House approves nearly $50B budget

By Jackie Lavender Bird

On April 27, the House of Representatives approved a $49.7 billion state spending plan for fiscal 2023 that, for municipal and school aid accounts, had few changes from the recommendation released by the House Ways and Means Committee on April 13.

The budget matches the governor’s proposed 2.7% increase for Unrestricted General Government Aid, but includes House Ways and Means proposals to significantly increase Chapter 70 school aid, charter school reimbursements, and the Special Education Circuit Breaker.

After consolidating more than 1,500 amendments into seven categories, House members voted to increase spending by $130 million over the Ways and Means proposal, bringing the total to $1.2 billion above the budget plan filed by the governor in January.

Chapter 70
The House budget meets the state’s commitment to fund the Student Opportunity Act at two-sixths of the implementation schedule, providing a total of $5.98 billion for Chapter 70 aid. An additional $9.6 million line item in the House plan would raise the minimum new aid amount from $30 per student to $60 per student.

Charter schools
The House budget includes $243 million for Charter School Mitigation Payments, which represents an increase of $89.2 million over the current fiscal year and is $24.4 million more than the governor proposed. The House’s increase would fund 100% of the state’s statutory obligation for charter school mitigation payments as outlined in the Student Opportunity Act, phasing in full funding a year earlier than would be accomplished by the governor’s plan.

Special Education Circuit Breaker
The House budget bill includes $440 million for the Special Education Circuit Breaker account, a $67 million increase over fiscal 2022.

The Student Opportunity Act expanded the circuit breaker by including out-of-district transportation, to be phased in over three years. The House total reflects years two and three of the schedule in the Student Opportunity Act, achieving full funding a year earlier than the governor’s plan would.

$3.5B economic development bill includes local investments

On April 21, Gov. Charlie Baker filed a $3.5 billion economic development bill that would fund projects to strengthen state infrastructure, create jobs and invest in cities and towns.

The legislation includes $2.3 billion in funding from the federal American Rescue Plan Act and $1.26 billion in capital bond authorizations.

“The Commonwealth has an opportunity to make significant investments now to help our communities and local economies emerge stronger in a post-pandemic world,” Baker said at a press event in Lynn. “The FORWARD legislation [An Act Investing in Future Opportunities for Resiliency, Workforce, and Revitalized Downtowns] will make investments in every municipality in Massachusetts, strengthening downtowns, improving the resiliency of infrastructure and giving workers the tools they need to succeed in today’s economy.”

Lt. Gov. Karyn Polito said the bill will support hundreds of local projects, including funding to improve green...
Executive Director’s Report

Clouds on the horizon: inflation, clawbacks, economic uncertainty

The Commonwealth’s record revenue growth over the past two years is certainly welcome news. The governor and lawmakers have used this multi-billion-dollar largess to propose record state budgets, bring the state’s rainy-day fund to highest-ever levels, and create a level of stability that was hard to imagine during the early stages of the pandemic.

One of the state’s impressive and much-appreciated investments is the ongoing commitment to fully fund the ambitious Student Opportunity Act within the original seven-year time span, even though that target was set before the pandemic disrupted all planning and whipsawed the state’s cash flows. This has been possible because state revenues are growing at well-above-inflation rates, and because state leaders have remained focused and passionate about closing educational resource disparities.

Yet the recent fiscal headlines mask a number of significant concerns that local and state leaders must attend to.

At the local level, municipal finances have not boomed. Cities and towns are trapped in an ever-tightening vise, squeezed on one side by revenues that have been reduced or stalled by the COVID economy, and on the other side by a growing demand to deliver essential services to their residents to respond to and recover from the public health emergency and its negative impacts on families and businesses.

Whether this fiscal vise grip tightens or loosens will depend on several factors that are beyond the control of local leaders. These factors — high inflation, federal clawbacks and an economic slowdown — are clouds on the horizon that must be carefully monitored.

High inflation would make Proposition 2½ unworkable

In the years leading up to the pandemic, cities and towns were able to achieve fiscal stability through a combination of sound management practices, cautious budgeting, predictable revenue sharing by the state, and generally favorable macroeconomic conditions that kept revenue growth at or above the rate of inflation.

Unfortunately, that formula for success has been upended by the spike in inflation and a slowdown in commercial and industrial growth. The only way that Proposition 2½ can be managed without forcing deep cuts in municipal services is in a low-inflation environment. In most years, inflation has hovered within the range of municipal revenue growth, at about 2.5% to 3.5%. From 1983 to 2022, the average U.S. inflation rate has been...
Committee extends review of MassTRAC bill

By Adrienne Núñez

The Joint Committee on Transportation has extended the time period for considering Gov. Charlie Baker’s $9.7 billion infrastructure bond bill until May 6.

The governor filed An Act Relative to Massachusetts’s Transportation Resources and Climate, or MassTRAC, on March 17. The bill was referred to the Transportation Committee, which held a hearing on April 12. The MMA submitted written testimony expressing support for the bill.

In addition to investing in existing state programs, MassTRAC includes required state matching funds to compete for and capitalize on investment opportunities provided by the federal Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.

The $1.2 trillion Bipartisan Infrastructure Law provides discretionary funding through formula-based allocations and more than $110 billion in competitive grants to be overseen by the U.S. Department of Transportation. These competitive grants will be distributed over five years and are available to all states, territories and tribal lands.

Gov. Baker said the MassTRAC bill would provide authorizations necessary to ensure the Commonwealth is well-po-
PFAS task force recommends policy framework

By Josie Ahlberg and Adrienne Núñez

The PFAS Interagency Task Force released an 88-page report on April 20 that outlines a policy framework to protect public health and address environmental concerns and remediation efforts related to the family of chemicals.

The report makes clear that the Commonwealth must phase out, regulate and remediate per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, while building education and awareness campaigns on the issue and the corresponding state and local responses. The task force, co-chaired by Sen. Julian Cyr and Rep. Kate Hogan, makes 30 specific recommendations.

“This report moves the Commonwealth in the right direction on the regulation, funding and removal of PFAS from the state economy and consumer products, and our water supplies,” said Easton Town Administrator Connor Read, the MMA’s appointee to the task force.

“These recommendations, if adopted by the Legislature, will support municipal governments in Massachusetts as we meet our charge to serve our communities and provide safe, clean drinking water to those who live in them.”

The task force, established by the fiscal 2021 state budget, held a series of 11 hearings to investigate contamination by PFAS — known as “forever chemicals” — across Massachusetts.

PFAS are a family of chemicals used since the 1950s to manufacture stain-resistant, water-resistant, and non-stick products. Also found in firefighting foam and other fire retardants, PFAS have been detected in water and soil sources in Massachusetts. According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, scientific studies have shown that exposure to some PFAS in the environment may be linked to harmful health effects in humans and animals.

PFAS remediation can be a complicated and costly process, as the chemical stability of PFAS chemicals pose significant barriers to traditional contaminant remediation measures.

The task force’s recommendations fall into the following eight strategies and include regulatory and legislative actions:

1. Fund PFAS detection and remediation: The task force seeks funding for the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection and the Department of Public Health to conduct PFAS testing in water, soil, air, and other environmental sources in locations with known or suspected contamination. The report acknowledges the need for grants, rather than loans, for municipalities, public water systems, and homeowners to cover PFAS remediation projects.

2. Support environmental justice communities: Recognizing the disproportionate impacts that PFAS can have on minority, low-income, tribal and indigenous populations, the task force recommends deliberate measures to increase loan forgiveness for eligible PFAS remediation projects within the Disadvantaged Communities program and provide information in multiple languages.

3. Phase out PFAS in consumer products: The report recommends funding research on alternatives to PFAS, while setting stricter standards for products containing PFAS. Recommendations include labeling and state disclosure, with a ban on the sale of products with intentionally added PFAS to be adopted by 2030.

4. Expand PFAS regulation: The task force urges the MassDEP to adopt a more ambitious classification of PFAS that goes beyond the existing state standard, PFAS6, to further regulate fluorinated organic chemicals.

5. Encourage private well PFAS testing and remediation: The report recommends a new fund for communities to receive loans for private well PFAS remediation and encourages PFAS testing during property transfers involving private wells and new well permits.

6. Support for firefighters and local fire departments: The task force recommends funding for aqueous film forming foam (AFFF) take-back programs, decontamination efforts, and the purchasing of fluorine-free foam, along with increased cancer awareness training and screenings to address occupant exposure to products and gear containing PFAS.

7. Address PFAS contamination accountability: The report urges the state to identify reasonable limitations for liability claims for both homeowners and municipalities, and a continued evaluation of claims against PFAS manufacturers.

8. Enhance public awareness: The task force urges the MassDEP and DPH to conduct public education and awareness campaigns and provide guidance to health care providers and local governments on the health impacts of PFAS.

At a press event to unveil the report, task force Chairs Hogan and Cyr both indicated their intent to file a wide-ranging PFAS bill in the next legislative session. Since 2018, they said, Massachusetts has provided $30 million in grant funding and $100 million in loans to address PFAS. Although the report does not estimate the total amount of funding needed, task force leaders indicated that a significant amount of funding from a variety of sources and channels will be needed.

Key recommendations that support cities and towns include the creation of a PFAS Remediation Fund to provide grants to municipalities, public water systems, and homeowners, and several recommendations focused on firefighters and fire departments. Seven of the 30 recommendations focus on protecting firefighters from PFAS, particularly addressing the use, cleanup and replacement of AFFF fire suppressants.

“I hope this report leads to decisive action on the state level to grapple with this challenge in all areas identified — but especially the creation of sufficient, regular funding of a PFAS Mitigation Fund to support local governments who are already in the process of constructing costly treatment — and by pushing manufacturers to remove PFAS from firefighter turnout gear as soon as viable to protect first responders,” Read said.

The federal government has yet to issue regulations for PFAS, but 16 states have begun to take action by establishing enforceable drinking water standards, with some requiring notification to state officials when water sources exceed...
ARPA audit simplified for non-entitlement recipients

The Office of Management and Budget has amended its compliance rules to allow for a simplified process for municipalities that would not be required to undergo a federal audit if not for expenditures of Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds under the American Rescue Plan Act.

Under the OMB addendum, issued on April 8, SLFRF recipients that expend $750,000 or more during their fiscal year and meet two specific criteria have the option for their auditor or practitioner to follow the Alternative Compliance Examination Engagement guidance.

The criteria are:
1. The recipient’s total SLFRF award received directly from the U.S. Department of the Treasury or received (through states) as a non-entitlement unit of local government is at or below $10 million; and
2. Other federal award funds the recipient expended (not including their SLFRF award funds) are less than $750,000 during the recipient’s fiscal year.

The revision is Addendum 3 to the 2021 Single Audit Compliance Supplement. Addendum 3 includes a simplified single-audit process (an “attestation”) for direct recipients that are considered exempt from the single audit if it was not for the expenditures of SLFRF funds. This alternative is intended to reduce the burden of a full single audit on eligible recipients (estimated at more than 10,000 entities). This alternative applies to fiscal year audits beginning after June 30, 2020.

Attestation would result in an auditor’s opinion on compliance, which includes an assessment of two activities, specifically “activities allowed” and “unallowable/allowable cost.”

Finally, the OMB’s “Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards” (commonly known as Uniform Guidance) still applies to all expended funds, whether the recipient performs an attestation or a single audit.

Municipal recipients of ARPA’s State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds are divided into two categories: metro cities, which are typically municipalities with a population greater than 50,000, and non-entitlement units of government, which have populations below 50,000.

LGAC addresses virtual public meetings

MMA Vice President Jill Hai, a Lexington Select Board member, asks the administration to support legislation extending options for virtual public meetings, including town meetings, during the April 20 virtual meeting of the Local Government Advisory Commission. Pandemic-era provisions allowing public bodies to meet remotely are set to expire on July 15, and Hai said that any disruption to those options would create problems for municipalities. She called for a permanent solution that gives communities flexibility in how they hold their meetings. “Allowing optional access to remote or hybrid meetings ensures the opportunity for continuity of operation at the municipal level in the face of whatever eventualities arise,” Hai said.
Senate OK’s $250M bill aimed at emissions reductions
By Josie Ahlberg
On April 14, the Senate passed a $250 billion climate bill with a range of investments and tools intended to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and promote clean energy.

The Senate bill (S. 2819) centers around three major blocks of funding:
- $100 million to create a Clean Energy Investment Fund
- $100 million to establish an Electric Vehicle Adoption Incentive Trust Fund
- $50 million to further develop the electric vehicle charging infrastructure across Massachusetts

The Clean Energy Investment Fund would advance clean energy research and technology, as well as providing for workforce development and training programs.

The Electric Vehicle Adoption Incentive Trust Fund would offer consumers rebates of $3,500 to $5,000 per electric vehicle.

The Senate bill includes a section, strongly supported by the MMA, that would establish a pilot program to allow 10 municipalities to adopt restrictions or bans on fossil fuel use in new building construction or major renovation projects.

In a letter to senators, the MMA wrote: “This innovative pilot program would set reasonable standards for municipal participation and would allow the Department of Energy Resources to collect data on best practices, monitor emissions impacts, and evaluate cost implications in participating cities and towns. This program will empower municipalities to pursue the net-zero emissions goals articulated in the 2021 Climate Act.”

Some cities and towns — such as Brookline, Arlington, Lexington, Acton, Concord and Cambridge — had sought fossil fuel bans on their own via home rule petitions, but those efforts face uncertainty under current state law. The MMA stated that Section 52 of the bill “would provide opportunities for many of those municipalities — so long as they are approved as part of the proposed demonstration program.”

The House passed its own climate bill (H. 4524), focused primarily on offshore wind and energy, on March 3. The House and Senate bills are expected to go to a legislative conference committee to work out the differences.

Senate passes wide-ranging cannabis bill
By Ali DiMatteo
On April 7, the Senate unanimously approved a bill that would implement the most significant changes to state cannabis laws since the legalization of adult-use marijuana in 2017.

While the bill passed by the Senate (S. 2801) eliminated sections that would have retroactively interfered with existing host community agreements, the MMA continues to have concerns about provisions that would expand the powers of the Cannabis Control Commission in ways that could undermine established local authority and lead to unpredictability in community impact fees.

The MMA expressed its concerns about the provisions in an April 6 letter to senators.

The Senate did adopt several amendments, supported by the MMA, that would:
- Clarify that the Cannabis Control Commission would not be required to approve all host community agreements
- Establish a 120-day review timeframe for agreements the CCC does review
- Establish criteria for reviewing and rejecting host community agreements and impact fees while allowing municipalities to appeal the decisions

The MMA continues to have concerns about the process for crafting community host agreements and setting community impact fees, which local leaders find burdensome and unpredictable. The Senate did not adopt several amendments supported by the MMA that would help to standardize impact fees and assist municipalities in negotiating host community agreements.

The MMA remains supportive of the Senate bill’s provision to establish a Social Equity Trust Fund, which would provide grants and loans to Economic Empowerment or Social Equity participants.

The MMA will continue to closely watch this issue and advocate for municipal needs as the House takes up its own cannabis bill.

Mayors discuss transportation funding
Transportation Secretary Jamey Tesler gives an overview of transportation funding opportunities available through the federal Bipartisan Infrastructure Law during the April 27 meeting of the Massachusetts Mayors’ Association in Leominster.
Safe Streets and Roads for All grant program launches

By Adrienne Núñez

More than $5 billion in discretionary grant funding for the new federal Safe Streets and Roads for All program will soon be available for municipalities, counties, special districts, metropolitan planning organizations, and federally recognized tribal governments.

Funded through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, the SS4A program is overseen by the U.S. Department of Transportation and intended to support the National Roadway Safety Strategy and its goal of zero deaths and serious injuries on U.S. roadways.

The U.S. DOT announced that a Notice of Funding Opportunity for the SS4A program is expected in May, with award announcements expected in late 2022 or early 2023.

Eligible projects include planning, design, development or updating of a Comprehensive Safety Action Plan as well as implementation of Action Plan activities.

Examples of possible projects include, but are not limited to:
- Improvements along an expanded multimodal roadway network with separated bicycle lanes and improved safety for pedestrians
- Community-informed street design enhancements
- Application of low-cost safety treatments (rumble strips, flashing beacons, signage, etc.)
- Traffic speed management projects
- Installation of safety enhancements including crosswalks, sidewalks, and lighting for safe passage for people walking, rolling, and using mobility assistive devices
- Creation of safe routes to schools and public transit services through improved safe passage for people walking, biking and rolling in underserved communities
- Addressing alcohol-impaired driving

Interested parties may subscribe to email updates to receive program announcements.

Informational webinars

The U.S. DOT is holding a series of webinars this spring titled “Getting Ready for the Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) Program.” Advance registration is required.

- May 2, 1-3 p.m. (register): For counties, cities, towns, other special districts that are subdivisions of a state, and transit agencies, with opening remarks by Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration Acting Administrator Robin Hutcheson
- May 3, 1-3 p.m. (register): For Metropolitan Planning Organizations, with opening remarks by USDOT Deputy Assistant Secretary for Tribal Affairs Arlando Teller

A webinar was held on April 28 for tribal governments, with opening remarks by Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations Executive Director Bill Keyrouze.

The webinars are being recorded, and the presentation and recordings will be posted on the SS4A Webinar Series page. For questions about the webinars, contact SS4A@dot.gov.

Federal cyber agency asks organizations to share information

In this time of heightened risk due to the war in Ukraine, the U.S. Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency is urging organizations to share information about cyber incidents in order to increase collective resilience in the face of global cyberthreats.

Sharing information about cyber incidents allows the CISA to fill critical information gaps, rapidly deploy resources and render assistance to victims, analyze incoming information from across sectors to spot trends, and quickly share that information with network defenders to warn other potential victims.

To facilitate the information-sharing process, the CISA developed a Cyber Event Information Sharing Fact Sheet, which provides stakeholders with clear guidance about what to share, who should share, and how to share information about unusual cyber incidents or activity.

The CISA is also encouraging organizations to use the wealth of resources on its Shields Up webpage, including technical guidance for network defenders, and free tools and services.

On March 21, the White House announced that there “is now evolving intelligence that Russia may be exploring options for potential cyberattacks” against the United States in response to economic sanctions resulting from Russia’s invasion of Ukraine.

The White House urged organizations to implement a range of prevention strategies, such as using multi-factor authentication, backing up data and ensuring offline backups, running exercises and emergency plans, encrypting data and training employees.

Organizations were also advised to engage proactively with their local FBI field office or CISA regional office to establish

Federal cybersecurity officials urge organizations to share information about cyber incidents to bolster collective defenses against attacks.
On April 5, Attorney General Maura Healey joined municipal and health care leaders from across the state, as well as families harmed by the opioid epidemic, to celebrate $525 million in funds that have been secured for prevention, harm reduction, treatment and recovery programs throughout Massachusetts.

As part of a $26 billion nationwide resolution with the nation’s largest manufacturers and marketers of opioids, municipalities across the country were eligible to sign-on to receive settlement funds to abate the crisis in their communities.

Healey announced that, because of widespread support from cities and towns, Massachusetts will receive the maximum amount under the settlements. In addition, as the result of an agreement secured by her office, all of the funds will go toward abatement resources for communities and families to address the devastating impact of the opioid crisis throughout the state.

More than $525 million will be coming into Massachusetts over the next 18 years, starting this spring. Of that, more than $210 million will be distributed directly to Massachusetts municipalities, and more than $310 million will go into the statewide Opioid Recovery and Remediation Fund to ensure that funds are spent on harm reduction, treatment and prevention.

"Massachusetts led the nation in taking on the opioid industry, and we will lead the nation in delivering prevention, harm reduction, treatment and recovery," Healey said. "Cities and towns across our state worked together to secure more than half a billion dollars, and we are committed to using every dollar to provide the services that families need." 

At the April 5 press event, Amesbury Mayor Kassandra Gove was among the local leaders acknowledging the impact of opioids in their community.

"Amesbury is no stranger to the opioid crisis, with nearly a dozen deaths in the last year due to opioid drugs," Gove said. "It has impacted our families and our neighborhoods, from how people care for their physical and mental health to how our teachers support and provide for our students in classrooms."

She said the settlement funding "will allow us to directly support and positively impact residents who need it and create proactive programming to ease the opioid crisis."

Boston Mayor Michelle Wu said her administration will be "working closely with public health experts and the recovery community to ensure every dollar of this funding delivers impact."

Newton Mayor Ruthanne Fuller, who serves as president of the MMA, said, "These funds give hope to thousands and thousands of people. They’re going to fortify the community-based programs that will meet people where they are. These funds will save lives."

Gardner Mayor Michael Nicholson thanked Healey and her team "for holding those who got us to this point accountable and for their continued efforts to assist those struggling with the disease of addiction."

Salem Mayor Kim Driscoll said the settlement "will enable us to invest more in overdose prevention and treatment, public education, and other initiatives aimed at reducing addiction to opioids and caring for those who are suffering from this crisis."

The settlements are the result of an investigation that found that three major opioid distributors — Cardinal, McKesson, and AmerisourceBergen — shipped thousands of suspicious orders without regard for their legitimacy, and that Johnson & Johnson misled patients and doctors about their addictive nature.

From 2023 through 2038, the payments are expected annually, in July.

For more information on the statewide opioid settlements, visit the AG’s Office FAQ page.

Lt. Gov. Karyn Polito discusses the benefits of the administration’s 2-year-old Community One Stop for Growth program during the April 20 virtual meeting of the Local Government Advisory Commission. She said the program grew out of conversations with local officials, who have until June 3 to apply for the program’s current round of grants.
Administration awards Green Communities grants

By John Ouellette

During an event in Lawrence on April 13, the administration awarded $8.3 million in Green Communities competitive grants to 64 municipalities.

The competitive grants support energy efficiency and renewable energy projects that further the designated communities’ clean energy goals. The grants are awarded to Green Communities that have successfully invested their initial designation grants and previous competitive grant awards.

According to the Department of Energy Resources, the grants will help to fund a range of projects, from ventilation system upgrades to the installation of insulation and energy management systems at municipal buildings and facilities. Projects also include installations of air-source heat pumps, hybrid police cruisers, and electric vehicle charging stations. (Click here for details of the project awards.)

Once completed, the grant-supported projects are estimated to yield energy savings comparable to the amount of energy consumed by 339 Massachusetts households, according to the DOER. In greenhouse gas emissions terms, the projects are estimated to reduce emissions by the equivalent to taking nearly 700 cars off the road.

“The innovative and cost-effective projects receiving grants will increase energy efficiency and clean energy use in municipal buildings and vehicles across the Commonwealth, significantly helping our state achieve its long-term emissions reduction requirements,” Gov. Charlie Baker said at the press event, where he was joined by Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Kathleen Theoharides and Department of Energy Resources Commissioner Patrick Woodcock.

Theoharides said the local projects will “reduce harmful greenhouse gas emissions and lower municipal energy costs.” Achieving long-term climate goals in Massachusetts “will not be possible without collaboration and partnerships at all levels of government,” she said.

To receive funding, cities and towns must earn the Green Communities designation by meeting five criteria defined by the Green Communities Act. According to the DOER, the current roster of 280 Green Communities account for 87% of the state’s population.

Since 2010, the DOER has awarded $153 million in designation grants and competitive grants to Green Communities. The grants are funded through proceeds from carbon allowance auctions under the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative.

Disaster Declaration ensures federal assistance for January storm

President Joe Biden issued a Major Disaster Declaration on April 18 for the severe winter storm that hit Massachusetts on Jan. 28 and 29, making federal disaster assistance available to cities and towns, state agencies, and certain nonprofits to help cover storm-related response and repair costs.

Total reimbursable costs for the storm are expected to exceed $13 million, according to the Baker-Polito administration, which had requested the federal disaster assistance.

The Major Disaster Declaration for Public Assistance, including Snow Assistance, supports Bristol, Norfolk, Plymouth and Suffolk counties, and the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe. Each of the four county’s eligible storm costs exceeded federal financial thresholds under the Public Assistance Program.

Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency Acting Director Dawn Brantley said her agency and the Federal Emergency Management Agency worked closely with affected cities and towns, state agencies and nonprofits to document and assess storm costs and pursue the federal disaster declaration. She said MEMA will now work to ensure that the federal resources are “delivered as quickly as possible.”

Affected local governments, state agencies and some private nonprofit organizations in the declared jurisdictions will be reimbursed for 75% of their costs associated with response and emergency protective measures, including storm-related overtime for first responders, clearing debris from public roads and public property, snow removal costs, and repairing, replacing, restoring or reconstructing damaged public facilities and infrastructure. Snow removal costs are reimbursable only when a county receives a record snowfall, or comes within 90% of the record snowfall.

Federal disaster funds will also be available for projects that will mitigate the costs and impacts of future disasters.

In the near future, MEMA said it will announce a series of information sessions in the impacted counties to explain the process for applying for federal disaster assistance to municipal and state officials and eligible nonprofits.

“From the first indications of any dynamic weather system, the Baker-Polito administration remains in close contact with local, state and federal officials to prepare for and mitigate impact,” said Public Safety and Security Secretary Terrence Reidy.

“Securing these federal funds sustains the ongoing recovery efforts and creates new opportunities for our municipal, state, and nonprofit partners.”
MSA holds Western Mass. Conference

By Isabelle Nichols

The Massachusetts Select Board Association’s second Western Massachusetts Municipal Conference, held on Saturday, April 9, in Easthampton, focused on some of the unique challenges facing the region.

The conference was co-sponsored by the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, the Franklin Regional Council of Governments, the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, and the Rural Policy Advisory Commission.


The legislators discussed priorities for the remainder of the legislative session, including the state’s remaining American Rescue Plan Act funding, mental health care in schools, privacy and security of personal data, and exploring the impact that unpaved roads have on small towns.

Following the panel, a number of workshops covered topics such as police reform and its impact on small towns, ARPA funding and economic recovery from the pandemic, the impacts of post-COVID population shifts on housing affordability, and the state of public infrastructure in western Massachusetts.

Discussing police reform, Pittsfield Police Chief Michael Wynn and Deerfield Police Chief John Paciorek provided an overview of Chapter 253 of the Acts of 2020 (generally known as the policing reform law), the Peace Officer Standards and Training Commission, and the impact that the new standards will have on local police departments. Wynn serves on the POST Commission.

Heath Fahle, assistant secretary for federal funds at the Executive Office for Administration and Finance, gave an update on funds provided to state and local governments through the ARPA.

Following Fahle’s overview, Holyoke Community Development Director Alicia Zoeller discussed how her city is managing its ARPA funding, including planning and community engagement, allocation of funds, and tracking and reporting on the funding.

Ben Tafoya, director of the Division of Local Mandates, discussed a recent study by the Office of the State Auditor, “Public Infrastructure in Western Massachusetts: A Critical Need for Regional Investment and Revitalization.”

Alyssa Larose, real estate project manager/housing development director for the Franklin County Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority, and Jessica Atwood, economic development program manager for the Franklin Regional Council of Governments, gave an overview of regional population trends and development challenges, including a deep dive into COVID-19 impacts on development.

Great Barrington Assistant Town Manager and Planning Director Christopher Rembold discussed how population shifts and development challenges have affected his town. He also gave an overview of some immediate and near-term strategies his town is implementing to address the challenges.

LGAC discusses education funding

During the April 20 virtual meeting of the Local Government Advisory Commission, Sandwich Town Manager Bud Dunham discusses the House’s plan to increase Chapter 70 minimum aid per student from $30 to $60 in the fiscal 2023 state budget. He said the increase would have a major impact for the 136 school districts that are minimum aid districts.
Solid waste challenges discussed at MassRecycle Conference

By Josie Ahlberg

The MassRecycle Conference on March 31 and April 1, co-sponsored by the MMA, featured energetic conversations on challenges and solutions related to solid waste and recycling services, looming waste bans, and extended producer responsibility.

Local officials, industry professionals and environmental advocates were eager to discuss several bills related to mattress, paint, electronics and smoke detector recycling currently before the Joint Committee on Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture, as well as a pending, wide-ranging bill on environmental issues.

A bill seeking to address rising recycling costs in Massachusetts (H. 878) was a hot topic during a panel discussion on extended producer responsibility. H. 878 would establish a comprehensive EPR system for packaging, requiring producers to reimburse municipalities for the costs of recycling packaging materials.

Panelists assured attendees that states such as Maine and Oregon that have implemented EPR programs have not seen increases in consumer costs. The MMA has expressed support for the approach and goals of H. 878 and is hopeful to see the Legislature enact the bill.

Local officials, industry professionals and environmental advocates discuss solid waste and recycling services during the MassRecycle Conference.

Public works officials, solid waste and recycling industry experts, and sustainability advocates were clearly invigorated by the conference, which was held as the Legislature is considering a number of pertinent bills.
The Massachusetts Municipal Human Resources association will offer its annual HR101 boot camp as a full-day, in-person event on May 12 in Wrentham.

The boot camp will cover core functions of the municipal HR office, including trends in negotiations related to COVID, first steps in creating a diversity, equity, and inclusion plan for cities and towns, key components of an HR audit, and an HR101 roundtable with seasoned human resources professionals.

Featured speakers will include:

- Wrentham Human Resources Director Mary Beth Bernard, who will discuss “big ticket” items in human resources audits
- Teresa Cruz Foley, founder and lead consultant of Brave Space Consulting, who will explore the first steps for municipal HR managers looking to undertake diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging initiatives
- Elizabeth Valerio, partner at Valerio, Dominello & Hillman, who will cover legal trends in labor law, with a focus on trends in negotiations related to COVID
- An HR101 roundtable discussion covering topics like recruitment, remote work policies, employee training, and managing discrimination claims, featuring Danvers Assistant Town Manager and Communications Director Jen Breaker, Avon Town Administrator Greg Enos, Lexington Human Resources Director Anne Graglia-Kostos, and Brookline Human Resources Director Ann Hess Braga

The boot camp is geared toward newer municipal human resources professionals, but veterans in the field are welcome to attend for a refresher course.

Registration and networking will begin at 8:30 a.m. The program will start at 9 a.m., and lunch will be served.

The boot camp will be held at Lake Pearl, 299 Creek St. in Wrentham.

The registration fee is $75 for members and $85 for nonmembers. A registration link is available at www.mma.org.

On the day of this in-person meeting, attendees will be required to show proof of being fully vaccinated for COVID (card, photo or QR code). (Religious or medical exemptions are allowed with a negative PCR test taken within 72 hours.) Masks are optional. These safety protocols are subject to change based on the latest public health data and guidance.

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

On June 16, the Massachusetts Municipal Human Resources Annual Meeting will cover federal drug and alcohol testing requirements for those with commercial driver’s licenses.

Municipal employers must comply with mandatory drug and alcohol regulations from the U.S. Department of Transportation’s Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration for CDL drivers. Any employer of CDL drivers must follow a specific set of drug and alcohol testing rules, and noncompliance can result in fines for the organization.

Ted Dawson, owner of Advantage Drug Testing, will lead a comprehensive training about the federal regulations and what municipal employers need to know to ensure compliance.

The MMHR Annual Meeting will include a vote on the fiscal 2023 budget and MMHR board slate; presentation of the 2022 Skop Award; and an MMA legislative update from Legislative Director Dave Koffman.

The annual meeting will be held at Grandview Farm, 55 Center St. in Burlington.

Registration and networking will begin at 8:30 a.m. The program will start at 9 a.m., and lunch will be served.

The registration fee is $40 for members and $55 for nonmembers. A registration link will be available at www.mma.org in early May.

On the day of this in-person meeting, attendees will be required to show proof of being fully vaccinated for COVID (card, photo or QR code). (Religious or medical exemptions are allowed with a negative PCR test taken within 72 hours.) Masks are optional. These safety protocols are subject to change based on the latest public health data and guidance.

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

Lauren Goldberg, managing partner at KP|Law, discusses the top five law questions currently facing municipalities during the Massachusetts Mayors’ Association’s monthly meeting on April 27 in Leominster. Topics included the handling of public meetings and opportunities for hybrid options.
MSA to hold training for newly elected members

The Massachusetts Select Board Association will hold a free training for newly elected select board members on Saturday, July 23, in Devens.

Key topics will include municipal finance and budgeting, open meeting and public records laws, and collaborative decision making. A roundtable discussion will provide an opportunity to hear from veteran select board members about their experiences, followed by an open question and answer session.

The training will be targeted to newly elected members, but any select board member is welcome to attend for a refresher and an opportunity to network with colleagues.

Registration and networking will begin at 8:30 a.m. The program will start at 9 a.m., and lunch will be served. The full agenda and registration will be available at www.mma.org in June.

The training will be held at Devens Commons Center, 31 Andrews Parkway in Devens.

On the day of this in-person meeting, attendees will be required to show proof of being fully vaccinated for COVID (card, photo or QR code). (Religious or medical exemptions are allowed with a negative PCR test taken within 72 hours.) Masks are optional. These safety protocols are subject to change based on the latest public health data and guidance.

The Massachusetts Select Board Association will also host a series of free webinars over the summer covering more technical topics, such as land use and community development. Webinars topics and dates will be announced in the coming weeks.

Newly elected select board members are encouraged to share their contact information with the MMA (by email to database@mma.org) in order to receive information about Select Board Association events.

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

MMHR accepting nominations for 2022 Skop Award

Massachusetts Municipal Human Resources is accepting nominations through May 19 for its annual Emil S. Skop Award, given in recognition of outstanding contributions made to the field of municipal human resources management.

Nominations will be accepted from MMHR members, human resources colleagues, municipal chief administrative officers, municipal personnel/human resources boards, officials of state human resources-related agencies, and other related entities.

The 2022 Skop Award will be presented at the MMHR Annual Business Meeting on June 16 in Burlington.

Skop was one of the founding members of the Massachusetts Municipal Personnel Association (renamed MMHR in 2019) and served as its first executive secretary.

Before “networking” became a recognizable term, Skop acknowledged the value of sharing information and experiences with other human resources and labor relations professionals. He is recognized for his tireless efforts in this area.

The award criteria and nomination form can be found here.

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

MunEnergy webinar to focus on energy markets, sustainability

By Katie McCue

The MMA’s MunEnergy program will host a webinar on May 12 for members to learn more about the value of the MunEnergy program, with a focus on the current state of energy markets.

The free virtual meeting will cover:
• Energy markets, including impacts due to the crisis in Ukraine
• Constellation’s sustainability offerings, and how they can help municipalities reach their climate goals
• MunEnergy’s unique contract designed specifically for cities and towns

The meeting will be held from noon to 1:30 p.m., and registration can be done through Zoom.

The MMA formed the MunEnergy program in 1998 to help Massachusetts cities, towns and government entities stabilize energy costs and simplify energy management. Constellation is the program’s trusted partner for energy procurement and education for Massachusetts cities and towns.

MunEnergy provides valuable resources to cities and towns, including a unique municipal contract, energy experts who provide information and answer questions, and a focus on sustainability solutions. MMA members can work with the team at Constellation on their climate goals through a range of innovative solutions.

Local officials can receive the latest energy information from the MMA by sending their energy contact information to energy@mma.org.

For more about the MunEnergy program, visit www.mma.org/munenergy or contact Katie McCue at kmccue@mma.org or 617-426-7272, ext. 111.
MMA-Suffolk accepting applications for finance class

The MMA-Suffolk Municipal Finance Management Seminar will hold three programs in 2022.

The five-week program, held on Fridays, 9 a.m.-4 p.m., provides an overview of Massachusetts municipal finance, including the operational aspects of finance structure, systems and processes in Massachusetts cities and towns.

The application period for the fall 2022 session remains open through July 31. The application is available on the MMA website.

In September, the MMA and Suffolk University will launch the 19th and 20th Certificate programs in-person in Grafton and Dartmouth. 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. Suffolk programs currently have a vaccination requirement for in-person learning. The application period has closed.

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

– Katie McCue

Mayors focus on downtowns

Leominster Mayor Dean Mazzarella discusses his city’s revitalization during the April 27 meeting of the Massachusetts Mayors’ Association in his city. Mazzarella said downtowns and cities are currently experiencing a resurgence.
Best practices for hiring seasonal help

By Lin Chabra

Each summer, municipalities across the state hire seasonal employees to meet increased demand for a variety of jobs. Although temporary in nature, this spike in employment requires careful consideration to avoid safety and liability exposure.

Seasonal hires are often high school and college students who, depending on their age, may be subject to child labor laws. Further, all minors under the age of 18 must complete an employment permit application and get their permit before starting a new job. (A youth employment permit is available online.)

Under child labor laws, workers between the ages of 14 and 16 shall not, among other things:

- Operate, clean or repair power-driven machinery (except office machines or machines for retail cleanup, or kitchen work not otherwise prohibited)
- Work on or use ladders, scaffolds, or their substitutes
- Work in garages, except dispensing gas and oil
- Ride in or on a motor vehicle (except in passenger seat when wearing a seatbelt)

In addition, individuals under the age of 16 are allowed to work only between the hours of 7 a.m. and 9 p.m. from July 1 through Labor Day.

Summer hazards

Outdoor summer work increases the potential for common ailments and harms such as heat stroke, dehydration, sunburn, poison ivy, and even lightning strike. It should also be noted that the northeast region of the country has a high rate of Lyme disease (spread by a bite from an infected tick), according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Other potentially hazardous situations include municipal pools and beaches, as well as public works and school jobs that involve working around motorized vehicles and mechanical equipment. While COVID-19 is still present, municipalities should consider vaccination status and a person’s potential interaction with others, particularly vulnerable populations.

Pre-screen, train and supervise

The three most important things that a municipality can do to help mitigate risks associated with hiring seasonal workers are to pre-screen, train and supervise.

Pre-screen: All camp staff and volunteers at “recreational camps” (as defined by Ch. 111, Sect. 127A and 105 CMR 430.000) must undergo Sex Offender Registry Information (SORI) checks. Although not mandatory, the Sex Offender Registry Board states that a SORI check may be requested “for the protection of a child under the age of 18 or another person for whom such inquirer has responsibility, care or custody.” This latter opportunity may apply to seasonal employees in departments such as parks and recreation or elder services.

Driving records should be thoroughly checked for any employee operating a vehicle to ensure that proper and relevant certifications are in place and valid — such as auto and equipment operator’s licenses, lifeguard certifications, first aid, and CPR.

Pre-employment physicals may also be necessary for certain jobs.

Train: All seasonal employees must be trained properly and thoroughly. Employers must ensure that all employees know how to use equipment and appropriate personal protective equipment competently and safely.

Temporary employees should be included in any tailgate safety talks that are being offered to full-time workers. Seasonal workers must be trained to know what to do in case of an emergency, such as when an injury or property damage occurs, or when inclement weather or an electrical storm hits. Employers should
Randolph

Town to build school-based community health center

The town of Randolph will soon start construction on a new community health center at its high school, bringing medical services to residents and bridging a health care gap that has affected the community for years.

On April 13, U.S. Rep. Ayanna Pressley came to Randolph to announce $1 million in federal funding, part of a $1.5 trillion omnibus spending package that President Joe Biden signed in March. The $1 million will cover construction costs for the center, which is expected to open in 2023.

Local officials say the facility, which will be run by Dorchester-based Codman Square Health Center, will provide badly needed pediatric services to Randolph, with the goal of eventually expanding services to more age groups. The town of 35,000 residents currently doesn’t have any pediatric health care options within its borders, a problem that this new center will help alleviate, officials said.

“This is a huge step forward for the Randolph community,” said Town Manager Brian Howard. “This is one of the key initiatives that we had. … We are truly committed to making sure that we can provide access to health care to every person that lives in Randolph, and make it easily accessible, affordable and welcoming.”

The community, a majority of whom are people of color, has long been underserved by the medical system. This problem came into sharper view during the COVID-19 pandemic, when Randolph ranked third for a time among Massachusetts communities for COVID infections.

“As we look ahead, we must ensure that communities like Randolph are made front and center in our recovery efforts,” Pressley said during her Randolph visit. “That means ensuring that Randolph students and families have the resources they need not just to survive this ongoing crisis, but also to thrive.”

In recent years, several factors brought the project to fruition. Since 2018, Randolph had been working with the Metropolitan Area Planning Commission on a community health assessment, which resulted in a January 2020 report that highlighted, among other things, the need for a community health care partner. Last year, Codman Square Health Center reached out to Randolph to collaborate on a school-based health center, according to Planning Director Michelle Tyler. Around the same time, she said, Pressley’s office asked about Randolph’s needs for the federal community projects funding.

The $1 million is expected to fully cover the renovations to incorporate the new center at the high school. Codman Square will fund the medical operations through grants, insurance payments and other sources, Tyler said, though Randolph will likely cover some expenses, such as utility costs.

Once completed, the new 1,500-square-foot center will include four examination rooms, lab space, an administrative area, a meeting space and bathrooms, Tyler said. It will have two separate entrances, through the school and directly to the outside. Initially, Randolph anticipates that residents ages 3 through 24 will receive services there.

Staffing levels haven’t been finalized, Tyler said, but a Department of Public Health grant being sought by Codman Square would require a full-time primary care provider, a full-time behavioral health specialist and a full-time community health worker to connect higher-need families with health insurance programs, food benefits and other non-medical services. The center will offer vaccinations, annual wellness exams and physicals, and mental health services.

Randolph officials said they hope to expand the center’s services and eventually transform it into a full federally qualified health care center that serves all ages. Tyler said community input will continue to drive the process.

“This isn’t the town hall making a decision, or the school making a decision,” Tyler said. “It truly has been a collaboration.”

- Jennifer Kavanaugh

New Bedford

City eyes ARPA funds for apartment construction

New Bedford officials plan to use up to $5 million in federal coronavirus recovery funds to encourage the production of more affordable apartments in the city and create a healthy mix of housing options for neighborhoods.

Budgeting funds from the American Rescue Plan Act, New Bedford will grant between $250,000 and $2 million through its Housing Expansion Initiative to each qualified developer that agrees to produce rental units for people earning 60% or less of the area median income. Developers have until May 16 to apply for funding, and the city is hoping to get the funds out the door by the end of May, said Mayor Jon Mitchell.

New Bedford already has a significant number of income-restricted units and a housing policy that encourages development of both market-rate and affordable housing, Mitchell said. The ARPA funding will help the city in its efforts to achieve a mix of new developments, he said.

“We’d like to see a balance of restricted and unrestricted units, so the ARPA funds give us an opportunity to accelerate projects that are in keeping with our overall policy,” Mitchell said.

- John Mitchell
Mitchell said. “The ARPA regulations require cities to fund income-restrict-
ed units. Through this program, we’re obviously following the regulations, but we’re also trying to emphasize mixed-in-
come and mixed-use properties, which we believe is our sweet spot.”

Overall, New Bedford is getting $64.7 million in direct ARPA funds, and another $16.7 million through Bristol County, Mitchell said. The Housing Expansion Initiative is one of several ARPA-funded programs the city currently has in motion. Other initiatives include the Enhanced Facade Improvement Program for small businesses; the Capital Costs for Childcare, Out-of-School Time Care and Early Childhood Education Program for nonprofit child care organizations; and a Small Business Assistance Program.

The Housing Expansion Initiative falls under the ARPA category of addressing negative economic impacts that people experienced during the pandemic. To qualify for the funding, developments must be shovel-ready, have an overall project cost of at least $5 million, demonstrate a need for the ARPA assistance, and fit into one of three categories: mixed-income projects that include both affordable and market-rate units, mixed-use projects, or adaptive reuses of vacant properties.

While the projects must include new units for households at or below 60% of area median income, the program doesn’t set a percentage of affordable units that each project must have. Mitchell said the applications will be scored individually based on how well they achieve a balance of income-restricted and market-rate units.

The initiative will focus solely on rent-
al housing, Mitchell said. To qualify, a one-person household will have an income limit of $35,340, while a four-person household will have an income cap of $50,460. In terms of rents, an eligible income-restricted, one-bedroom apartment would have a limit of $818 a month, with utilities included; a two-bedroom apartment would be capped at $1,012; and a three-bedroom apartment could cost no more than $1,259 per month. The city will continue to monitor compliance with income and rent restrictions going forward.

City officials said this use of ARPA funds will benefit both residents and the city overall.

“It’s no secret that we have a serious hous-
ing shortage in our community, especially housing that’s affordable for our work-
ing and middle-class families,” said City Council President Ian Abreu in a statement about the initiative. “Programs like these coming to fruition, thanks to the American Rescue Plan Act funds, will go a long way to ensure that no family or resident, especially our children and seniors, will ever go homeless here in the city of New Bedford.”

-- Jennifer Kavanaugh

Becket, Otis

Town’s launch shared police chief role

The towns of Becket and Otis have become the latest two communities to share a police chief.

Becket approached Otis after its chief decided to step away last year to see if the town would be interested in having Becket’s chief serve both towns. The two towns signed an agreement in February, and Police Chief Kristopher McDonough’s first day in Otis was March 7.

“Small towns like Otis and Becket have a hard time competing with the salaries offered in bigger communities, which makes it challenging to retain competent employees,” said Otis Town Administrator Brandi Page. “This would give Becket the opportunity to compensate Kris, who they were happy with, more competitively.”

Page said that former Becket Town Admin-
istrator Bill Caldwell, who recently transitioned to the town of Sterling, reached out to other communities who had shared the chief position, doing the groundwork on a fair and vetted agreement.

McDonough, who has served as police chief in Becket since 2012, began his ten-
ure in Becket as a patrol officer in 2008 and has worked in law enforcement since 2001.

“It’s really a community policing model out here in the Berkshires,” McDonough said. “We have all types of calls, from very serious to very straightforward assistance. … My philosophy is based on community policing and really getting out there and getting to know the residents and what they expect from us.”

McDonough puts in 20 hours per week in each community. So far, he has been splitting Mondays and spending Tuesdays and Thursdays in Becket and Wednesdays and Fridays in Otis. The intermunicipal agreement does allow for emergency needs that might require more time in one town.

“The needs in many of the smaller Western Massachusetts towns mirror each other,” Page said. “We are looking to provide the best services we can with modest budgets and attractive tax rates.”

Similar to towns on the Cape, towns like Otis see populations expand significantly in the summer months, which requires additional public safety and public health dollars, Page said.

The position reports to the town admin-
istrators in both communities, but is officially employed and paid by the town of Becket, including all benefits. Otis contributes for half of the total compensation, in-
cluding benefits and cruiser maintenance.

The towns received a $46,852 grant from the Community Compact Cabinet’s Effi-
ciency and Regionalization program this year, which was used to purchase a cruiser for the chief.

“The experience so far has been very posi-
tive,” Page said. “Kris is doing an excellent job and transitioned immediately. … He has made a point to introduce himself in the community and the feedback has all been great.”

The current agreement runs through the end of the fiscal year, and both communi-
ties must decide by May 15 if they want to renew the agreement and for how long.

“I think towns are always looking for new and more efficient ways to run things,” Page said. “It just takes being open to the opportunity and giving it a try.”

-- Meredith Gabrilska

This monthly column features local and re-
regional news items related to local government in Massachusetts. To suggest an item for this column, email editor@mma.org.
**BUDGET**
*Continued from page 1*

**UGGA**

The House’s and governor’s budgets would increase Unrestricted General Government Aid by $31.5 million, or 2.7%, to $1.19 billion.

The governor’s budget tied the UGGA increase to the projected rate of growth in state tax revenues, but the administration used a revised estimate for fiscal 2022 as its base. The MMA has argued that the proposed increase does not reflect the actual — and far higher — increase in state tax collections.

The MMA will continue to advocate for a higher UGGA increase as the budget process continues.

**School transportation**

In line with the governor’s recommendation, the House budget would reduce regional school transportation aid from $82 million this year to $77 million. The budget would increase funding for the transportation of homeless students under the federal McKinney-Vento program by $8.5 million, to $22.9 million. The House budget does not have a line item for out-of-district vocational transportation, which was funded at $250,000 for fiscal 2022.

**PILOT**

The House budget would level-fund payments-in-lieu-of-taxes (PILOT) for state-owned land, at $35 million.

**Local-option COLA for retirees**

During debate, the House adopted an amendment that would allow (but not mandate) retirement boards that have accepted Section 103 of Chapter 32 to award a cost-of-living adjustment of up to 5% to retirees, rather than the current limit of up to 3%. The ability to award this higher COLA would only be authorized for fiscal 2023.

The MMA is encouraging local officials to consult with their financial teams to determine how this would impact each community’s unfunded pension liability. The impact would vary between retirement systems due to differences in the COLA base, and the actuarial parameters used to calculate the unfunded pension liability. Local officials with concerns about this section should discuss this with their senators as soon as possible.

**Next steps**

During the budget process and the remainder of the legislative session, the MMA will work to build on the House bill by advocating for a greater increase in Unrestricted General Government Aid and higher funding for regional school transportation, PILOT, and other key accounts.

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

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**PFAS**
*Continued from page 4*

state-issued limits. Last October, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency announced a strategic roadmap to confront PFAS contamination nationwide.

Read said the coordinated strategy proposed by the PFAS Interagency Task Force provides the guidance needed for Massachusetts to be a leader on this complex issue. Addressing the health and environmental impacts of PFAS contamination will require a multifaceted approach and significant financial investment, and the MMA will remain engaged with the Legislature and local officials to help to determine exactly how these recommendations will be funded and implemented in the coming years.

Read thanked the task force co-chairs for ensuring that municipalities were represented in the process.

“We look forward to working together with the Legislature and Commonwealth as this report translates to funding decisions, regulatory rulemaking, and lawmakers.”

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**CISA**
*Continued from page 7*

relationships in advance of any cyber incidents.

In addition to the Shields Up webpage, the CISA is urging state and municipal officials to make use of several resources it provides:

- A cybersecurity advisory issued jointly by the CISA, the FBI and the National Security Agency on Jan. 11 describing the tactics, techniques and procedures frequently associated with Russian state-sponsored cyberattacks
- A CISA list of of cybersecurity measures to reduce the likelihood and impact of a cyberattack
- A Russia Cyber Threat Overview and Advisories webpage, with the CISA’s advisories about Russian state-sponsored threats
- A new catalog of free cybersecurity resources from CISA, the open-source community, and CISA’s private sector partners in the Joint Cyber Defense Collaborative
- A CISA Insights document, “Preparing for and Mitigating Foreign Influence Operations Targeting Critical Infrastructure,” focusing on misinformation and disinformation campaigns used to sow public distrust and undermine security

CISA can offer help to organizations that have experienced cyber incidents and can use information from incident reports to protect other possible victims.
DEVELOPMENT BILL
Continued from page 1

spaces and grants to support economic
development.

The bill would provide nearly $970 million to support revitalizing local
downtowns and communities, including $318 million in ARPA funding and $650 million in a bond authorization. This
includes $550 million for the MassWorks program, including $400 million in reauthorization and $147 million in ARPA funds to support 94 local projects. Nearly 250 municipalities would receive downtown recovery grants totaling $108 million.

The administration said the bill, in part, is responding to last year’s “Future of Work” report, which found that downtowns will look fundamentally different coming out of the COVID-19 pandemic, as many people have changed how and where they work.

The bill would authorize $270 million to support housing production across the Commonwealth, including affordable rental housing production and rehabilitation, public housing, climate resilient housing, and transit-oriented development. The bill includes policy proposals to increase housing production, including an increase of the cap on the Housing Development Incentive Program from $10 million to $30 million.

The bill would use $1.2 billion of the state’s ARPA funds for climate resiliency and preservation efforts. This includes $750 million for the Commonwealth’s clean energy industry, for projects such as electric vehicle rapid charging stations at Logan International Airport, the expansion of the MassCEC Wind Technology Training Center in Charlestown, more than $70 million in investments related to the New Bedford Marine Terminal, and a greater focus on higher education and workforce training in an effort to support the growing clean energy industry.

The bill also proposes $413 million to support more than 100 projects across state parks and trails, water and sewer, and environmental infrastructure grant programs.

The bill includes $325 million in ARPA funding for workforce efforts, including $300 million for the Unemployment Trust Fund to address unemployment overpayments. The HireNow program, which provides grants to employers to train and hire new workers, would receive $25 million.

To support the innovation economy, the bill includes $50 million for a new competitive and secure future innovation program to make strategic investments in purpose-driven research, technology development, and innovation, and in emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence and machine learning (AI/ML), robotics, quantum information science, cybersecurity, communications, and digital health.

ARPA funds to be used for COVID response include $20 million for local workforce training grants to recruit and train municipal employees that deliver important public services across Massachusetts.

The legislation would allow the Massachusetts Convention Center Authority to sell the Hynes Convention Center, with proceeds from the sale going to affordable housing development and the Back Bay area. Occupancy levels at the Hynes have been around 60% in recent years, according to the administration. Housing and Economic Development Secretary Mike Kennealy said the package reflects a “spirit of collaboration by targeting funding toward key priorities in all cities and towns across the Commonwealth.”

Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Kathleen Theoharis said the bill would make climate resiliency investments at the state and local level and promote clean energy solutions, “fostering innovation and technology advancements, continuing the growth of a homegrown clean energy and climate workforce, and beginning construction of important resilient infrastructure improvements.”

Federal ARPA funds must be committed by states by the end of 2024 and spent by the end of 2026. The governor said his bill prioritizes investing ARPA funding into projects that are already sufficiently defined and narrow in scope so they can be completed by 2026.

See the administration’s press release for a more complete list of items in the FORWARD package.

• View list of proposed “APRA 2.0” spending by community

ATFC holds Spring Conference

At the ATFC Spring Conference on April 30 in Oxford, Medfield Finance Committee Member Jeremy Marsette discusses how his town built a capital plan over the course of several years, and how town officials continue to implement it, despite challenges. Marsette also serves as Public Works director in Natick and is a director on the Association of Town Finance Committees board. More than 40 finance committee members attended the conference, which included a session on the American Rescue Plan Act with MMA Senior Legislative Analyst Jackie Lavender Bird.
WINTER ROADS
Continued from page 5
allowed. Unused allocations will not be available for use beyond the close of the fiscal year. Communities will receive reimbursements by Sept. 30, 2023.
If the total amount of WRAP reimbursement requests submitted to MassDOT is less than the original allocation, the remainder will be de-obligated and no longer available to the municipality. In the event that a city or town’s contractor claims to be unavailable due to other work, said contractor will be allowed to subcontract work related to WRAP.
Similar programs to WRAP were enacted in 2014 and 2015. Past grant allocations were based on the Chapter 90 funding formula, but this year’s WRAP distributions are calculated based on municipal road mileage.

LGAC highlights street improvement programs
During the April 20 virtual meeting of the Local Government Advisory Commission, Fitchburg City Councillor Sam Squailia thanks the administration for the $55 million in its infrastructure bond bill for municipal programs such as Complete Streets and Shared Streets and Spaces. Squailia said the programs improve safety and invigorate communities. She said a $197,000 Shared Streets grant helped Fitchburg transform Cushing Street from a roadway to a “vibrant pedestrian plaza,” bringing a boost of energy to the community.

SEASONAL HELP
Continued from page 15
review safety manuals and instructions, including listing what equipment each employee is and isn’t authorized to use.
Seasonal employees must sign to verify that they have received and reviewed the information.

Supervise: Do not, under any circumstance, leave seasonal workers unsupervised, as significant and catastrophic injuries could occur. A full-time, adult employee should always be present and supervising part-time summer workers. This can help prevent horseplay and serious injuries.

Risk reduction
Municipal employers should also examine what can be done on a more detailed level and work to address any potential risks. For example, assess the implications of child labor laws (as addressed above). Massachusetts has specific regulations regarding minors and various mechanical equipment, hazardous materials and specific working conditions. For example, employees under 18 years of age may not operate vehicles or forklifts, use buffing or polishing equipment, or work in wrecking, demolition, excavation or roofing.
Employers should carefully examine safety around the city or town and in specific areas where employees will be working. Check parks and playground equipment, and be diligent about pool and beach safety. Remind employees about summer storm and lightning safety, and work with them to identify heat stress and dehydration quickly when it occurs. Ensure that all employees know to report hazardous conditions promptly.

Finally, provide sunscreen for outdoor workers and be prepared for insect bites, poison ivy, sunburn and ticks.
Many municipal departments and the young people they hire are excited about the chance to work together to make a difference in their community. The benefits to both the employer and employee can be great, so long as safety is the first consideration.

Lin Chabra is MIIA’s Senior Manager of Risk Management.
WITH THIS FEDERAL COMMITMENT IN HAND, local and state leaders have been fully engaged in planning how to best use these invaluable ARPA funds, working under the assumption that they will have adequate time to plan, allocate, appropriate, distribute, commit and spend the funds. This is not a swift process. A huge portion of the funds will be directed to capital investments, which will require extensive time for procurement, negotiation and contracting. The deadline for completing all this work to obligate the funds is, on paper, Dec. 31, 2024. However, the minority party on Capitol Hill has made it clear that their goal is to claw back unobligated state and local ARPA funds if they return to the majority. Indeed, their demand has been to use these already committed ARPA funds to pay for new federal spending measures. While these attempts have been blocked by the majority party in recent months, if the balance of power shifts in this fall’s elections, ARPA clawbacks will become a very real possibility.

The best way to protect our communities and state from losing hundreds of millions — or billions — of invaluable ARPA dollars is to move swiftly in the allocation process, and to make certain that the funds are obligated well in advance of December 2024. With $2.3 billion in state ARPA funds still awaiting appropriation, and formal legislative sessions scheduled to end on July 31, the state is facing a new and unforeseen deadline to act within the next 90 days.

Fortunately, Gov. Charlie Baker’s recently filed $3.5 billion economic development bill (see MMA coverage here) provides an excellent vehicle to finish the ARPA appropriations process in time to avoid the risk of clawbacks that could be triggered when the new Congress convenes in January. While it would be ideal for the state to have more time to decide where to focus ARPA investments, waiting beyond July 31 would create an enterprise risk that could jeopardize access to the full amount that Massachusetts is entitled to.

Because of the political uncertainty in Washington, D.C., it is becoming increasingly clear that municipal leaders should do their best to complete their planning and decision-making processes and move to obligate the funds as soon as practicable.

Recessions always hit local governments the hardest

The third threat visible on the horizon is the global economic uncertainty created by the pandemic, supply chain disruptions, spiking energy prices and inflation — all deeply exacerbated by Russia’s immoral war on Ukraine.

With last week’s news that the U.S. experienced a real decline in GDP during the last quarter, economists are concluding that the risk of a recession within the next 18 months has increased substantially. We know from experience that every recession has created deeper and longer fiscal stress for municipalities than for states and the federal government. This is because the federal government can operate in deficit. Our state government, while needing to balance its budget, has far more tools at its disposal, including a $5.7 billion stabilization fund (massively higher than local rainy day funds), the power to raise taxes, and the ability to reduce spending. Cities and towns have very slim reserves and cannot raise taxes without state or voter permission. In addition, local government’s main revenue source, the property tax, lags for years after a recession due to the suspension of private investment in commercial or business growth.

While communities cannot insulate themselves from a recession, they can benefit from fiscal and economic tools that their partners at the state and federal levels can provide. For example, using today’s state revenue surplus to shore up municipal aid to match inflation, and using the state’s stabilization fund to protect education and local aid if a recession comes, would help enormously. Federally, guaranteeing 100% of ARPA funds would advance projects to deliver core services, employ thousands of private sector workers, build lifelines for teetering businesses and vulnerable residents, and create stronger local economies as a base to build on.

Inflation, clawbacks, recession — that’s a lot to worry about!

The good news is that local officials, state leaders, and our federal lawmakers here in Massachusetts can lean in and work together to manage these risks.

That’s the only way to guard against the coming hazards. •
Christine Lindberg became the new town administrator in Ashby on Feb. 14. Lindberg had served as human resources director in Dracut from June 2017 until November 2021, and before that had served for four years as chief aide to Salisbury Town Manager Neil Harrington and three years as assistant to the town manager in Hamilton. She served for nine years on the Middleton Select Board and served on the Middleton Planning Board from 2001 to 2016.

Lindberg has a master’s degree in public administration from Suffolk University and a bachelor’s degree in political science from Salem State University. She also completed the 2012-2013 MMA-Suffolk University Certificate in Local Government Leadership and Management program.

In Ashby, Lindberg replaces Bob Hanson, who served as administrator from 2013 until his retirement last year.

James Ferrera became the new town administrator in Warren on March 14.

For the past 16 years, Ferrera had worked as a court service coordinator for the Massachusetts Trial Court. He also served on the Springfield City Council from 2007 to 2014, and was twice council president. He has a bachelor’s degree in political science and criminal justice from American International College.

In Warren, Ferrera replaces Michael Lapinski, who left the position in December.

On April 25, Kate Hodges became the new town administrator in Lancaster. Hodges had worked for the town of Concord for the past seven years, serving as assistant town manager from February 2015 until December 2018, and as deputy town manager after that. Previously, she had worked as the director of parks, recreation and community education in Littleton from 2008 to 2015, and had been the director of parks and recreation for the town of Coventry, Connecticut, from 2004 to 2008. She has a bachelor’s degree in sociology/women’s studies from UMass Amherst, and a master’s degree in public administration from Framingham State University.

In Lancaster, Hodges replaces Orlando Pacheco, who became the town administrator in Georgetown in January. Retired Franklin Town Administrator Jeff Nutting had been serving as Lancaster’s interim administrator.

Angie Lopes Ellison became the new town administrator in Fairhaven on April 4. Ellison had served as the city administrator in North Adams since 2020, and had been the town manager in Uxbridge for two years before that. She served as town administrator in Blandford from 2016 to 2018, and as a college administrator at UMass Boston from 2002 to 2007 and at Framingham State University from 2000 to 2002. She also worked as an independent consultant from 2008 to 2019, with a focus on diversity, equity and inclusion work.

She has a master’s degree in American studies from UMass Boston, and a bachelor’s degree in political science from Southeastern Massachusetts University (now UMass Dartmouth). She completed the MMA-Suffolk University Certificate in Local Government Leadership and Management program in 2018-2019.

In Fairhaven, Ellison replaces Mark Rees, who retired in January 2021 after five years of service. Rees is a former city manager in Portland, Maine, town manager in North Andover and Northbridge, and chief financial officer in Framingham. Wendy Graves, the town’s finance director, had served as interim administrator after Rees retired.

Tom Golden, who had been serving in the House of Representatives since 1995, became the new city manager in Lowell on April 28.

A lifelong resident of Lowell, Golden had been representing the 16th Middlesex District, which includes parts of Lowell and Chelmsford. He had served on numerous committees, including the House Committee on Ethics, the House Committee on Rules, and the Special Joint Committee on Redistricting. He has a bachelor’s degree and master’s degree in business administration, both from UMass Lowell.

In Lowell, Golden replaces Eileen Donoghue, the first woman to hold the position, who left on April 11 after four years. She had previously served on the Lowell City Council and as mayor from 1998 to 2002. In 2010, she was elected to the state Senate, where she represented Lowell, Dunstable, Groton, Pepperell, Tyngsboro, and Westford in the First Middlesex District until becoming city manager.

In the weeks between Donoghue’s departure and Golden’s arrival, City Clerk Michael Geary served as interim city manager.
Richard Waldo will become the new town administrator in Wellfleet on May 31. Waldo has been Provincetown’s public works director since November 2013 after serving as the deputy public works director for more than a year. He has a bachelor’s degree in civil engineering from Concordia University and is working toward a master’s degree in public administration at Suffolk University, with an expected graduation this fall. He completed the 2019-2020 MMA-Suffolk University Certificate in Local Government Leadership and Management program.

In Wellfleet, Waldo replaces Maria Broadbent, who left the position in April 2021. Charles Sumner has been serving as the town’s interim administrator.

Needham Town Manager Kate Fitzpatrick has received national attention for a crowdsourced poem she started just over a year ago to reflect people’s hopes and dreams for cities and towns. The poem, “We Long For A City Where We Go Hard On The Issues And Easy On The People,” received more than 50 contributions from around the country and one from Australia.

Ron Holifield, CEO of Strategic Government Resources, discussed the poem in a video included in the organization’s March 29 “10 in 10” email newsletter, and Fitzpatrick recently learned that the poem would be included in the May issue of Public Management magazine, published by the International City/County Management Association. Fitzpatrick first requested contributions to the poem in April 2021 on her blog Very Kate, which she has been writing for the past three years, and where she reflects on life and municipal management. She credited Arlington Town Manager Adam Chapdelaine with inspiring the poem’s title. (Click here for the poem.)

Kenrick Clifton, who was serving his seventh term on the Randolph Town Council, died on April 21 at age 61.

Clifton was the council’s vice president when he died. He previously served two terms on the Randolph School Committee. He had been working for the MBTA since 1995 and was assistant director of the MBTA’s civil rights office.

A native of St. Kitts and Nevis, Clifton spent his high school and college years in the United States, having attended Boise State University on academic and athletic scholarships and earning a bachelor’s degree in political science. He earned a master’s degree in government and international relations from the City University of New York, a law degree from the University of Wolverhampton Law School in the United Kingdom, and certificates in law from the Norman Manley Law School in Jamaica and the Inns of Court School of Law in London. Before joining the MBTA, Clifton had worked for the St. Kitts Ministry of Foreign Affairs and for the Ministry of Tourism and Trade.

Florence Seldin, a longtime public servant and former Select Board member in Chatham, died on April 6 at age 91.

Seldin had served on the Select Board from 2009 to 2015, with three of those years as chair. She had also served as vice chair of Chatham’s Finance Committee, and was the town’s representative to the Cape Cod Commission for several years. She served on committees devoted to affordable housing, human services and community preservation, among others. A member of the League of Women Voters of Cape Cod, she had served as its president from 1997 to 2000.

With a Ph.D. in education from the University of Rochester, Seldin served as a school principal and assistant superintendent in Pittsford, New York, and as the superintendent of schools in Harvard before moving to Chatham in 1994. While in New York, Seldin also served on a statewide commission that investigated discrimination against women during the 1970s.

After eight terms and 24 years of service, John Lebeaux will retire from the Shrewsbury Board of Selectmen following the town’s May 3 election. Lebeaux, who had also served as town administrator in Princeton from 2009 to 2015, has been commissioner of the state Department of Agricultural Resources since February 2015. He was a member of Small Town Administrators of Massachusetts.

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.
The following are new select board members elected in annual town elections from March 1 through April 22.

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

**Andover:** Melissa Danisch  
**Athol:** Kala Fisher  
**Barre:** John Dixon  
**Bedford:** Shawn Hanegan  
**Billerica:** Mike Riley  
**Blackstone:** Brian Scanlan  
**Burlington:** Mike Espejo  
**Concord:** Mary Hartman  
**Dartmouth:** Heidi Brooks  
**Dedham:** Erin Boles Welsh  
**Dighton:** Peter Caron  
**Fairhaven:** Leon Correy  
**Freetown:** Carlos Lopes  
**Hamilton:** Caroline Beaulieu, Tom Myers  
**Lincoln:** Jim Hutchinson  
**Medfield:** Eileen Murphy  
**Middleborough:** Brian Giovanoni  
**Millville:** Richard Keith Bremilst  
**Natick:** Kathryn Coughlin, Bruce Evans  
**Needham:** Heidi Frail  
**Norwood:** Bob Donnelly, Amanda Grow  
**Reading:** Jackie McCarthy  
**Rockland:** Lori Childs, Donna Shortall  
**Royalston:** Richard Martin  
**Somerset:** Jacob Vaught  
**South Hadley:** Renee Sweeney  
**Sudbury:** Lisa Kouchakdjian  
**Swansea:** Bob Medeiros  
**Ware:** Joshua Kusnierz  
**Wrentham:** Peter Clay  
**Winchester:** Anthea Brady, John Fallon  
**Wrentham:** William Harrington

**Managers gather for ICMA conference**

Sandy Stapczynski (left), president of Human Resources Services, Sandwich Assistant Town Manager Heather Harper (center), and Tricia Vinchesi, Northeast regional director for the International City/County Management Association, attend a session called “A Bumpy Road Ahead? Adapting to the New Workplace” during the ICMA Northeast Regional Conference, held in Boston from April 6 to 8. The conference was attended by more than 200 government management professionals. The theme was “Build Your Resilience: Creating Balance in the Personal and Professional.”

**Officials discuss incivility in government**

Bridgewater Town Manager Michael Dutton discusses an increase in incivility in local government and strategies to counter this behavior during an April 14 joint meeting of the Massachusetts Municipal Management Association and Massachusetts Municipal Human Resources in Worcester. Dutton participated in a panel that included Norfolk Town Administrator Blythe Robinson and Acton Human Resources Director Marianne Fleckner and was facilitated by Randolph Town Councillor Katrina Huff-Larmond.

**Officials consider effects of birth order**

Jack Agati, a human relations and management expert, speaks during a joint meeting of the Massachusetts Municipal Management Association and Massachusetts Municipal Human Resources on April 14. Agati discussed how a person’s birth order influences behavior, and identified interesting character traits of the firstborn child, only child, youngest child and somewhere-in-the-middle child.
Classified Advertisements

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Junior Mechanic
City of Melrose

The city of Melrose is currently hiring for a Junior Mechanic. Under the direction of the Mechanic, they will perform skilled and semi-skilled work in the repair and maintenance of a wide variety of mechanical equipment (i.e. light and medium duty trucks (gas), diesel heavy duty trucks; diesel machinery such as bobcats, front end loaders, backhoes, etc.). The work includes routine repair, preventive maintenance, and emergency breakdown repair, all of which involves responsibility for making swift, efficient, and workmanlike repairs. Please send a cover letter and resume to mtravers@cityofmelrose.org. For a full job description, go to cityofmelrose.org.

Animal Control Officer/Animal Inspector
City of Melrose

The city of Melrose is currently hiring for an Animal Control Officer/Animal Inspector under the supervision of the Health and Human Services Director. They are responsible for the welfare of animals and the protection of persons within the city of Melrose. Interested applicants should send a letter of interest and cover letter to Matt Travers, HR, at mtravers@cityofmelrose.org.

EMS Administrator
Town of Wilton, New Hampshire

Wilton Ambulance Service serves Wilton, Lyndeborough and Greenfield, N.H. This is a full-time salaried position with benefits for a Paramedic with at least five years municipal experience. Responsible for staffing, payroll, budgets, billing, compliance, training and maintaining policy and procedures. More information can be found on our website at www.wiltonnh.gov. Send resume to adminassist@wiltonnh.gov or P.O. Box 83, Wilton, NH 03086. Available immediately; open until filled.

Town Clerk
Town of Wayland

Full-time/hours: 35 hours/week. Union/Grade: N-8

The town of Wayland seeks highly qualified innovative candidates for the position of Town Clerk. The Town Clerk performs professional administrative and supervisory work in conducting elections, registering voters, recording and issuing vital records, and serving as a source of public information on a wide variety of subjects relating to municipal government. Responsible for maintaining and improving upon the efficiency and effectiveness of all areas under their direction and control. Performs varied and responsible duties requiring a thorough knowledge of departmental operations and the exercise of judgment and initiative in completing tasks, particularly in situations not clearly defined by precedent or established procedures. Incumbent handles a significant amount of varied work, requiring independent direction, judgment and attention to detail. For the full job description, click here. Recommended Minimum Qualifications: Education:

Bachelor’s degree in public administration, business management or related subjects and experience in municipal operations is desirable, including supervisory experience, or any equivalent combination of education and experience. Experience: Over five years of progressively responsible experience in public administration, records management, office management, or a related field; or any equivalent combination of education and experience. Licenses/Certificates: Must be bondable. Must attain Notary Public status within six months. Justice of the Peace preferred. Must attain Certified Municipal Clerk (CMC) or Massachusetts Municipal Clerk Certification (CMCC). Valid Driver’s license required. Date posted: April 20. 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.

Tree Warden
City of Quincy

The Tree Warden shall be responsible for overseeing the maintenance and care of the more than 20,000 trees that line our city’s streets, as well as the countless trees in our parks, conservation areas, schools, and on other public properties. The Tree Warden shall assess the condition of our trees and schedule any maintenance, care, or removal as necessary. The Tree Warden shall help develop and maintain a full tree inventory of all city-owned trees. The Tree Warden is responsible for the daily oversight and scheduling of the employees of the Forestry Division. The Tree Warden shall create and maintain an appropriate database for the maintenance requests generated by the public. The Tree Warden will be expected to interact with the public frequently as it relates to tree care, maintenance, and plantings. From time to time, the Tree Warden may be required to perform actual tree work when needed. The Tree Warden should be a Certified Arborist, with more than ten years in the forestry business. The Tree Warden will be expected to maintain their professional status throughout their tenure. The Tree Warden should have familiarity with technology including, Microsoft Word, Excel, and standard GIS programming. The Tree Warden reports directly to the Commissioner of Natural Resources.

The position directly supervises the personnel assigned to the Forestry Division (currently five workers). The scope of the job is broad and includes responsibility for all community trees – on streets and town commons as well as in parks, schoolyards, and town forests. The position of tree warden requires qualified training in arboriculture, the science of tree care. A tree warden should also have good communication skills for dealing with the public, municipal department heads, and local politicians. The job may be physically challenging as well. On a day-to-day basis, a tree warden must plan, organize, control, and be accountable for all authorized activities in the public community forest, including: pruning of trees for safety and health; removal of trees that are dead or dying (from storms, insects, disease, or old age); identification of appropriate planting sites; planting new trees; creation or updating of a tree inventory, often on computer; assessment of trees for potential hazards to public safety; oversight of utility arboricultural operations; preparation of budget presentations; supervision of city tree workers; creation of bid proposals for contract tree work; inspection of contracted tree work; conduct public meetings and tree hearings; writing grant proposals. Interested persons should submit a resume to Patricia McGowan, Director of Human Resources, at pmcgowan@quincyma.gov or apply through our website at quincyma.gov/departments/human-resources.

Police and Fire Communications Officer
Groton Police Department

The Groton Police Department is accepting applications for a full-time (40 hour) Police and Fire Communications Officer. The hourly wage range is $23.81 to $27.84 based on experience. There is an evening shift differential of 6% and late night shift premium of up to 100 words for first 100 words, $75 for each additional block of up to 100 words. The Beacon publishes classified ads from units of government, public agencies, and companies. Classified advertising rates include in The Beacon or on www.mma.org, though a discount is available for those who request placement of an ad only in The Beacon or on the website.

Classified advertising rates and information

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

Beacon deadlines and publication dates

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

June Beacon
Deadline: May 25
Publication: June 1

Summer Beacon
Deadline: July 12
Publication: July 19

Placing an ad

You may use our convenient online form at www.mma.org/municipal-marketplace/add-listing/.
shift differential of 8%. Candidates must be able to
work all shifts including holidays and weekends for
a 24/7 operation. Responsibilities include receiving
emergency and non-emergency calls for Police, Fire
and EMS, and dispatching Public Safety Personnel.
Other duties would include record keeping, warrant
management and other administrative tasks.
Applicants must be able to multitask in a fast-paced
and stressful environment. Experience and training
in this field is a plus and must be able to earn and
maintain required state certifications. Applicants
will be required to successfully complete a one-year
probationary period. Applicants must possess a
high school diploma or equivalency, good typing and
communications skills, a valid driver’s license and
have no criminal convictions. Successful candidates
must have a good work history, references and be
able to successfully complete a thorough background
check. To apply, please send cover letter and resume
to mail Human Resources Director, Town Hall,
173 Main St., Groton, MA 01450 or by email to
humanresources@groton.ma.gov. For questions please
call 978-448-1145. Job description is available by
request. Deadline for applications: May 6. The town of
Groton is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

Council on Aging Director
Town of Rockland

The town of Rockland is seeking a Council on Aging
Director who oversees the daily operation of the
Senior Center. Responsible for administrative,
fiscal management, managerial, supervisory, and
social service work in connection with the need’s
determination, development, implementation of
support programs, services, events, activities and
facilities of a multi-purpose Council on Aging and
Senior Center. Full-time, exempt, minimum annual
salary $70,000/DOQ. Excellent benefits including
BCBSMA health insurance with town contribution
of 79% of the premium and 50% of the dental
premium. Full job description and application can be
found online at rockland-ma.gov. Please send letter
of interest, resume and application to скалалнс
rockland-ma.gov.

Planning Director
Town of Dudley

Dudley, Mass. (pop. 15,812) seeks qualified Planning
Director (full-time, benefit eligible) to perform
professional and administrative planning, organizing
and coordinating of land use and community
development. Administers, develops and initiates
planning and zoning policies and regulatory programs,
addresses planning and land use issues consistent with
state law, town bylaws, subdivision rules/regulations
and land-use planning objectives. Bachelor’s degree in
planning or related field, five to seven years’ municipal
planning experience, valid driver’s license, AICP
Planner certification, or any equivalent combination,
 supervisory experience and Notary Public preferred.
Posted April 11, open until filled. For job description
and to apply go to: townsfordudleyjobs.easyapply.
c.co, EEO

DPW Superintendent/Town Engineer
Town of Great Barrington

The town of Great Barrington is seeking an
experienced, progressive, and dedicated individual
as its next DPW Superintendent/ Town Engineer.
This is a key management position reporting directly
to the Town Manager, and responsible for directing
and overseeing all operational and administrative
activities of the Department of Public Works. The
town of Great Barrington has a population of 7,000
and is located in scenic Southern Berkshire County in
western Massachusetts. The DPW operating budget
is approximately $5.4 million with 23 full-time
employees and three part-time employees. The ideal
candidate will be an energetic, professional manager
with strong leadership skills, and a bachelor of science
degree in public or business administration, or civil
engineering. Registration as a Professional Engineer
is preferred. Salary up to $100K; depending upon
qualifications and work experience. Please send a
cover letter, resume and application to apulver@etownog
.org. Resumes and applications will be accepted until
the position is filled.

Engineering/Administrator
Town of Westborough

The Westborough Treatment Plant Board is seeking
applications from qualified individuals for this part-
time position. The position will report directly to the
Westborough Treatment Plant Board and perform
advanced professional administrative activities in
support of the wastewater treatment plant. Applicant
shall possess a bachelor’s degree in engineering and
 possess strong administrative skills needed to
satisfy the requirements of the position. Requires PE
license. Strong computer skills are required. Position
Range is up to $29,664 for this hybrid part-time
position (currently averaging 15 hours a month).
Interested persons should submit a cover letter and
 resume to Jack Goodhall, Engineer/Administrator,
Westborough Treatment Plant Board, 230 Turnpike
Road, Westborough, MA 01581, or jgoodhall@town
westborough.ma.us. Review of applications shall begin
April 4 and the position shall remain open until filled.
EOE/AA.

Senior Budget Analyst
Cambridge Public Schools

The Senior Budget Analyst is responsible for assisting
in the management of the CPSD’s budget and related
financial operations. This position has a critical role
in budget development and monitoring, position
management, grant administration, purchasing,
accounts payable, payables and reporting and
compliance. This role also supports the mission of
the school district through providing assistance and
guidance to principals in managing school fiscal
resources. This is a great opportunity for a mission-
driven professional who would like to utilize their
understanding of finance and accounting best
practices to make a significant impact on the lives of
ViewJOB.aspx?JOBID=3634.
Compliance Officer for the town. Responsible for negotiating union and department head contracts based on parameters established by the Board of Selectmen. Oversees delivery of management goals as set by the Board of Selectmen for all departments. Serves as liaison and resource for boards, committees, commissions, department heads, and elected officials. Coordinates volunteers, employees, elected officials and contractors for maximum benefit of the town. Assures a “consumer friendly” Town Hall. Oversees preparation of town reports, all materials for all town meetings and Annual Report. Oversees preparation of agendas, sets meetings and correspondence priorities and attends the meetings of the Board of Selectmen and other boards and committees as necessary. Develops policy proposals and recommends policy alternatives to the Selectmen. Manages information systems, coordinates internal financial information systems and networking. Manages the preparation and administration of Town Hall grants. Formulates written policies for the town under the supervision of the Board of Selectmen. Maintains active membership and participation in state and national organizations of municipal managers. Performs other duties as required. Please send resume and cover letter to Townhall.floridamass@gmail.com.

Wastewater Plant Operator
Town of Ware

Wanted: Wastewater Plant Operator in the Department of Public Works. This is a full-time benefited, union position. Duties and responsibilities include but not limited to: Works under the general direction of the Chief Plant Operator. Provides daily operation and maintenance, including visual checks of equipment and inspection of motor control center, and recording instrumentation; records and interprets readings of instruments monitoring treatment process, maintains operational records. Minimum Qualifications: High school diploma or GED equivalent. Two years of experience relating to the construction, repair and maintenance of wastewater treatment systems, or any equivalent to the construction, repair and maintenance of wastewater treatment systems, or any equivalent to the construction, repair and maintenance of wastewater treatment systems. Salary: $24.82-$32.66/hour. The town of Ware is an AA/EEO Employer.

System Operator
Town of Medway

Responsibilities: Construction and maintenance of extensions to water distribution and sanitary sewer systems; install valves, hydrants, pipes, pumps; excavates trenches and backfills excavations; cleans and repairs mains and manholes; repairs water mains, hydrants, and gates. Installs and reads water meters. Performs daily water sampling of water supply and adjusts treatment as necessary. Qualifications: High school graduate; three years’ experience in municipal water supply and wastewater collection operations; MA Drinking Water Operators License; wastewater collection system certificate; Cross Connection Backflow Test and Survey; MA CDL Class B & MA Hoisting License. Salary: $24.82-$32.66/hour. The town of Medway is an AA/EEO Employer.

Building Commissioner
Town of Monson

The town of Monson is seeking a full-time Building Commissioner. Position is responsible for reviewing all building permit applications for compliance, conducting site inspections, issuing permits, certificates of occupancy, determining/collecting related fees, and reviewing all subdivision/commercial development proposals. Successful candidate meets/exceeds requirements pursuant to MGL C. 143 Section 3 and 780 CMR including: minimum five years’ direct construction supervision, State Certified Building Commissioner or Local Inspector, possesses a Construction Supervisors License, and a valid motor vehicle operator’s license. Salary DOQ/DOE. Submit cover letter, resume and general application to the HR Department, 110 Main St., Monson; astaples@monson-ma.gov; fax: 413-238-6127. Posted until filled. Town of Monson is an AA/EEO Employer.

Finance Director/Town Accountant
Town of Harwich

The town of Harwich is seeking applications for the position of Finance Director/Town Accountant. Must have a bachelor’s degree in accounting, finance, business or public administration and five years of progressively responsible municipal financial work. A master’s degree in public administration, accounting or finance is preferred. A thorough knowledge of the Municipal Finance Law of the Commonwealth, and knowledge of the statutory responsibilities of each of the three divisions in the Department of Finance (Accounting, Treasurer/Collector, Assessing). MUNIS experience is preferred. 35 hours/week. The successful candidate will receive an attractive compensation package including health and retirement plans commensurate with qualifications and experience. Town employment application and job description are available on the town’s website at www.harwich-ma.gov or from the Town Administrator’s Office at 508-430-7513. Cover letter, resume, and job application must be submitted to Town of Harwich, Joseph F. Powers - Town Administrator, 732 Main St., Harwich, MA 02645, or email to jpowers@town.harwich.ma.us. Position search will remain open until filled. Town will commence review of applications by April 22 at noon.

EOE

Long-Term Substitute Math Interventionist
Wellesley Public Schools

The ideal candidate will hold DESE certification in mathematics 5-8 or 5-12. The candidate’s teaching responsibilities will include multiple sections of 6th grade and 7th grade math workshop, which is a tier 2 mathematics intervention class that meets every other day, and one section of Geometry in 8th grade that meets every day. Previous experience in math intervention is preferred but not required. This position is a long-term substitute position through the end of the 2021-2022 school year. Please apply via: wellesleyyps.tedk12.com/hire/admin/JobPosting/NewManageJobPostings.aspx#.

Temporary Human Resources Secretary
Wellesley Public Schools

Part- or full-time temporary support needed for a busy Human Resource department to provide various clerical functions for the months of April, May and June 2022. Answer questions, file, direct inquiries, manage daily mail, create correspondence as directed in addition to other duties as required. Ability to work independently, multi-task, excellent interpersonal and communication skills and a comfort with technology are required. Please apply via TalentEd: wellesleyyps.tedk12.com/hire/Admin/JobPosting/NewManageJobPostings.aspx#.

Town Accountant
Town of Hardwick – Gilbertville

Population less than 3,000 with an approx. $6 million budget seeks a detail-oriented individual to serve as its Town Accountant. A full-time benefited (32 hr/ wk) position that reports to the Town Administrator. Accountant is responsible for financial monitoring, maintaining comprehensive records and generating required reports under statute and local policies. Applicants must have excellent communication skills, financial management, general knowledge of small town government operations and Massachusetts laws and regulations, and the ability to work with diverse groups of town officials and residents. Hardwick is a rural town, predominantly residential, with an Open Town Meeting and three-member Select Board. The preferred candidate will have a bachelor’s degree in accounting or closely related field and a minimum of three to five years’ municipal experience or a combination of education and experience. Knowledge of UMAS and experience with Vadar software is preferred. Salary range of $40,000 to $70,000 DOQ. Submit cover letter and resume to Nicole Parker, Town Administrator at admin@townofhardwick.com.

Classified Advertisements

CLASSIFIEDS
Continued from page 26

Drinking Water Operator
Town of Palmer, Three Rivers Water Department

The Three Rivers Water Department is seeking a secondary operator to help with all functions of the department. This position will include everything from repairing pipes in the streets, to adding chemicals before water is distributed to the town, to working on a computer. For the full description, please go to TownofPalmer.com and navigate to the Three Rivers Water Department’s web page, then scroll down until you see “Employment.” Or, use this link.

Project Manager
Massachusetts Division of Local Services

The Massachusetts Division of Local Services is seeking qualified candidates for a Project Manager position. The Project Manager promotes best practices in municipal finance by providing consulting services to municipalities across Massachusetts. To encourage efficient and effective municipal financial management, this individual works collaboratively with team members; conducts in-depth interviews with local officials and employees; analyzes complex data and information; prepares guidance on municipal finance policies and procedures; writes comprehensive reports; and provides technical assistance and training. Experience in a municipal finance role is highly desirable. This is a telework position with periodic travel. For more information, visit massanf.taleo.net/careersection/ex/jobdetail.ftl?job=220003NY&tz=GMT-04%3A00&tenename=America%2FNew...
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.

Athletic Courts
Sport Court MA has been the premier custom court builder and sports flooring expert for residential and commercial properties for more than 25 years. Our experienced team designs and installs, and repurposes and resurfaces existing indoor and outdoor courts, including pickleball, basketball, tennis, volleyball, hockey, and much more. Headquartered in Andover, Mass., Sport Court MA has designed and constructed more than 2,000 courts. Call Mo Killay, Sales Manager, to arrange a complimentary site visit: 207-396-0205. www.sportcourtma.com

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; mmacrginc@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 expertise that can help communities deliver quality services and resolve complex problems with real-world solutions. Contact us at 866-501-0352 or info@melanson.com.

Executive Recruiting, Interim Staffing, Human Resources and Management Consulting
GovHR USA/GovTempUSA 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 Outsources staffing; Performance Evaluation System and Training. Visit our website at www.GovHRusa.com; or contact us at 847-380-3240 or info@govhrusa.com to discuss how we may serve your organization. Post to our job board at www.govhrijobs.com.

GIS Consulting Services
As a local government, does your community expect more from you? Geospatial technology is a great tool to use to meet these expectations and build trust. Spatial Relationships is a GIS consulting firm in Boston that specializes in on-demand personalized GIS services for local government. Need extra GIS support for an important project, but don’t want to deal with the overhead of a large firm? Don’t have GIS staff, but have a one-time need? Indispensable GIS staff going out on leave? We’re here to help. To learn more about us, please visit 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 more information, visit www.k-law.com; or contact Lauren Goldberg, Esq., at 617-556-0007, or toll-free at 800-548-3522, or at LGoldberg@k-law.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 recruiting, 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@mrmrgw.com.

Town Counsel/Legal Services
Brooks & DeRensis, PC, 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 www.themediationgroup.org, email info@themediationgroup.org or call 617-277-9232.

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

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

The Massachusetts Municipal Management Association is seeking applications for two of its scholarship programs: the Gerry Whitlock Memorial Scholarship and the Nancy Galkowski Legacy Fund.

The Whitlock Scholarship is funded by the MMMA in honor of the late former town administrator, who dedicated his life to local government, starting as a selectman in Belchertown before becoming its first town administrator. He mentored many young professionals who were just entering the field of local government, and he was well known for his wit and candor.

Candidates for the Whitlock Scholarship must be enrolled in a college or university master’s-level program in public administration, and the award of $2,000 may be used to offset tuition. The deadline for submission is June 1. Click here for the application in fillable PDF format.

The Galkowski Fund is named after Nancy Galkowski, who had a 35-year career in municipal management in Massachusetts and a passion for mentoring younger managers and being of service to all of her peers. Following her death in 2013, her colleagues in the Massachusetts Municipal Management Association established a fund to honor her memory and continue her legacy. Galkowski funds can be used for any number of professional development programs. Applicants should identify the program they wish to participate in. The program is open to all local government professionals and is targeted to those seeking to further their municipal management career.

Click here to download the application form in fillable PDF format. The deadline for the Galkowski Fund is May 20.

Councillors discuss cybersecurity

MassCyberCenter Director Stephanie Helm (top) and her colleague, Resiliency Program Manager Meg Speranza, discuss cybersecurity strategies during an April 21 webinar held by the Massachusetts Municipal Councillors’ Association. Helm discussed the Minimum Baseline of Cybersecurity for Municipalities, a framework to help Massachusetts cities and towns protect themselves from cyberattacks.
Calendar

MAY

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

10 Massachusetts Municipal Councillors’ Association, board meeting, virtual. Contact: MMA Senior Member Services Coordinator Denise Baker

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

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

11 Massachusetts Municipal Councillors’ Association, 5:30-8 p.m., Brady’s restaurant, Leominster. Contact: MMA Senior Member Services Coordinator Denise Baker

12 Massachusetts Municipal Human Resources, boot camp, 8:30 a.m.-3 p.m., Lake Pearl, Wrentham. Contact: MMA Senior Member Services Coordinator Isabelle Nichols

12 MunEnergy, spring breakfast meeting, 12-1:30 p.m., webinar. Contact: MMA Administration, Finance and Operations Director Katie McCue

19-20 Massachusetts Mayors’ Association, spring conference. Contact: MMA Communications and Membership Director Candace Pierce

JUNE

2-3 Massachusetts Municipal Management Association, spring conference, Beauport Hotel, Gloucester. Contact: MMA Senior Member Services Coordinator Denise Baker

JULY

12 Massachusetts Municipal Councillors’ Association, board meeting, 8:30-9:45 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

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

21 Massachusetts Municipal Management Association, monthly meeting, Cyprian Keyes Golf Club, Bolyston. Contact: MMA Senior Member Services Coordinator Denise Baker

23 Massachusetts Select Board Association, newly elected member training, Devens Common Center, Devens. Contact: MMA Senior Member Services Coordinator Isabelle Nichols

For more information, visit www.mma.org.

Note: Until further notice, attendees of in-person meetings will be required to show proof of being fully vaccinated for COVID (card, photo or QR code) on the day of the event. (Religious or medical vaccine exemptions are allowed with a negative PCR test taken within 72 hours.) Masks are optional. These safety protocols are subject to change based on the latest public health data and guidance.