodies and plowing snow among other responsibilities. A CDL (Class B) and hoisting license (Class 2B) are required. The starting pay is \$20.53 per hour. For a copy of the complete job description and an application please go to www.sturbridge.gov/yourgovernment/pages/job-opportunities. Position open until filled. The town of Sturbridge is an EOE.

Town Administrator Town of Warren

The town of Warren seeks qualified applicants for the position of Town Administrator. The Town Administrator is appointed by, and reports to, the Board of Selectmen. They act as the agent for the Board, serving as their initial point of contact. assisting and advising in discharging their duties of office. They will work with considerable independence to perform managerial and administrative functions and coordinate the activities of the various departments, commissions, boards, committees, and offices of the town. Applicants should be versed in municipal operations management, grant writing, and conflict resolution. Salary range is \$75,000 to \$90,000 negotiated based on education and relevant experience. For more information, visit www. warren-ma.gov. Candidates should submit a cover letter, resume, college transcripts, and three letters of reference to Board of Selectmen, 48 High St., Warren, MA 01083 or via email to selectmen@warren-ma. gov. Deadline for applications is Jan. 31. Selected candidates will be notified by Feb. 18, for an interview date.

Truck Driver/Motor Equipment Operator II Town of Arlington

Skilled manual work in the operation of heavy equipment which requires a high degree of dexterity, inspection of the equipment for proper operating condition and carrying out certain preventive maintenance procedures. Requires a Commercial Driver's License. Works under general supervision, following departmental rules, regulations and policies, requiring the ability to plan and perform operations to complete assigned task, or tasks, according to a prescribed time schedule; refers unusual problems to superiors. \$20.89-25.96 per hour. Please visit <u>www. arlingtonma.gov/hr</u> to see full job description or to apply.

Skilled Laborer

Town of Duxbury

Seeking qualified and experienced candidates for our full-time, benefit eligible Skilled Laborer position within the Lands and Natural Resources Dept. Must have extensive knowledge and skill in the operation of trucks, landscape equipment, and power tools. Removes and prunes trees, chip debris and performs tasks in care and maintenance of town owned lands. Must have high school diploma, or G.E.D., with three years of related work experience, a valid driver's license and CDL B. For a full job description and to apply go to townofduxburyjobs.easyapply.co.

Aerial Lift Operator Town of Duxbury

Seeking qualified and experienced candidates for our full-time, benefit eligible, Aerial Lift Operator position within the Lands & Natural Resources Dept. Must have extensive tree and natural resources knowledge, physical ability, agility, tree climbing, rope use, chainsaw, in the tree and proper harness skills as well as prior and demonstrable ability to supervise others, as well as valid Driver's and CDL class B licenses. Hydraulics 2B license and climbing and aerial lift certification preferred. To view full job description and to apply go to townofduxburyjobs.eaayapply.co.

CLASSIFIEDS continued on 28

CLASSIFIEDS

Continued from page 27

Assistant Assessor Town of Westford

The Westford Board of Assessors is seeking highly qualified and motivated candidates for a full-time Assistant Assessor that would be responsible for assisting in the analytical, administrative, technical, and field support to the Principal Assessor in the appraising and classification of all town properties. Position assists with the annual valuation and analysis of all residential properties. The Assistant Assessor is the residential specialist for the town assisting in setting annual residential values. Assists in the research, adjusting cost tables, inspecting all residential sales, all residential permit work, and residential abatement applications. Candidate works under the administrative direction and performance evaluation of the Principal Assessor and operates under the policy direction of the Board of Assessors. The candidate should have three to five years' experience and training in the real estate assessing/ appraisal field. Must possess excellent written and oral communication skills and be highly proficient with MS Word, including Excel. Must hold the Massachusetts Accredited Assessor (MAA) designation or be able to obtain and must be able to take and pass the Department of Revenue's Course 101. Licensure by the State Board of Real Estate Appraisers is highly desirable. Bachelors' degree is preferred. The salary range for this exempt position is \$66,106-\$79,733 and is dependent upon qualifications and experience. Please submit resume and cover letter by Jan. 21 to HR@westfordma.gov or send to: Town of Westford, Pam Hicks, Director of Human Resources, 55 Main St., Westford, MA 01886. For a full position description, please visit: www.westfordma.gov/Jobs.aspx. The town of Westford is an EEO/AA Employer.

Veterans Service Officer Town of Somerset

The town of Somerset is accepting applications for the position of Veterans Service Officer. Candidates for this position must possess a bachelor's degree or an equivalent master craftsman level of trade services; a minimum of seven to 10 years of related experience preferably in social services. Successful candidate must be an honorable discharged veteran in accordance with Massachusetts State Law and must complete within six months of appointment and maintain during the course of employment a Department of Veterans Service Certification. Valid Class D Motor Vehicle Driver's License. The town of Somerset offers a comprehensive benefits package. Application and job description are available on the town's website at www.townofsomerset.org/administrator/ pages/employment-opportunities or at the Town Administrator/Personnel Director's office, Room 23, Town Office Building, 140 Wood St., Somerset, MA 02726. Questions and applications should be submitted to the Town Administrator/Personnel Director's office, at pramos@town.somerset.ma.us. Application will be received until the position is filled. Applicants who have applied in the past must reapply if they wish to be considered. The town of Somerset is an AA/EEO employer.

Data Acquisition/Infrastructure Maintenance 1 - Water & Sewer Department Town of Freetown

The Personnel Board is seeking applications for the position of Data Acquisition/Infrastructure Maintenance 1 in the water & Sewer Department. This is a unionized, full-time position (40 hours); hourly pay rate of \$23.89/hour. Works in office and outdoor environment doing meter reading, water testing, infrastructure maintenance, data acquisition and manipulation, customer service and administrative duties as required by the Water & Sewer Commissioners. Applications are available at freetownma.gov/jobs or at the Selectmen's Office, 3 North Main St., Assonet, MA. Position will remain open until filled, but priority will be given to applications received by Wednesday, Dec. 15, 2021. Resume and cover letter can be emailed to lsouza@ freetownma.gov.

Project Engineer

Massachusetts Water Resources Authority The MWRA is seeking a Project Engineer to provide engineering support for all Operations Division activities, including implementing operational changes that have service impact, supporting emergency response, supporting maintenance planning, supporting in-house design and construction activities, acting as liaison to design and construction projects, and supporting start-up of new/rehabilitated facilities. The work includes assisting in the preparation of Operations Plans for Operations Division activities that have potential to impact water service; working with Engineering and Construction staff as needed and Metropolitan and Western operations and maintenance staff to develop plan steps and constraints; working with GIS staff to develop mapping and detail notes; assisting in review and execution of plans; developing the Valve Section valve maintenance schedules for Metropolitan and Western Operations; coordinating all aspects of the schedules execution, Community Coordination, Notification, and Valve Exercise packages; providing engineering support for in-house construction projects, including permitting and engineering calculations (e.g. thrust restraint); assisting in the analysis of distribution system problems including hydraulic modeling; providing analyses of planned or emergency shutdowns to identify service impacts; participating in emergency response to any/all Operations Division emergencies; acting as liaison to MWRA communities during MWRA activities that affect water service and during local activities; assisting with updating and maintaining databases, including the valve database, blow-off database and GIS databases; and assisting in tracking of designs and planning for construction projects. The position requires a bachelor's of science degree in civil or mechanical engineering or related field; working knowledge of water supply engineering as acquired by two to five years of experience in operating waterworks facilities; large diameter pipeline system or metropolitan area waterworks system experience preferred; a valid driver's license; Engineer-in-Training certificate preferred; and a valid Grade II Water Treatment Operators License and/or Grade IV Distribution Operators License preferred. Apply at: mwra.applicantpro.com/jobs. Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA) is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer. All

.....

qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, national or ethnic origin, age, religion, disability, sex or gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or veteran status.

Town Administrator Town of Lee

The town of Lee is seeking qualified, intrinsically motivated candidates for the position of Town Administrator possessing strong finance and communication skills. This proactive leader will be responsible for developing and administering a \$24 million dollar budget in which they will oversee the day-to-day operations of all town departments and projects. The Town Administrator will work with all elected and appointed officials, reporting directly to Lee's three-member Select Board. The best candidates will be highly organized and demonstrate broad abilities in economic and community development. Valued leadership abilities include: collaborative skills to coordinate and oversee all town departments; ability to act as a liaison to the town attorney and various agencies; demonstrated experience with budget oversight and management; organizational skills and the ability to plan for and manage multiple tasks and deadlines. A full job description can be found at the town website www.lee.ma.us. Candidates should apply with a resume and cover letter, via email to Lyndsav Patenaude, Director of Human Resources, at lbroom@town.lee.ma subject line "Town Administrator." This position remains open until filled. The town of Lee is an equal opportunity/affirmative action employer.

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.

New Manager Webinar Series

The UMass Donahue Institute is offering a new manager webinar series, designed for those with limited experience managing direct reports. Focused on core skills any manager should master to engage, develop and retain talent, and drive the team member performance. Reflection questions and assignments are designed to further support skill development and behavior change. Each learning series and each webinar is recorded to make up missed sessions. Webinar length is 90 minutes. Starts April 13. Flexible

CLASSIFIEDS continued on 29

CLASSIFIEDS

Continued from page 28

registration options: both series (12 modules total); one series of six webinars (Series 1 or Series 2); or register for one at a time. Visit <u>donahue.umass.edu/</u> <u>business-groups/organizational-development-</u> <u>learning-solutions2/new-manager-webinar-series</u>.

Leadership Excellence Program

On the heels of our sold-out fall program, UMass Donahue Institute, with University Without Walls (UWW) and UMass Online, is again offering an online leadership development certificate. The Leadership Excellence program is for leaders who want to add new skills and tools for successfully implementing organizational change and propelling their careers forward. Five interactive online modules provide 30 hours of hands-on learning over eight weeks. Participants also complete two leadership assessments and receive individualized coaching to interpret the results. Completion will earn learners a certificate and is accredited to award three CEUs through UWW. Classes begin April 19. Visit www.donahue.umass. edu/leadershipexcellence.

Tax Collection, Tax Foreclosure Services and Tax Valuation Appeals

Law Offices of Aldo A. Cipriano & Associates, established in 1979, has been providing tax collection and foreclosure services in Land Court to municipalities effectively for over 41 years. Our staff will provide assistance in positive collection efforts to reduce tax delinquent accounts. We have experienced auctioneers available to conduct foreclosure auctions. We also offer legal services to municipal Boards of Assessors in defense of Real Estate assessments and valuation before the Appellate Tax Board. Please contact us at 508-485-7245 or aldoc.esg@comcast.net for additional information.

Public Management Consultants

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

Municipal Accounting Services

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

Executive Recruiting, Management and Governance Consulting Services

Community Paradigm Associates provides

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

Executive Recruiting, Interim Staffing, Human Resources and Management Consulting

GovHR USA/GovTempsUSA provides executive recruiting and interim staffing solutions, management and human resource consulting to local government and nonprofit clients across the country. Seasoned local government professionals provide five-star quality services including: Classification and Compensation Studies; Temporary and Outsourced staffing; Performance Evaluation System and Training. Visit our website at <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>.

GIS Consulting Services

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

Town Counsel Services

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

General Consultant, Recruiting and Special Studies

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

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@ miyares-harrington.com or 617-489-1600.

Tax Title Legal Services

KP | Law has been providing a full range of legal services to municipal treasurers and collectors for more than 30 years. Our experienced tax title attorneys draft collection letters and payment agreements; prepare all instruments relative to tax takings and tax sales; draft pleadings for Land Court foreclosures; and provide full representation of municipalities in Land Court actions. We also provide assistance with disposition or reuse of tax parcels. The breadth of our experience, volume, use of experienced paralegals,

CLASSIFIEDS continued on 30

CLASSIFIEDS

Continued from page 29

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 longterm claims. We offer training in sexual harassment, social media and the "just cause analysis" to municipal managers. We also serve as appointed hearing officers on a case-by-case basis. Many of our clients take advantage of a flat monthly rate for unlimited phone calls and emails, which encourages key managers to work with counsel prior to making critical personnel decisions. Check our website at CliffordKennyLaw. com to see a complete list of our satisfied clients or call John Clifford or Jaime Kenny at 781-924-5796 for more information.

Municipal Financial Management Services

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

MASK ADVISORY

Continued from page 5

15, to require proof of vaccination in order to enter many indoor public spaces, including dining establishments, convention centers, fitness centers and entertainment venues. Somerville followed suit the next day, and similar standards are in the works elsewhere.

Baker reminded residents that getting a COVID vaccine and booster remain the best way to protect against serious illness or hospitalization.

<u>Updated data</u> from the DPH shows that 97% of COVID breakthrough cases in Massachusetts have not resulted in hospitalization or death. Unvaccinated individuals are five times more likely to contract COVID than fully vaccinated individuals and 31 times more likely to contract COVID than individuals who have a booster.

According to the DPH, as of Dec. 21, more than 94% of eligible residents have received at least one dose of a COVID vaccine. More than 89% of the entire Massachusetts population has at least one dose, and 74% of the entire population is fully vaccinated. The governor said the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's mask requirement and <u>Policy on Vaccination</u> <u>Rate Threshold</u>, issued on Sept. 27, remain in place.

Regarding the Commonwealth's health care system, Baker said a critical staffing shortage had contributed to the loss of approximately 500 medical/surgical and ICU hospital beds since the beginning of 2021.

The governor activated up to 500 members of the Massachusetts National Guard to address the non-clinical support needs of hospitals and transport systems. The DPH identified five key roles that non-clinical Guard personnel can serve in support hospital operations for up to 90 days, including non-emergency transport between facilities, patient observers, security support, in-hospital transport, and food service/tray delivery support.

Under <u>updated guidance</u> from the DPH, effective on Dec. 27, all hospitals are directed to postpone or cancel all nonessential elective procedures likely to result in inpatient admission in order to maintain and increase inpatient capacity.



HR professionals focus on self care

Bette Hoffman, a certified professional coach, leads a self-care workshop during the Massachusetts Municipal Human Resources association's Dec. 2 holiday meeting in Salem. Hoffman provided tools to help participants manage stress and avoid burnout at work, and to achieve self-discovery around their own personal sense of well being.

Calendar

JANUARY



43rd MMA Annual Meeting & Trade Show, Hynes

Convention Center and Sheraton Hotel, Boston. Contact: MMA Conference and Meeting Planner Timmery Kuck

FEBRUARY

2 Association of Town Finance Committees, board meeting,

4-5:30 p.m., virtual. Contact: MMA Senior Member Services Coordinator Denise Baker

8 Massachusetts Municipal Councillors' Association,

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

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

16 Massachusetts Select Board Association, board meeting, 2:15-3:30 p.m., virtual. Contact: MMA Senior Member Services Coordinator Isabelle Nichols

16 Massachusetts Mayors' Association, monthly meeting, Woburn, 9:30 a.m.-1 p.m. Contact: MMA Communications and Membership Director Candace Pierce

MARCH

2 Association of Town Finance Committees, board meeting,

4-5:30 p.m., virtual. Contact: MMA Senior Member Services Coordinator Denise Baker



Online registration is available for most of these events.

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



Massachusetts Municipal Association 3 Center Plaza, Suite 610, Boston, MA 02108

4 Massachusetts Select Board Association, webinar. Contact: MMA Senior Member Services Coordinator Isabelle Nichols

9 Massachusetts Municipal Councillors' Association, dinner, the Chateau Restaurant, Waltham. Contact: MMA Senior Member Services Coordinator Denise Baker

10 Massachusetts Municipal Human Resources Association, webinar. Contact: MMA Senior Member Services Coordinator Isabelle Nichols

18 Massachusetts Municipal Management Association, meeting, Lake Pearl, Wrentham. Contact: MMA Senior Member Services Coordinator Denise Baker

30 Massachusetts Mayors' Association, monthly meeting, Brockton, 9:30 a.m.-1 p.m. Contact: MMA Communications and Membership Director Candace Pierce

APRIL

2 Women Elected Municipal Officials, conference, Courtyard Marriott, Marlborough. Contact: MMA Senior Member Services Coordinator Isabelle Nichols

Association of Town Finance Committees, board meeting, 4-5:30 p.m., virtual. Contact: MMA Senior Member Services Coordinator Denise Baker

Massachusetts Select

9 **Board Association,** Western Massachusetts Conference, Easthampton High School, Easthampton. Contact: MMA Senior Member Services Coordinator Isabelle Nichols

12 Massachusetts Municipal Councillors' Association,

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

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

12 Massachusetts Select Board Association, board meeting, 2:15-3:30 p.m., virtual. Contact: MMA Senior Member Services Coordinator Isabelle Nichols

14 Massachusetts Municipal Management Association and Massachusetts Municipal Human Resources, joint meeting, AC Hotel, Worcester. Contact: MMA Senior Member Services Coordinator Denise Baker and MMA Senior Member Services Coordinator Isabelle Nichols

27 Massachusetts Mayors' Association, monthly meeting, Leominster, 9:30 a.m.-1 p.m. Contact: MMA Communications and Membership Director Candace Pierce

28 MMA Human Services Council, meeting. Contact: MMA Senior 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