

Vol. 50, No. 4

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

April 2023

Gov. Healey signs supplemental budget

By Ali DiMatteo

On March 29, Gov. Maura Healey signed a fiscal 2023 spending package that includes more than \$740 million in bonding authorizations, \$389 million in supplemental spending, and a number of policy provisions, including extensions of pandemic-related authorizations related to public meetings and outdoor dining.

The new law extends pandemic-related authorizations that were set to expire on March 31 and April 1, thereby:

- Allowing remote and hybrid meeting options for public bodies through March 31, 2025
- Allowing remote and hybrid participation options for representative town meetings through March 31, 2025
- Permitting reduced quorums for open town meetings through March 31, 2025

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• Extending the expedited outdoor dining permit process and allowing restaurants to offer to-go cocktails through April 1, 2024

Regarding representative town meetings, the law includes language to clarify the definition of remote participation to specifically include hybrid participation.

The final compromise bill, enacted by the House and Senate on March 23, combines items from three separate bills filed by the governor in her first few months in office.

The Legislature included a majority of the governor's proposed <u>"immediate</u> <u>needs" bond bill</u>, including \$400 million for the popular <u>MassWorks Infrastruc-</u> <u>ture Program</u>, and \$104 million for the <u>Massachusetts Clean Water Trust</u> to finance local efforts to improve water infrastructure and water quality. There is an additional \$34 million for grant and loan assistance for the rehabilitation and redevelopment of blighted, vacant



With Lt. Gov. Kim Driscoll (right) looking on, Gov. Maura Healey signs the first major bill of her new administration on March 29 – a supplemental spending package that also extends remote and hybrid meeting options for public bodies. (Photo courtesy Governor's Press Office)

and underutilized properties, as well as a bond mechanism for this purpose.

In supplemental spending, the law allocates nearly \$92 million to address the migrant housing crisis: nearly \$45 mil-

BUDGET continued on 25

House, Senate pass Chapter 90 bills with small variations

By Adrienne Núñez

The Senate on March 30 passed a Chapter 90 bond bill that would level-fund the local road and bridge program at \$200 million for fiscal 2024, while also authorizing a total of \$150 million for six transportation-related programs.

The Senate bill resembles the bill passed by the House (<u>H.</u> <u>3547</u>) a week earlier, with the exception of a change in one of the added programs.

Rather than \$25 million that the House proposed for the <u>Municipal Pavement</u> <u>Program</u>, the Senate proposes \$25 million in new road maintenance funding



During a March 7 hearing before the Joint Committee on Transportation, Melrose Mayor Paul Brodeur (left) explains that the Chapter 90 funding program serves as the primary mechanism to maintain locally owned roads. Sitting next to Brodeur is MMA Legislative Director Dave Koffman.

> targeting small and rural communities. The funding formula would be based on road mileage and population density,

2023 MMA Board of Directors

The MMA Board of Directors holds regular meetings in Boston, followed by a meeting of the Local Government Advisory Commission with the administration. Board members are chosen by: Massachusetts Mayors' Association, Massachusetts Municipal Councillors' Association, Massachusetts Municipal Management Association, Massachusetts Select Board Association, Association of Town Finance Committees.

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Executive Director's Report

DEI builds stronger, healthier communities

Diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging are essential. We need to weave all these threads together to create truly thriving and resilient communities, where each person is welcomed in and encouraged to be their best, authentic selves as neighbors and contributors.



By Geoffrey Beckwith

Human biology proves that people need diversity, equity and inclusion in their lives. Our health and happiness is directly correlated with the number of friends we have and our level of access to basic resources. Further, the more we are connected to a diverse network of friends who support and welcome us for who we are, the longer we live and the more we enjoy and value our lives. That is true regardless of economic status.

On a larger scale, the world's healthiest ecosystems are diverse, equitable (balanced in the access and use of resources), and inclusive. Unbalanced systems that lack diversity die out when confronted by new threats. Diverse and balanced systems are the ones that are the most resilient and adaptable to change.

As it is for people and ecosystems, our geographically defined communities are also healthier when we build in diversity, equity and inclusion. The challenge is that our communities have grown up in an extremely complex global system that has not rewarded diversity or been built with equity or inclusion. That's why so many localities are looking to take action to find a better, healthier balance that takes DEI into account.

Yet, as we all know, advancing new initiatives to enhance diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging in our communities is far, far easier said than done.

While the human impulse is to strive for community, we are also individuals, with differing histories, life experiences, advantages, disadvantages, political and social beliefs, and economic realities. Most people simply want to preserve what they know and cherish in their lives. And that's the rub, because the prospect of change creates stress, and it is very hard for people to be their best selves under stress. Stressed people are defensive, don't listen or absorb new information well, and place greater value on perceived downsides, and much less value on potential benefits.

And this is the challenge. We know that advancing diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging in our communities is vitally important, essential work. We also know that moving too fast without adequate preparation, planning, communication and engagement can hit roadblocks and stall long-term progress.

For many months, a terrific committee of local officials has been meeting regularly with the MMA to advise and inform the

■ DIRECTOR'S REPORT continued on 23

The Beacon

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Massachusetts Interlocal Insurance Association 3 Center Plaza, Suite 610, Boston, MA 02108 617-426-7272 • <u>www.mma.org</u> Twitter and Facebook: @massmunicipal **TheBeacon** (ISSN 0199-235X) is published monthly, except for a combined July-August issue, by the Massachusetts Municipal Association, 3 Center Plaza, Suite 610, Boston, MA 02108. The MMA is composed of the Massachusetts Select Board Association, the Massachusetts Mayors' Association, the Massachusetts Municipal Management Association, the Massachusetts Municipal Councillors' Association, and the Association of Town Finance Committees.

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

Administration files \$734M supplemental budget bill

By Jackie Lavender Bird

The Healey-Driscoll administration on March 17 filed a \$734 million fiscal 2023 supplemental budget bill that includes \$75 million for a reserve to help school districts with extraordinary increases in special education costs.

The special education funding is intended to help offset the impact of a decision made by the Operational Services Division last October allowing private special education schools to increase their tuition rates by 14% in fiscal 2024. The OSD decision will have an impact on every district that places students out of district to meet their students' educational needs.

The supplemental budget bill also includes a <u>number of outside sections that would</u> <u>make adjustments to municipal finance</u> <u>laws</u> to give cities and towns more flexibility in how they spend opioid settlement money and to simplify accounting and fiscal rules regarding revolving funds, insurance proceeds and mitigation agreements, among other items.

Among the spending items, the bill proposes an additional \$171 million to extend state-funded universal free school meals through the 2023-2024 school year and \$5 million for grants to aid cities and towns with costs associated with early voting and vote by mail, as well as funding for clean energy, MBTA hiring, preparations for the end of the COVID-19 public health emergency, and other one-time priorities.

Healey said the universal school meals program "has proven to be a success in expanding access to nutritious meals for all students, and it's essential that we keep it running and evaluate our options for the future."

She said the budget bill would fulfill her commitment to triple the operating budget of the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center, with an additional \$35 million, "to keep Massachusetts on the cutting edge of clean technology and decarbonization efforts and to forge new partnerships with public higher education institutions and trades to grow the clean energy industry." The bill would authorize the MassCEC to establish the Salem Offshore Wind Terminal to further the creation of new green jobs.

Other key investments in the bill include:

- \$20 million to improve employee recruitment and retention at the MBTA
- \$200 million toward a Critical Health and Human Services and Workforce Reserve to cover projected deficiencies in fiscal 2023 and expenses in early fiscal 2024 for the continuation of COVID-19 response and mitigation efforts



WLG gets management advice

Brookline Chief Information Officer Feng Yang (left), Needham Public Works Director Carys Lustig (center) and Westford Town Manager Kristen Las participate in a "Management 101" panel during the Women Leading Government Annual Conference on March 2 in Devens. The participants focused on career advancement and on what to expect when transitioning into a management position, both within an organization and externally. The third annual WLG conference included sessions on leadership presence, delegation and networking.



A fiscal 2023 supplemental budget filed by the administration includes \$75 million in reserves to address extraordinary increases in special education costs.

- \$60 million to support caseworkers and staff at the Department of Transitional Assistance
- \$20 million for a bridge to stabilize critical victim service programs throughout the Commonwealth and ensure continued access to traumainformed services in light of decreased federal funding through the Victims of Crime Act
- \$10 million to double the Cultural Facilities Fund for the Massachusetts Cultural Council
- \$3.5 million to support the redetermination process at MassHealth
- \$100 million for a supplemental transfer to the pension fund, as agreed to with the House and Senate as part of the consensus revenue process, to fully pay down pension liabilities attributable to the 2015 Early Retirement Incentive Program ahead of schedule

Healey said the spending recommended in the bill would be covered by a mix of available General Fund revenue and onetime resources.

Among the policy pieces, the bill would direct the Executive Office of Education to report by early next year on options to reform, modify or extend the universal free school meals program in a way that promotes equity, maximizes federal revenue, and improves predictability and sustainability of funding into the future. The administration previously requested additional funding to continue the program through the end of the 2022-2023 school year.

- <u>Gov. Healey's supplemental budget filing</u> <u>letter</u>
- Text of the supplemental budget bill

At local aid hearing, UGGA remains top MMA priority

By Jackie Lavender Bird

At a major legislative budget hearing on education and local aid on March 13, the MMA and local officials called for a new state revenue-sharing plan that would better reflect the state's robust revenue collections of recent years and help cash-strapped cities and towns provide essential local services.

MMA Executive Director Geoff Beckwith said the 2% increase in unrestricted local aid proposed in the governor's fiscal 2024 budget is "too low" given that cities and towns face escalating costs and a tight cap on local revenues.

"It is so far below inflation and the general costs that communities are struggling with, that it would backslide communities' ability to support essential municipal services," he told members of the House and Senate Ways and Means committees during the hearing, held at UMass Amherst.

Since fiscal 2021, he said, state revenues have grown by 18.38%, far surpassing expectations, but Unrestricted General Government Aid, the state's main revenue-sharing mechanism, would grow by just 11.3% over that period if the Legislature goes along with the governor's UGGA proposal for fiscal 2024.

Beckwith proposed that legislators use a three-year rolling average of state tax revenue growth, rather than the projected growth for a single year, as a baseline for setting UGGA increases, which he said would smooth out peaks and valleys in UGGA proposals and provide more predictability for cities and towns. Using this method would increase UGGA by 6.13% (\$75.5 million) for fiscal 2024, he said.

The proposed increase, he said, would still leave UGGA funding slightly below where it was 16 years ago, in fiscal 2008, and "that's not even figuring in the impacts of inflation, which is about 40% during that time."

Joining Beckwith was Athol Town Manager Shaun Suhoski, the chair of Small Town Administrators of Massachusetts, and Amherst Town Council President Lynn Griesemer. Suhoski pointed out that cities and towns provide essential services, including public safety, public works, education, senior services, and



During a March 13 legislative hearing in Amherst, MMA Executive Director Geoff Beckwith (left), discusses the importance of local aid to communities. Seated next to him were (l-r) Linda Dunlavy, executive director of the Franklin Regional Council of Governments; Athol Town Manager Shaun Suhoski; and Amherst Town Council President Lynn Griesemer.

snow and ice removal, but that they "are limited on property tax collections and rely on state aid that the Commonwealth provides to stay strong and viable."

"Two percent is insufficient," he said, "and we are robbing Peter to pay Paul."

The <u>MMA also submitted written testi-</u> <u>mony</u> outlining municipal priorities for the fiscal 2024 state budget. The MMA testimony includes graphical representations of state and local revenue trends.

Chapter 70

The governor's budget proposal, known as House 1, would increase Chapter 70 school aid by \$586 million for fiscal 2024, fulfilling commitments in the Student Opportunity Act, and funding year three of six of the law's intended implementation schedule.

Beckwith noted, however, that 37% of operating districts (119 out of 318) would receive only the minimum per-student increase of \$30 in the Student Opportunity Act, providing those districts with a Chapter 70 increase of just 0.7%, far below inflation. These 119 districts would receive a combined increase of \$7.7 million, and the remaining districts would receive \$578 million.

The MMA continued its strong advocacy for minimum aid of \$100 per student to ensure that all districts can at least keep pace with inflation and maintain school services. Bringing all districts up to the \$100 per student threshold would only require an additional \$18.8 million.

"The governor's budget proposes a

significant increase (in Chapter 70), but it doesn't benefit us," Griesemer said. "With regard to school aid, like every other community, we are not keeping up."

The MMA also asked the Ways and Means committee members to consider another aspect of Chapter 70: the very high increase in mandated local contributions in the foundation budget formula. Beckwith pointed out that state-mandated increases in local education spending far outpace the growth in local revenues in recent years,

which is putting a major strain on all municipal budgets.

"All types of communities are impacted," he said, "whether they are major beneficiaries of the Student Opportunity Act or they are minimum aid districts."

Special Education Circuit Breaker

The MMA expressed support for the governor's proposal to fund the Special Education Circuit Breaker program at \$503 million. The MMA asked for full funding of the state's share of eligible educational costs with the schedule included in the Student Opportunity Act, which added transportation expenses as an eligible cost.

The MMA and local officials shared the urgency of finding a solution to a decision by the Operational Services Division to allow private special education schools to increase their tuition rates by 14% in fiscal 2024. The estimated cost of this increase, based on the current number of students statewide placed in private special education schools, is \$92.8 million. Local officials suggested a two-pronged approach, addressing future reimbursement through the Circuit Breaker program, but also addressing the urgent need for additional funding for the upcoming fiscal year.

Charter School Impact Mitigation Payments

The governor's budget would increase the charter school reimbursement account to \$243 million, intended to meet

Bill proposes municipal finance rule changes

By Jackie Lavender Bird

A <u>fiscal 2023 supplemental budget bill</u>

filed by Gov. Maura Healey on March 17 includes a number of policy proposals that seek to modernize and streamline certain municipal finance rules.

The proposed municipal finance rule changes share many similarities with a series proposed by the Baker-Polito administration last spring that ultimately did not become law.

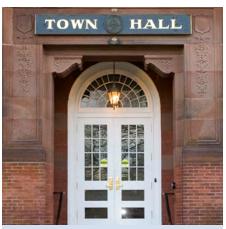
The nine outside sections of the bill (<u>H.</u> <u>3545</u>) related to municipal finance are as follows:

- Section 6 would make a technical correction to clarify "governing body" regarding other post-employment benefit (OPEB) trust funds.
- Section 8 would allow for a simple majority vote of the local legislative body, rather than a two-thirds vote, to draw down special purpose stabilization funds. A two-thirds vote would still be required to establish both types of stabilization funds — general and special purpose — but the threshold would be lowered for drawing from special purpose funds.
- Section 9 would allow municipalities to combine an appointed treasurer and appointed collector into one position. Currently, municipalities must seek a home rule petition if they want these positions to be held by one employee.
- Section 10 would allow municipal departments to repair property damages under \$150,000 before the insurance claim comes through, without seeking appropriation, with the expectation that appropriate accounts would be reimbursed when the insurance claim is paid. The municipality would be required to fund the deficit if the insurance claim is not received within a certain period.

Section 10 would also create a "general fund revenue exception." Under state law (Ch. 44, Sect. 53), all money received or collected from any source by a municipality belongs to its general fund and can only be spent after appropriation, unless a general or special law provides an exception. This rule can present accounting challenges when unexpected, conditional revenue is received, because the law requires this revenue to become part of the general fund even though it is intended for a specific purpose. As a result, these funds often become part of the next year's free cash certification, creating confusion around how the funds can be used.

Section 10 would allow municipalities to reserve such one-time revenue in a special fund, with the approval of the Division of Local Services' director of accounts, thus keeping it out of the general fund and preventing it from eventually becoming free cash. The proposed language would clarify how the receipts in special funds can be spent: if the receipt is for one specific purpose, such as opioid settlement funds, a municipal executive would be able to spend the funds without further appropriation; otherwise, gualifying revenue reserved in a special fund would be subject to appropriation. In both cases, the exception applies only to one-time, unanticipated receipts that are received by multiple communities.

- Section 23 would allow cities and towns that have created a dedicated stabilization fund for statewide opioid settlement receipts to vote to revoke this account and allow the settlement receipts to be spent in accordance with the amendment proposed in Section 10.
- Section 11 addresses approval of the spending cap of a municipal department's revolving account. Currently, the spending cap must be approved annually by the local legislative body. The bill proposes that legislative body approval would only be needed when the spending cap of the revolving account is being changed.
- Section 12 would establish a new Section 53k under Chapter 44, Section 53, to allow a municipal CEO to create a special revenue fund (rather than using the general revenue fund) for funds coming to the municipality for a specific purpose. Municipalities often enter into host or mitigation agreements with developers or other entities to address the impacts of new development, and receive payments to mitigate these impacts. Under current law, these mitigation payments go into the general fund and must be appropriated before they can be used for their intended purposes. The administration's proposal would let communities separately account for these payments and spend them for the dedicated purpose without appropriation.



Proposed changes would modernize and streamline certain municipal finance rules.

 Section 12 would also create a "general fund revenue exception." Under state law (Ch. 44, Sect. 53), all money received or collected from any source by a municipality belongs to its general fund and can only be spent after appropriation, unless a general or special law provides an exception. This rule can present accounting challenges when unexpected, conditional revenue is received, because the law requires this revenue to become part of the general fund even though it is intended for a specific purpose. As a result, these funds often become part of the next year's free cash certification, creating confusion around how the funds can be used.

The administration's proposal would allow municipalities to reserve such one-time revenue in a special fund, thus keeping it out of the general fund and preventing it from eventually becoming free cash. The proposed language would clarify how the receipts in special funds can be spent: if the receipt is for one specific purpose, a municipal executive would be able to spend the funds without further appropriation.

- Section 18 would address potential violations of the state conflict-ofinterest law regarding shared municipal employees.
- Section 24 would temporarily allow school districts to reserve some of their Chapter 70 funding for future years without facing state financial penalties, thereby helping them spend timelimited federal funds.

MMA holds legislative briefing for local officials

By John Ouellette

Amid a busy start for the 2023-24 legislative session and the new Healey-Driscoll administration, the <u>MMA's Leg-</u> <u>islative team hosted a briefing webinar</u> <u>for local officials on March 27</u> to provide updates on key legislative matters and highlight MMA priorities for the next several months.

The briefing covered the state budget for fiscal 2024 — particularly local accounts — as well as two supplemental spending bills, the extension of pandemic-era provisions related to remote and hybrid public meetings and outdoor dining, the Chapter 90 local roads program, PFAS, recycling and solid waste issues, and much more.

Over the course of the state budget process, the MMA will be pressing lawmakers for increases in Unrestricted General Government Aid, Chapter 70 education aid (particularly minimum additional aid per student), the special education circuit breaker, charter school reimbursements, school transportation accounts, rural school aid, and the payments in lieu of taxes (PILOT) program.

The <u>MMA is strongly advocating for</u> <u>a 6.13% increase for UGGA</u>, tied to a proposed rolling three-year average of state revenue growth, which has been exceeding expectations in recent years while local revenues are constrained by Proposition 2½.

The Legislative team also highlighted the MMA's <u>24-bill legislative package</u> for the two-year session that began in January, and urged local leaders to contact their legislators and "provide critical local perspective" in support of budget increases and legislation that will benefit cities and towns.

In addition to the state budget, which is expected to be wrapped up around July 1, legislative issues on the horizon include tax reform, housing, PFAS, and extended producer responsibility for certain solid waste items.

- <u>View the MMA slide presentation</u>
- <u>View the MMA's legislative package</u>



The MMA's Legislative team hosted a briefing webinar for local officials on March 27. Pictured are (clockwise from top left) MMA Legislative Director Dave Koffman, Legislative Analyst Ali DiMatteo, Senior Legislative Analyst Jackie Lavender Bird, Legislative Analyst Adrienne Núñez, Project Assistant Daniel Yi, and Legislative Analyst Josie Ahlberg.

<u>summary</u>

• View the webinar

SJC rules 'civility' cannot be required in public meetings

By Ali DiMatteo

In a unanimous decision on March 7, the Massachusetts <u>Supreme Judicial Court</u> <u>ruled</u> that a public comment policy, or "civility restraint," used by the town of Southborough violates the free speech rights codified in the <u>Massachusetts Con-</u> <u>stitution</u>.

"Although civility can and should be encouraged in political discourse," the court wrote, "it cannot be required."

The case originated from a lawsuit filed against the town of Southborough in 2020 by a resident who claimed the select board unconstitutionally silenced her at a 2018 public hearing. The resident, Louise Barron, addressed the board on several issues at a meeting in December 2018, making a number of critical comments regarding the town's spending and accusing the board of breaking the open meeting law. After calling one of her comments "slander," the chair of the board at the time, Daniel Kolenda, ended the public comment period and threatened to have Barron removed. Kolenda cited the board's public comment policy, which states, "All remarks and dialogues in public meetings must

be respectful and courteous, free of rude personal or slanderous remarks."

In a 29-page decision, the SJC found that the town's civility code was an unconstitutional restriction of Barron's speech.

Citing a case from 1854, Commonwealth v. Porter, the court reaffirmed that "peaceable and orderly is not the same as respectful and courteous." The court found that, while Barron's remark likening Kolenda to Hitler was "certainly rude and insulting, it is still speech protected by [Article 19 of the Massachusetts Constitution]."

While time, place and manner restrictions for public comments might be lawful, the court ruled that the public comment policy in this case was "so overbroad, so vague and so subject to manipulation on its face that it is not salvageable or severable." The court found that Barron had the right to "express her views vehemently, critically and personally to the government officials involved."

The ruling was celebrated as a free speech victory by Barron, who says she has not attended a public meeting since 2018, as well as by the American Civil Liberties Union, which filed an amicus brief in the case. John J. Davis, an attorney for the town, countered that the SJC decision "effectively warns local officials against enforcing even modest rules of order and decorum at public meetings and hearings." In a statement, he added that the decision "elevates the public's unfettered right to express their views above local governments' significant and legitimate interests in conducting the important business of cities, towns and public school districts in an efficient and orderly manner."

Some see the ruling as a setback for efforts to promote decorum in government settings at a time when public discourse has grown increasingly coarse and personal. They say the ruling could result in fewer opportunities for public speech, as public boards, which are not required by law to have public comment sessions, could choose to eliminate them altogether. Davis added that the ruling could have a cooling effect on volunteers stepping up to serve on local boards.

The SJC decision reversed an earlier ruling for the town by the Worcester County Superior Court.

MMA holds spring Legislative Breakfast Meetings

By Daniel Yi

On two Fridays in March, legislators and local officials from across Massachusetts gathered for a series of four MMA Legislative Breakfast Meetings.

The meetings, held each spring and fall, provide an opportunity for local officials to

engage in informal discussions with legislators, fellow local officials, and MMA staff. The hosts of the spring meetings were Fairhaven and Tyngsborough on March 17, and Adams and Westfield on March 24.

The program kicked off with updates from MMA Legislative staff on issues including state revenues, the state budget process, and key bills in the MMA's 2023-2024 Legislative Package. This was followed by an open-ended opportunity for legislators and local officials



Southampton Select Board Chair Christine Fowles speaks during the March 24 MMA Legislative Breakfast Meeting in Westfield.

to discuss the many challenges facing communities.

Topics that came up for discussion included Chapter 70 education aid and how it impacts districts, PFAS contamination, the Chapter 90 local road and bridge maintenance program and the need for additional funding, the administration's supplemental budget bills, and an extension for remote and hybrid public meetings.

More than 160 municipal officials and legislators registered for the four spring



Carlisle Select Board Chair Kate Reid (left) talks with Rep. Simon Cataldo during the March 17 MMA Legislative Breakfast Meeting in Tyngsborough.

meetings, including 13 state representatives, two state senators, and a number of legislative staff members.

The MMA has hosted 226 breakfast meetings in 197 communities since 2007, with a goal of hosting a meeting in each of the state's 351 cities and towns. Communities that have not hosted a Legislative Breakfast but would be interested in doing so are asked to contact Daniel Yi at dyi@mma.org or 617-426-7272, ext. 125. ●

AG Campbell issues advisory on MBTA communities law

By Ali DiMatteo

In <u>an advisory</u> issued on March 15, Attorney General Andrea Campbell warned all 177 MBTA communities that, without exception, they must comply with a multifamily zoning law enacted in 2021.

Section 3A of the Zoning Act (Chapter 40A) requires MBTA communities to have at least one zoning district of reasonable size near a transit station in which multifamily housing is permitted as of right.

"Compliance with the MBTA Communities Zoning Law is not only mandatory, it is an essential tool for the Commonwealth to address its housing crisis," Campbell stated in the advisory.

All but four of the designated MBTA communities have reached interim compliance by submitting an action plan before the Jan. 31 deadline.

Communities that fail to meet the timelines in the law become ineligible for



Attorney General Andrea Campbell warns that MBTA communities that fail to comply with a new multifamily zoning law may face legal ramifications, in addition to losing out on state funding sources.

funding from the state's Local Capital Projects Fund, MassWorks grants program, and Housing Choice Initiative.

The advisory marks the first time Campbell has weighed in on the issue, and is meant to send a clear signal to communities that they must fully comply.

"Communities that fail to comply with the law may be subject to civil enforcement action," she wrote. "MBTA Communities cannot avoid their obligations under the Law by forgoing this funding."

Campbell added that MBTA Communities that fail to comply also risk liability under federal and state fair housing laws.

Full compliance deadlines vary by transit type, with the 12 rapid transit communities expected to be in compliance by the end of this year. Commuter

rail and adjacent communities have a deadline of Dec. 31, 2024, and adjacent towns have until Dec. 31, 2025 to comply.

EPA seeks to regulate 6 PFAS in drinking water

By Josie Ahlberg

On March 14, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency announced a <u>new regula-</u> <u>tory proposal</u> to set enforceable limits on six PFAS, known as "forever chemicals," in drinking water across the nation.

The six chemicals the EPA seeks to regulate are:

- Perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA)
- Perfluorooctane sulfonic acid (PFOS)
- Perfluorononanoic acid (PFNA)
- Hexafluoropropylene oxide dimer acid (HFPO-DA, commonly known as GenX Chemicals)
- Perfluorohexane sulfonic acid (PFHxS)
- Perfluorobutane sulfonic acid (PFBS)

The proposed National Primary Drinking Water Regulation would mandate that public water systems monitor for these PFAS, notify the public, and reduce levels of PFAS if they exceed standards set by the EPA. The EPA expects some 66,000 water systems nationwide to be subject to the rule once it is finalized, and the agency anticipates that between 3,400 and 6,300 systems will exceed one or more of the new thresholds.

Scientific research indicates that human exposure to PFAS — short for per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances — may lead to adverse health outcomes such as reproductive effects, developmental effects in children, increased cancer risk, and interference with the body's immune and hormonal systems.

EPA proposal details

The EPA's proposal would establish legally enforceable levels, or maximum contaminant levels (MCLs), of 4 parts per trillion (ppt) for PFOA and 4 ppt for PFOS.

The four other PFAS chemicals would be regulated as a mixture of chemicals through a hazard index (HI), a tool often used in the Superfund program to evaluate health risks from chemical mixtures. Water systems would use the proposed <u>hazard index calculation</u> to determine whether action is required to mitigate PFNA, GenX Chemicals, PFHxS, and PFBS. Under the proposal, a running annual average hazard index value greater than 1.0 would be a violation of the proposed HI MCL.

Once finalized, water systems will have

three years to reach compliance with the new regulatory requirements.

In addition to the enforceable maximum contaminant levels, the proposal includes health-based maximum contaminant level goals, or MCLGs, which are not legally enforceable. This measure represents the margin of safe exposure — the maximum level of exposure where there is no known negative effect on an individual's health.

The MCLGs proposed for PFOA and PFOS are both 0 ppt, meaning there is no safe level of exposure to these two chemicals. The accompanying MCLG for PFNA, GenX Chemicals, PFHxS, and PFBS is a combined 1.0 hazard index value.

The proposed National Primary Drinking Water Regulation would mandate that public water systems monitor for these PFAS, notify the public, and reduce levels of PFAS if they exceed standards set by the EPA.

Existing regulatory landscape

In 2016, the EPA established health advisories for PFOA and PFOS indicating that PFOA and PFOS in drinking water at a combined concentration of more than 70 ppt could result in adverse health effects. Health advisories are unenforceable and nonregulatory, but they help to educate water systems and their customers about health risks.

In 2020, <u>Massachusetts established</u> <u>drinking water standards</u> requiring public water suppliers to test for a set of six PFAS compounds, called PFAS6, and to take remedial actions when amounts exceeded 20 ppt — much lower than the EPA's health advisory at the time.

In June of 2022, the <u>EPA released interim</u> <u>updated health advisories</u> for four PFAS chemicals, including PFOA and PFOS, replacing the advisories from 2016. The 2022 advisories revealed that some negative health effects may occur with concentrations of certain PFAS in water that are near zero.



A new federal regulatory proposal would set enforceable limits on six PFAS, known as "forever chemicals," in drinking water.

The Massachusetts PFAS6 includes PFOA, PFOS, PFHxS, PFNA, perfluoroheptanoic acid (PFHpA) and perfluorodecanoic acid (PFDA). The EPA's new proposal addresses PFOS, PFOA, PFHxS and PFNA, but not PFHpA and PFDA.

The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection said it plans to pursue PFAS water regulations that are at least as stringent as the federal standards. The <u>MassDEP website</u> has more information on its PFAS efforts.

Following the work of the <u>PFAS Interagency Task Force</u> over the past few years, the group's chairs, Rep. Kate Hogan and Sen. Julian Cyr, filed an omnibus bill (<u>H. 2197</u> and <u>S. 1356</u>) in January to implement many of the task force's recommendations, including the creation of a PFAS Remediation Trust Fund. The bills have been assigned to the Joint Committee on Public Health for review.

Next steps

The EPA is requesting public comment on its proposed drinking water regulations through <u>www.regulations.gov</u>, under Docket ID: EPA-HQ-OW-2022-0114. The proposal was published in the <u>Federal Register on March 29</u>, and comments must be submitted by May 30.

The EPA will hold a public hearing on May 4 from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. <u>Registration is</u> required by April 28.

The <u>EPA website</u> has more detailed information, including links to webinar recordings and materials, summaries of the federal water regulation changes, and technical materials.

The EPA anticipates finalizing its PFAS regulations by the end of this year.

EPA announces grants to plan climate projects

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has announced a two-stage grant program that will use nearly \$5 billion in Inflation Reduction Act investments to deploy greenhouse gas reduction strategies.

The first tranche of funding from the <u>Climate Pollution Reduction Grants</u> program is \$250 million in noncompetitive planning grants to states, local governments, tribes and territories to develop innovative strategies to reduce climate pollution and build clean energy economies. The program provides flexible planning resources for grant recipients to develop and implement scalable solutions that protect people from pollution and advance environmental justice.

All 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico are eligible to receive \$3 million each in planning grant funds. Each of the <u>67 most populous metropol-</u> <u>itan areas</u> in the country are eligible to receive \$1 million, including two Massachusetts-based areas. The <u>Boston-Cambridge-Newton, MA-NH MSA</u> covers 188 municipalities, and the <u>Worcester,</u> <u>MA-CT MSA</u> covers 48.

Metropolitan areas must submit a notice of intent to participate by April 28.

Later this year, the EPA will launch a competition for \$4.6 billion in funding to implement projects and initiatives included in these plans. States, cities, territories and tribes can also use this funding to develop strategies for using the other grant, loan and tax provisions secured by legislation including the Inflation Reduction Act and Bipartisan Infrastructure Law to achieve their clean energy, climate and environmental justice goals.

The \$250 million in climate planning grants builds on \$550 million recently announced for the EPA's new <u>Environmental Justice Thriving Communities</u> <u>Grantmaking</u> program and <u>\$100 million</u> <u>announced</u> earlier this year for environmental justice grants to support underserved and overburdened communities. In addition, the <u>Greenhouse</u> <u>Gas Reduction Fund</u> will award nearly \$27 billion to leverage private capital for clean energy and clean air investments across the country.

Climate Pollution Reduction Grants Program

The planning grants under the Climate Pollution Reduction Grants program will support states, territories, tribes, municipalities and air agencies in the creation of comprehensive, innovative strategies for reducing pollution and ensuring that investments maximize benefits, especially for low-income and disadvantaged communities.

The climate plans will include:

- Greenhouse gas emissions inventories
- Emissions projections and reduction targets

EPA GRANTS continued on 19

MMA webinar covers Climate Pollution Reduction Grants

By Josie Ahlberg

The <u>MMA hosted a free webinar on</u> <u>March 20</u> about a <u>new two-stage federal</u> <u>grant program</u> that will use nearly \$5 billion in Inflation Reduction Act funds to deploy greenhouse gas reduction strategies across the nation.

Representatives from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency gave municipal officials an overview of the new <u>Climate Pollution Reduction Grants</u> program.

The first tranche of funding from the program is \$250 million in noncompetitive planning grants to states, local governments, tribes and territories to develop innovative strategies to reduce climate pollution and build clean energy economies. The program provides flexible planning resources for grant recipients to develop and implement scalable solutions that protect people from pollution and advance environmental justice.

Each of the 67 most populous metropolitan areas in the country are eligible to receive \$1 million in planning grants, including two Massachusetts-based areas: the <u>Boston-Cambridge-Newton</u>, <u>MA-NH MSA</u>, which covers 188 mu-



The MMA hosted a webinar on March 20 about the new Climate Pollution Reduction Grants program. Pictured are (clockwise from top left) MMA Legislative Analyst Josie Ahlberg; Andrea Denny, Local Energy and Environment program lead at the EPA; and John Rogan, Air Quality Planning Branch chief at the EPA.

nicipalities, and the <u>Worcester, MA-CT</u> <u>MSA</u>, which covers 48. Municipalities outside of these metropolitan areas will have the opportunity to collaborate with their state on planning and be eligible to apply for implementation funding activities identified in the state's plan.

The MMA webinar allowed municipal leaders from the eligible metropolitan areas to hear from EPA Region 1 staff, review key application details, and ask questions. The session emphasized the

urgent need to address climate change on a local and regional level — efforts that the climate grants are designed to support and accelerate.

EPA staff highlighted the importance of collaboration and communication among eligible municipalities in the weeks ahead, as the Boston and Worcester metro areas organize to submit a notice of intent to participate by April 28. Many metro areas across the country, including the two Massachusetts-based areas, will need to work with municipalities across state borders to participate, a characteristic that is unique to the Climate Pollution Reduction Grants program.

For more details on the planning grants and the application process, see the CPRG Program Guidance document on the <u>EPA website</u>. Answers to frequently asked questions can be found in the CPRG <u>Updates and Questions</u> section. Additional questions can be directed to CPRG@epa.gov.

- <u>View the webinar</u>
- View the <u>EPA's "Climate Pollution</u> <u>Reduction Grants: Planning Grants"</u> <u>presentation</u>

MMA hosts 1st 'Reframing Recruitment' webinar

By Lily Rancatore

On March 15, the MMA hosted the first in a series of webinars for municipal officials to showcase timely hiring strategies to help communities succeed in a tight labor market.

<u>"Setting the Table – Vacancies and</u>

<u>Advertising</u>" covered how innovative strategies for writing standout ads and seeking creative placements for vacancies can maximize the potential for reaching new and diverse candidates.

The session was led by Jen Breaker, the assistant town manager and communications director in Danvers, and Caitlyn Julius, the assistant human resources director in Springfield, along with Kristina Ordung, the director of human resources in Shrewsbury.

Breaker discussed the global labor shortage that has become more apparent since the peak of the COVID pandemic, partly due to workers' desire for higher-paying jobs with more flexibility and the growing "gig economy." She said municipal officials need to be proactive, rather than reactive, in their recruitment approach, developing action steps to market careers and reframe local government as a business.

Julius said communities can be proactive by working with retirement boards to regularly identify employees who may be eligible for retirement, so that departments can plan to update job descriptions and make internal arrangements.

Ordung suggested that communities create a five-year staffing plan, which helps appointed and elected officials



On March 15, the MMA hosted the first in a series of webinars for municipal officials to showcase timely hiring strategies during a tight labor market. Pictured are (clockwise from top left) Shrewsbury Human Resources Director Kristina Ordung, Danvers Assistant Town Manager and Communications Director Jen Breaker, and Springfield Assistant Human Resources Director Caitlyn Julius.

think strategically about both short- and long-term department needs.

Panelists stressed the importance of developing and implementing a marketing strategy for vacancies once staffing needs are identified. Breaker suggested using web-based tools, such as Canva, to create high-end advertisements and graphics. Julius said it's essential to post employment ads on the community's social channels, such as Linkedin, Facebook and Instagram, as well as on job boards.

Ordung emphasized the importance of advertising opportunities through a sustainable public outreach strategy. She mentioned sharing job openings with community social clubs, religious groups, boards, commissions, and committees. Advertising employment opportunities in physical spaces, or electronically with these groups, can help reach a larger candidate pool, increase transparency, and foster positive relationships within the community.

Panelists discussed how to intentionally develop a clear understanding of the "ideal candidate" before starting the hiring process. They clarified how to define roles, approach the process in a holistic way, use existing resources, and analyze what makes your community competitive.

During a 20-minute question and answer period, attendees asked about recruiting with limited HR staff, leveraging social media, and hosting

Upcoming Reframing Recruitment webinars include:

- <u>Reframing Recruitment: The Interview</u> <u>Process</u> – April 19
- <u>Reframing Recruitment: What</u> <u>Happens After the Offer</u> – May 17
- <u>Reframing Recruitment: Key</u> <u>Takeaways from Vacancy to Post-</u> <u>Recruitment</u> – June 14
- View the March 15 webinar

virtual job fairs.

AG Campbell to speak at WEMO symposium on April 28

Attorney General Andrea Campbell will give the keynote address at the Women Elected Municipal Officials spring symposium on Friday, April 28.

The free, virtual symposium will run from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. The theme is "Stepping into Your Power: Policymaking as a Woman Leader."

The keynote will be followed by a series of breakout discussions on topics that may include building support when proposing policies, bringing issues forward in the face of opposition; dealing with microaggressions; and coaching/mentoring newly elected female colleagues. The meeting will open with a networking session from 9:30 to 10 a.m., giving mem-

Andrea Campbell

of their fellow women elected leaders and provide the WEMO Committee with

bers an opportunity

input about programming for the year ahead.

Advance registration is required. An email with the registration link and full agenda was sent to all WEMO members.

Contact: MMA Education and Training Coordinator Coordinator Lily Rancatore at Irancatore@mma.org

Administration creating director of rural affairs

Gov. Maura Healey and Lt. Gov. Kim Driscoll visited Franklin County on March 10 to announce the creation of a director of rural affairs to ensure that the state's rural communities are better represented in state government.

The director of rural affairs, within the Executive Office of Economic Development, will serve as a dedicated advocate and ombudsman for rural communities. The director will be responsible for cultivating rural economic development and coordinating with secretariats and state agencies to ensure that state government is attuned to the unique needs of rural communities.

"For the first time in state history, we will have a dedicated staff member committed to coordinating across state government to support economic development in rural communities," Healey said during an appearance in Deerfield. "We want to send a clear message to every single person who calls rural Massachusetts home: We see you, we value you, and we're going to work every day to ensure you have the representation and support you deserve."

Driscoll said the new director "will bring the level of intentionality to our policy making that rural communities deserve."

The director of rural affairs will be tasked with conducting a review of all state grant opportunities to ensure that barriers for rural and small towns are mitigated. The director will also host dedicated office hours for rural towns to provide technical assistance to identify and explore grant opportunities.



During a visit to Williams Farm Sugarhouse in Deerfield on March 10, Gov. Maura Healey (left) and Lt. Gov. Kim Driscoll announce the creation of a director of rural affairs position. (Photo courtesy Joshua Qualls/Governor's Press Office)

The administration is also committing to maintaining and updating the Community Compact Connector Calendar so that small municipalities can find all state grants in one place and better coordinate their application efforts.

"Our economy needs to work for everyone, including the 181 rural communities and small towns across our state," said Housing and Economic Development Secretary Yvonne Hao. "Through this role, rural and small towns will have an advocate in state government committed to helping their economies thrive."

With rural communities in mind, the governor noted that her fiscal 2024 state budget (H. 1) proposes:

 \$25 million for Food Security Infrastructure Grants to aid farmers, fisherman, schools, nonprofits, and local producers and to construct infrastructure to bolster the local food system

- \$7.5 million for rural school aid
- A \$6.5 million (14%) increase for payments in lieu of taxes (PILOT) for state-owned land, and ensuring that all municipalities receive the same or higher payments
- A \$2 million increase in the dairy tax credit cap, to \$8 million, to protect dairy farmers from fluctuations in wholesale milk prices
- A nearly \$9 million increase in base funding for regional transit authorities, and \$19 million for new grant opportunities for transit providers, including RTAs, to enable providers to explore new service models
- A \$570,000 increase in the Department of Agricultural Resources' MassGrown and Fresher branding campaign, agricultural fairs, farmers markets, and agricultural education initiatives
- Funding for three new staff positions to bolster the Agricultural Preservation Restriction program, facilitating farmland acquisition and protection
- Expanded support for the Community One Stop for Growth with a \$1 million investment into technical assistance to help municipalities identify ways to breathe life into underutilized parcels, and committing \$600,000 for the Massachusetts Downtown Initiative to help further community development efforts in town centers and downtowns with planning support

RURAL AFFAIRS continued on 19

Tech support available through federal Thriving Communities Network

By Adrienne Núñez

Three technical support opportunities are now available through the federal government's <u>Thriving Communities</u> <u>Network</u>, a partnership among federal agencies intended to align and coordinate technical assistance offerings for communities.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development has opened an <u>online portal</u> for local governments to request technical assistance through the <u>Thriving Communities technical</u> <u>assistance program</u>. Program funding will help municipalities receiving federal transportation funding to ensure that housing is considered in infrastructure investment plans, with a focus on disadvantaged communities. Requests for assistance will be received and reviewed on a rolling basis.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is offering \$100 million in environmental justice funding through two new grant programs, with applications due April 14:

• \$70 million is available through the <u>Environmental Justice Government-</u> <u>to-Government (EJG2G) program</u>, which supports government actions

that lead to measurable environmental or public health benefits in communities disproportionately affected by environmental harms. (Click here for informational webinar recordings.)

 \$30 million is available through the <u>Environmental Justice Collaborative</u> <u>Problem-Solving Cooperative</u> <u>Agreement program</u>. Funding is provided to nonprofit communitybased organizations working to address local environmental or public health issues. (<u>Click here for</u> informational webinar recordings.)

Administration announces end of COVID emergency

Three years after it began, the Healey-Driscoll administration announced that the state's COVID-19 public health emergency will end on May 11, to align with the end of the federal public health emergency.

The announcement on March 15 came ahead of the 45-day notice required by state law, allowing additional time for affected organizations to prepare.

On March 29, Gov. Maura Healey signed a <u>supplemental budget package</u> that included policy proposals to permanently extend, beyond May 11, three Public Health Orders issued in connection with the COVID-19 public health emergency. The law codifies staffing flexibilities for advanced life support ambulances and freestanding dialysis providers, and flexibilities for the administration of prescription medications to clients of state agencies who reside in community settings.

The governor also announced that on May 11 she plans to rescind Executive Order 595, which required all Executive Branch state employees to have received their primary series COVID-19 vaccines. She said the order had been "a successful tool" for reducing the spread and severity of COVID-19 in Massachusetts.



The state's COVID-19 public health emergency will end on May 11.

– John Ouellette

Electric and alternative vehicle charging infrastructure grant opens

By Adrienne Núñez

The Charging and Fueling Infrastructure Discretionary Grant Program (CFI program), a new competitive grant program overseen by the Federal Highway Administration, is accepting applications through May 30.

The first round will award \$700 million in grants intended to help build publicly accessible electric vehicle charging infrastructure, as well as alternative fueling infrastructure for hydrogen, propane and natural gas vehicles.

Funded by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, the CFI program will provide \$2.5 billion in grants over five years in two categories:

 The Community Program that will provide \$1.25 billion to strategically deploy publicly accessible EV charging infrastructure, and hydrogen, propane, or natural gas fueling infrastructure.
Project sites may be located on any public road, other publicly accessible



A new federal grant program will help build publicly accessible electric vehicle charging infrastructure, as well as alternative fueling infrastructure.

locations such as parking facilities at public buildings, public schools, and public parks, or in publicly accessible parking facilities owned or managed by a private entity.

• The Corridor Program will provide \$1.25 billion to support publicly accessible EV charging infrastructure and hydrogen, propane, and natural gas fueling infrastructure along designated alternative fuel corridors.

Eligible entities include states, counties, local governments, Metropolitan planning organizations and transportation-focused special purpose districts or authorities. Groups of eligible entities are able to apply together.

The FHWA seeks to fund projects that address environmental justice, particularly for communities such as rural and low- and moderate-income neighborhoods that may disproportionately experience the consequences of climate change and other pollutants.

The Notice of Funding Opportunity for the CFI program is available on grants. gov. Applications are accepted on grants. gov only.

Additional grant information, including links to informational webinars, is available on the FHWA website.

Water districts urged to sign on to program to help ratepayers

The federal Office of Community Services is urging all water districts, particularly those serving large populations of low-income residents, to participate in a program to help low-income water and wastewater ratepayers.

An estimated \$16 million in American Rescue Act funding is available to Massachusetts for the <u>Low-Income Home</u> <u>Water Assistance Program</u> until the close of the year, and water districts are urged to sign on to the program as soon as possible to ensure that funding is programmed by Sept. 30, 2023.

Eligible ratepayers can access funding to offset service charges, pay past-due bills, and/or restore service. The water program is overseen by the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP).

To participate, water districts must have a vendor agreement in place with

the local administrative agency. Water districts are advised to contact the local LIHEAP/LIHWAP agency as soon as possible to set up the vendor agreement. A list of LIHEAP agencies by town is available at <u>hedfuel.azurewebsites.net</u>.

The Massachusetts <u>LIHWAP grant implementation plan</u> is available online.

For more information, contact Ed Kiely at edward.kiely@state.ma.us.

– Adrienne Núñez

2nd session of 'Reframing Recruitment' webinars set

By Lily Rancatore

"The Interview Process," the second session in the MMA's monthly "Reframing Recruitment" webinar series, will be held on April 19.

The webinar will

share tips for reviewing applications, building an interview panel, and selecting the best questions for prospective candidates. Panelists will discuss how to conduct an effective interview and tailor the process according to current vacancies and community needs.



Caitlyn Julius

Jen Breaker

Michelle Pizzi O'Brien

<u>Online registration</u> <u>is open</u> for the April 19 session.

The "Reframing Recruitment" series showcases timely and successful municipal hiring strategies. The webinars are led by Jen Breaker, the assistant town manager and communications director in Danvers, and Caitlyn Julius, the assistant human resources director in Springfield. In April, they will be joined by Michelle Pizzi O'Brien, the human resources director in Newton.

Upcoming webinars include:

- <u>Reframing Recruitment: What</u> <u>Happens After the Offer</u> – May 17
- <u>Reframing Recruitment: Key</u> <u>Takeaways from Vacancy to Post-</u> <u>Recruitment</u> – June 14

For more information, contact MMA Education and Training Coordinator Lily Rancatore at lrancatore@mma.org.

MMA to host webinar on public records and open meeting laws

A free MMA webinar on April 25 will provide an overview of recent developments related to the state's public records and open meeting laws.



Janelle Austin

will address the current state of each law, as well as practical considerations for municipalities given the recent <u>Supreme</u> <u>Judicial Court</u> <u>decision</u> restricting

Austin of KP Law

policies related to public comment at public meetings.

Appointed and elected municipal officials are invited to <u>register now</u>.

For more information, contact MMA Education and Training Coordinator Lily Rancatore at lrancatore@mma.org.

MMA webinar shares effective internal conflict resolution strategies

Lauren Goldberg

By Lily Rancatore

Attorneys Lauren

Goldberg and Janelle

An <u>MMA webinar on March 28</u> covered how to skillfully manage internal conflict, neutralize its negative effects, and maintain a positive and healthy work culture.

Katie Gilfeather, an employee assistance program professional and clinician with AllOne Health, began by discussing common causes of conflict, saying that inadequate communication and perceived performance issues are prominent influences.

AllOne Health Regional Executive Director Michael Stuart explained the difference between healthy and unhealthy conflict, in addition to various examples of conflicts that might arise within city and town halls. He described how poor communication can develop from fundamental differences in personality and lead to workplace disputes and confusion around project delegation.

Unmanaged conflict can diminish performance, reduce morale, and increase turnover, triggering a residual impact on the



Katie Gilfeather (left), a clinician with AllOne Health, and Michael Stuart, AllOne Health's executive director, address workplace conflict during a March 28 MMA webinar.

overall municipal workplace, as well as the health of appointed and elected officials.

To resolve and mitigate conflict, Gilfeather said it's essential to set expectations and create alignment between colleagues. She stressed the significance of early intervention and enhancing interpersonal communication skills to sharpen emotional intelligence and increase conflict resiliency.

Stuart and Gilfeather offered several strategies for addressing conflict, such

as remaining calm, using neutral language, and being timely in your response. Remaining calm helps prevent a conflict from escalating and activating the body's "fight or flight" response.

Gilfeather highlighted the importance of listening, recognizing the brain's default response, and responding instead of reacting. Taking the time to process your emotions, and using more effective language to communicate your position, is less likely to exacerbate tension and prolong the conflict.

The session wrapped with an emphasis on early intervention and effective communication, encouraging appointed and elected officials to approach anger with empathy.

Sandwich Town Manager Bud Dunham moderated the question and answer session, where attendees asked about responding to tension in a timely manner and mitigating conflict between committee and board members.

• <u>View the webinar</u>

MMA webinar covers social media best practices

By Lily Rancatore

An <u>MMA webinar on March 7</u> showcased how to use social media as a tool to communicate and engage with local communities while complying with the unique legal and ethical requirements imposed on municipal officials.

Sean Dugan, the director of communications and special projects in Lexington, opened the session by highlighting the benefits of using social media to increase awareness of community programs, build trust with constituents, and gather feedback.

Brianna Sunryd, the director of communications and civic innovation in Amherst, discussed the importance of developing a social media strategy with clear objectives and the intended audience. She identified the most popular social channels and the general user demographics for each, and reviewed what to consider when selecting a platform to use.

Sunryd explained the importance of having a social media policy to govern the use and maintenance of social media accounts, as well as a terms of use statement for visitors.

Internal policies should address the personal use of social media by appointed and elected officials and include a protocol for launching new social media



During a March 7 webinar hosted by the MMA, panelists discuss benefits and challenges of social media use for municipalities. Pictured are (clockwise from top left) Brianna Sunryd, Amherst's director of communications and civic innovation; Anne Marie Noonan, an attorney at Valerio, Dominello & Hillman; North Andover Town Manager Melissa Murphy-Rodrigues; and Sean Dugan, Lexington's director of communications and special projects.

accounts, Sunryd said. External policies should establish acceptable guidelines for public use and include disclosures regarding the preservation of content for public records law compliance.

Dugan offered high-level tips for social media policies, such as making them available on municipal websites and social accounts and having a clear process for providing access to municipal employees and officials for posting on official municipal accounts. He said it's important for key municipal leaders to have a listing of login information for all official municipal social accounts.

Attorney Ann Marie Noonan of Valerio, Dominello & Hillman explored best practices related to the broad legal considerations of social media for governing bodies, starting with the public records and open meeting laws. Dugan said it's a best practice to retain records with the help of social media archiving tools.

Noonan said public officials must be careful not to use municipal social media in ways that may create a conflict of interest or expose legally protected information.

Turning to public responses to municipal social media posts, Noonan discussed the line between legitimate discourse and actionable conduct. Regarding First Amendment implications, she said a terms of use policy can be used to outline the limits on public responses. Municipalities are also advised to monitor posts for violations of the terms of use.

The terms of use should explicitly re-

SOCIAL MEDIA continued on 18

Select Board Association webinar looks at affordable housing trusts

By Isabelle Jenkins

The Massachusetts Select Board Association held its first program webinar of the year on March 17, discussing best practices for affordable housing trusts.

Shelly Goehring, senior program manager at the <u>Massachusetts Housing</u> <u>Partnership</u>, gave an overview of housing trust basics, including relevant state laws, processes for establishing a trust, and what trusts can do.

Goehring discussed operations and best practices for housing trusts, providing a number of case studies for reference. She also reviewed a number of free, online resources available to municipalities through the Housing Partnership.

Caitlin Madden, executive director of <u>Metrowest Collaborative Development</u>,

provided an overview of the work being done by her organization and discussed why communities should prioritize affordable housing.

Madden discussed successful housing projects that her organization has worked on in partnership with Affordable Housing Trusts in Medway and Hudson. She described the "secret sauce" that made the projects successful, with a strong emphasis on local leadership.

Kathryn Roy, chair of the <u>Lexington</u> <u>Affordable Housing Trust Study Com-</u> <u>mittee</u>, discussed how her committee was able to successfully advocate for the establishment of a trust, which was adopted by a special town meeting in 2022.



Shelly Goehring, senior program manager at the Massachusetts Housing Partnership, discusses affordable housing trusts during a March 17 webinar hosted by the Massachusett Select Board Association.

• <u>View the MSA webinar on affordable</u> <u>housing trusts</u>

Communities form coalition to facilitate broadband

By Bob Espindola

More than 25 cities and towns have formed a coalition to facilitate networking among communities with broadband ambitions.

The Massachusetts Broadband Coalition started with a group of local officials along the south coast who were aware of each other's efforts and felt that it might be helpful to share experiences and ideas and pool resources. The group identified common areas of concern, including the lack of competition among internet service providers in their communities, service quality concerns, and digital equity concerns.

Group members felt overwhelmed by information about \$65 billion in federal funding for broadband and \$200 million available in Massachusetts through the Massachusetts Broadband Institute, saying the programs, especially at the federal level, are fluid and have yet to fully define eligibility requirements for grants.

Coalition members are finding it helpful to share knowledge, some of which has been gained through working with their own consultants, as some communities have been studying the feasibility of building fiber optic networks to residences and businesses.

Coalition members felt there was likely



Through the Massachusetts Broadband Coalition, more than 25 communities are working together to address broadband issues.

common ground among the 77 communities that received grant funding from the state's <u>Municipal Fiber Grant</u> <u>Program</u>, a program that has awarded more than \$13 million. The coalition's outreach has brought in communities from across Massachusetts.

At the coalition's most recent monthly meeting, on March 22, representatives from the Massachusetts Broadband Institute discussed digital equity planning and capacity building. They said grant programs are available without matching fund requirements.

Coalition members pointed out that an upcoming opportunity has a deadline of May 1. The Department of Commerce's National Telecommunications and Information Administration, according to its website, is responsible for distributing more than \$48 billion in Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funding through several different programs. The NTIA is seeking comments on the \$2.75 billion Digital Equity Act of 2021, and on the design and implementation of two components of that grant program: the \$1.44 billion State Digital Equity Capacity Grant Program and the \$1.25 billion Digital Equity Competitive Grant Program.

The coalition plans to review the <u>24</u> <u>questions being asked by the NTIA</u>.

Several coalition communities have expressed interest in working together to study the <u>NTIA model</u> for how to form a public-private partnership, with the goal of driving economies of scale to a point where building a shared, open access network would be feasible.

Those interested in joining the Massachusetts Broadband Coalition or signing up for its listserv can do so on its website: <u>www.ma-bc.org</u>.

Bob Espindola is a Select Board member in Fairhaven and a founder of the Massachusetts Broadband Coalition.

Management Association and MMHR to hold joint meeting April 13

The Massachusetts Municipal Management Association and Massachusetts Municipal Human Resources will hold a joint meeting on April 13 at Devens Common Center.

Marc Wey, managing partner at Leadership Management International, will lead a session on how to build a management team. The discussion will include ways to cultivate strong relationships among members of the team, how to hire a team that performs and works well together, and the role of personal assessment tools (such as <u>DISC</u>) in the process.

The meeting will begin with a discussion of Harvard professor Robert Waldinger's TED talk: "<u>What Makes a</u> <u>Good Life? Lessons from the Longest</u> <u>Study on Happiness.</u>" East Bridgewater



Charlie Seelig



ig V

Town Administrator Charlie Seelig and Southborough Assistant Town Administrator Vanessa Hale will lead this member-driven session.

The meeting agenda and online registration are available at <u>www.mma.org</u>.

The meeting cost of \$40 includes a light breakfast and lunch.



Marc Wey

The MMA is advising in-person meeting attendees to keep up with the latest COVID vaccines for which they are eligible. Attendees are urged to take an at-home rapid antigen test prior to attending,

and not attend if they have any COVID symptoms or if a household member has tested positive for COVID. These protocols are subject to change based on the latest public health data and guidance.

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

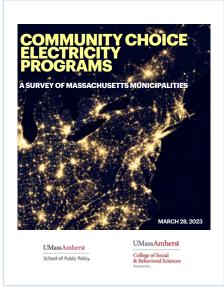
UMass study: Aggregation programs lower costs

Researchers from UMass Amherst have found that nearly 80% of Community Choice Energy aggregation programs instituted by municipalities in Massachusetts offer reduced electricity costs compared to utility basic service rates, while 60% of standard CCE packages are rated "green," with a higher percentage of renewable energy certificates than required by the Commonwealth.

The findings are detailed in a <u>report</u> released on March 28 by the UMass Amherst Sustainable Policy Lab, which examined the various opportunities and challenges associated with the implementation of CCE aggregation programs across Massachusetts using data collected between 2019 and 2022.

CCE programs allow local governments to aggregate the electricity loads of residents, businesses and municipal facilities to procure their energy supply at competitive market prices. Massachusetts is one of only eight states across the country to have enacted CCE legislation, with such programs adopted by 157 of the state's 351 municipalities as of November 2021.

The study finds that 79% of these municipalities achieved savings compared to utilities' monthly basic service rates, with an average amount of savings corresponding to 0.88 cents per kilowatt-hour, or about \$93 per household, per year. The savings for these municipalities amount to about \$70 million per year, in total, according to Marta Vicarelli, assistant professor of economics and public policy at UMass Amherst and principal investigator of the study, which assessed municipal officials' responses to interviews, focus groups and an online survey. Additionally, 35% of municipalities achieved savings above 1 cent per kWh — about \$106 per household, per year — and the maximum amount of savings corresponded



to 2.55 cents per kWh, or about \$271 per household, per year.

Vicarelli's team also found that 30% of standard CCE packages not only exceed the Massachusetts renewable energy requirement, but also contain 100% of renewable energy certificates, while 89% of municipalities with contracts exceeding state renewable energy level requirements achieved savings corresponding to about \$33.5 million per year in total.

"This is one of the most interesting and uplifting results," Vicarelli said. "It suggests that fair and equitable access to energy is not compromised by the transition to sustainable/renewable energy, which is urgently needed to mitigate climate change."

In the survey, municipalities systematically reported obtaining additional benefits beyond their primary goal.

"For instance," Vicarelli said, "among municipalities with 'higher renewable energy levels' as their primary goal, the top three benefits reported include higher renewable energy levels (83%), reduced rates (78%), and price stability (65%)."

The report also details some of the challenges that municipalities faced when instituting CCE programs. The most frequently reported challenge was delays associated with approval from the Department of Public Utilities; some municipalities had to wait more than one year for the DPU approval, the researchers found. Smaller municipalities, particularly in rural areas, were more likely to have experienced difficulties associated with information acquisition toward the creation of CCE programs and understanding or interpreting state regulations associated with CCEs.

"To our knowledge, this is the first study assessing in detail the performance of a CCE program in the United States by both analyzing market data as well as the self-reported experience of municipalities," Vicarelli said. "Our results suggest that community energy aggregation programs contribute to making the energy market more equitable by reducing costs for consumers and by providing higher price stability and customer's protection. Moreover, with solar and wind energy prices declining over time, and fossil fuel prices becoming more and more volatile, CCE programs are emerging as promising cost-effective instruments to support the transition to sustainable energy and climate mitigation efforts.

"Last, but not least," she said, "by expanding local renewable energy markets, CCE programs contribute to local economic development."

The complete report, "<u>Community</u> <u>Choice Electricity Programs: A Survey</u> <u>of Massachusetts Municipalities</u>," is available on the UMass Amherst School of Public Policy website. ●

Let us know about your local news

Every day across the Commonwealth, municipal leaders are figuring out ways to deliver services more efficiently, save taxpayers money, engage more citizens in the vital work of local government, and improve the effectiveness of the layer of government that has the most direct impact on people's lives. The MMA wants to recognize and help spread the word about these local creative solutions.

If your community has launched a new program or initiative, or has found a

unique solution to a common problem, please let us know by filling out our new <u>Local News Tips form</u> on the MMA website.

MMHR to hold HR101 boot camp in Boylston on May 11

The Massachusetts Municipal Human Resources association will offer its annual HR101 boot camp as a full-day, in-person event on May 11 in Boylston.

The boot camp will cover core functions of the municipal HR office, including employee termination and/or separation, recent trends in labor law, municipal leave laws, and an HR101 roundtable with seasoned human resources professionals.

Featured speakers will include:

- Human resources consultant and former MMHR Chair Mary Beth Bernard, who will discuss the path to termination or separation
- Alexandra Pichette, partner at Morgan, Brown & Joy, and Richard Gello, associate at Morgan, Brown & Joy, who will discuss employee leave laws, including the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Family and Medical Leave Act, and more



Alexandra Pichette



Mary Beth Bernard

Additional speakers and the complete agenda will be announced in the coming weeks.

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

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 Cyprian Keyes Golf Club, 284 E Temple Street in Boylston.

Richard Gello

The registration fee is \$100 for members and \$120 for nonmembers. A registration link is available at <u>mma.</u> org.

The MMA is advising in-person meeting attendees to

keep up with the latest COVID vaccines for which they are eligible. Attendees are urged to take an at-home rapid antigen test prior to attending, and not attend if they have any COVID symptoms or if a household member has tested positive for COVID. These protocols are subject to change based on the latest public health data and guidance.

Contact: MMA Director of Communication & Membership Candace Pierce at cpierce@mma.org

ATFC to hold spring conference

The Association of Town Finance Committees will hold its spring conference on Saturday, April 29, at the Pompositticut Community Center in Stow.



The agenda will feature "The ABC's

Jennifer Raitt

of Grants," an overview of federal and state grants available to municipalities and the application process. The session will be led by Jennifer Raitt, executive director of the Northern Middlesex Council of Governments.

A practitioner's panel will address how a finance committee is affected when a town pursues and receives grant funding. Topics will include budgeting costs associated with grants, factoring funding into long-range planning, and other lessons learned. Attendees will also learn about resources to assist towns with the grant process.

The meeting will kick off with a legislative and budget update from MMA Senior Legislative Analyst Jackie Lavender Bird. The conference will run from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., with lunch served at noon.

The cost is \$25 for ATFC members and \$35 for all other registrants. A registration link is available at www.mma.org.

The MMA is advising in-person meeting attendees to keep up with the latest COVID vaccines for which they are eligible. Attendees are urged to take an at-home rapid antigen test prior to attending, and not attend if they have any COVID symptoms or if a household member has tested positive for COVID. These protocols are subject to change based on the latest public health data and guidance.

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



WLG highlights importance of mentors

Keynote speaker Cathy Conlow, executive director of the Maine Municipal Association, emphasizes the importance of mentorship in career development during the Women Leading Government Annual Conference on March 2 in Devens. Conlow has a 35-year career in municipal management. The third annual WLG conference included networking and complimentary professional photos for all 150 attendees.

MunEnergy to hold webinar on summer energy costs

The MunEnergy program will hold a one-hour webinar on May 10 beginning at 11:30 a.m. to provide timely information about summer energy costs and sustainability opportunities for cities and towns.

Local officials will have the opportunity to learn about issues affecting energy costs as we head into the warm

LOCAL AID

Continued from page 4

the commitment in the Student Opportunity Act to fund 100% of the state's statutory obligation to mitigate Chapter 70 losses to charter schools.

Beckwith thanked legislators for accelerating the reimbursement rate in fiscal 2023, which fulfilled the state's statutory obligation one year ahead of schedule. He noted, however, that charter schools continue to divert a high percentage of Chapter 70 funds away from many municipally operated school districts, and place increasing strain on the districts that serve the vast majority of public schoolchildren. The MMA reiterated its call for comprehensive charter school finance reform.

Student transportation

House 1 would fund approximately 90% of regional transportation costs at \$97 million. Not fully funding this account creates a hardship for virtually all communities in regional districts.

"If you can get to 100% reimbursement," Suhoski said, "that would help so many rural districts, some of which are sprawling."

Reimbursements for transportation of out-of-district vocational students

summer months. Participants will also hear about benefits of the MunEnergy program.

<u>Advance registration</u> is required in order to receive the link to attend.

For 24 years, the <u>MMA's MunEnergy</u> <u>program</u> has helped cities and towns manage energy costs through a program designed specifically for public entities.

would receive a significant increase in House 1, bringing reimbursements up to 90% for the first-time in many years, which Beckwith applauded, while also asking that the Legislature consider fully funding the account.

The governor's budget reflects full funding for transportation of homeless students under the federal McKinney-Vento Act at \$28.6 million.

Rural schools

The governor's proposal would increase rural school aid by \$2 million, bringing the account to \$7.5 million. Beckwith expressed appreciation for the increase, but explained that it still falls short of the \$60 million recommendation included in <u>last summer's report from</u> <u>the Commission on the Fiscal Health of</u> <u>Rural School Districts</u>.

Payments In Lieu Of Taxes (PI-LOT)

The governor's budget would fund payments-in-lieu-of-taxes at \$51.5 million. According to the administration, this amount would hold municipalities harmless from recent valuations. In fiscal 2023, the Legislature increased this account by 29% over the prior year. Beckwith acknowledged the progress that has been made on PILOT in the For more information about the MMA's MunEnergy program, visit the program's webpage or contact MMA Deputy Executive Director Katie McCue at 617-426-7272, ext. 111, or kmccue@mma.org.

last two years, and asked that legislators continue to support this important funding for municipalities.

Municipal Regionalization and Efficiencies Reserve

The governor's budget proposal includes funding for several key initiatives that assist cities and towns. This reserve would provide \$8 million to the Community Compact Program, \$5 million in public safety staffing grants, \$3 million for technical assistance through regional planning agencies, \$2 million for regionalization and efficiency programs, \$2 million to assist communities in identifying and applying for new federal grants, and \$500,000 for the Local Finance Commonwealth Fellowship Program.

Process

The House and Senate Ways and Means committees jointly hold a series of hearings in March and early April on various areas of the state budget.

The House is expected to draft and debate its budget bill in April, with the Senate deliberating its own bill in May.

The Legislature will work to get a final budget bill to the governor by the beginning of the fiscal year on July 1. ●

SOCIAL MEDIA

Continued from page 14

serve the municipality's right to remove comments that are off-topic, threatening, discriminatory, obscene, or that encourage illegal activity. Dugan added that it's important to consult municipal leadership, and possibly municipal counsel, before deleting a user's posts or comments.

Noonan and Sunryd reviewed how to assess threats made on social media, knowing when to intervene and how to respond, while preserving objectionable content using screen captures or archiving tools. North Andover Town Manager Melissa Murphy-Rodrigues moderated 20 minutes of questions and answers. Attendees asked about archiving posts, the use of in-house communications staff, and personal use of social media by appointed and elected officials.

• View the webinar and materials

MMCA to hold statewide meeting on April 27

Social media will be the focus of the Massachusetts Municipal Councillors' Association's statewide meeting on Thursday, April 27, from 6 to 8 p.m., in Worcester.

Anne Marie Noonan, an attorney with Valerio, Dominello & Hillman, will speak about best practices for councillors in the use of social media. She will focus on the legal issues and requirements for local officials.

The free event will be held at Grill on

Form-of-government resources available

The Massachusetts Municipal Management Association offers free resources to help communities that are considering a change in their form of government.

The Management Association, a member group of the MMA comprising town managers, administrators and assistants, has compiled answers to frequently asked questions as well as descriptions of the different forms of

EPA GRANTS

Continued from page 9

- Economic, health and social benefits, including to low-income and disadvantaged communities
- Plans to leverage other sources of federal funding, including the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and Inflation Reduction Act
- Workforce needs to support decarbonization and a clean energy economy
- Future government staffing and budget needs

The EPA's program guidance describes how the agency intends to award and manage CPRG funds to eligible entities.

Metropolitan areas will develop regional planning grants with key stakeholders in their area. Communities that do not rank in the top 67 most populous areas

RURAL AFFAIRS

Continued from page 11

The administration's budget also proposes funding for the Massachusetts Department of Transportation to continue government with a professional administrator.

meeting attendees to keep up with the

the Hill at Green

Hill Golf Course

Networking and

a light dinner will

Advance registra-

tion is required.

The MMA is

advising in-person

follow the speaking

in Worcester.

program.

Also available are reports on towns that have gone through changes in their forms of government.

A management chart shows the progression of management authority in a decentralized vs. centralized form of government.

These and other related resources can

will have opportunities to partner with their states and neighboring jurisdictions.

Next steps

Metropolitan areas must submit a notice of intent to participate by April 28. The lead organization for the metropolitan area will then need to submit an application, including a workplan and budget for the planning grant, by May 31. Metropolitan areas can work with EPA regional offices during this time.

All eligible entities are advised to review the <u>program guidance documents on</u> <u>the EPA website</u> to learn more about the planning grants, including details about eligibility criteria and allocation formulas, important deadlines, and other requirements.

The planning grants will be followed by \$4.6 billion in implementation grant funding that will support the

to explore next steps for West-East Passenger Rail. This includes \$650,000 for five full-time employees, including the position of a West-East Rail director. The budget also recommends \$12.5 millatest COVID vaccines for which they are eligible. Attendees are urged to take an at-home rapid antigen test prior to attending, and not attend if they have any COVID symptoms or if a household member has tested positive for COVID. These protocols are subject to change based on the latest public health data and guidance.

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

be found in the MMA website Resource Library.

Members of the Massachusetts Municipal Management Association are also available to meet with charter commissions, government study committees and select boards to discuss options and answer questions.

Contact: MMA Senior Member Services Coordinator Denise Baker

expeditious implementation of investment-ready policies created by the CPRG planning grants, programs and projects to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the near term. Through the CPRG program, the EPA will support the development and deployment of technologies and solutions that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions and harmful air pollution, as well as transition America to a clean energy economy.

Webinars

The EPA held webinars on March 2 and 7 to provide additional information on the program guidance for the noncompetitive planning grants. The webinar recording and materials are being posted to the <u>Climate Pollution Reduction</u> <u>Grants</u> program webpage.

- CPRG Guidances
- <u>Sign up for notifications about Climate</u> <u>Pollution Reduction Grants</u>

lion for components of a future West-East Rail, including track improvements at the Pittsfield Station and the study and design of Palmer Station.

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Anne Marie

Noonan

Around the Commonwealth

Franklin County, Martha's Vineyard, Nantucket

Three rural regions team up to improve road safety

Relying on their shared rural character instead of geographic proximity, Nantucket, Martha's Vineyard and the communities of Franklin County are sharing a federal grant to improve road safety.

This past winter, the Nantucket Planning and Economic Development Commission, working with the Martha's Vineyard Commission and the Franklin Regional Council of Governments, won a \$460,000 grant through the federal Safe Streets and Roads for All program. The three regions will use the funding to hire and share a consultant to develop three separate comprehensive safety action plans.

Leaders from the three regions said they collaborated because of their common rural challenges, and for the ability to maximize the grant's benefits among their smaller staffs. In particular, they said, the grant would help elevate road safety issues for rural communities, given their concerns that safety efforts, planning initiatives and funding opportunities sometimes have a more urban or suburban focus.

"It made sense because we all have safety issues, and the character of our roads can be a little bit different than in the more urbanized areas, and in the problems that we're facing," said Beth Giannini, the Franklin County council's transportation manager. "Even though we each were different ... we could help each other."

The grant came from \$800 million in Safe Streets and Roads for All funding announced in February, funded by the 2021 Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. The federal program is awarding both planning and implementation grants to help prevent deaths and serious injuries on roadways, through efforts ranging from redesigned roads to improved sidewalks.

The participants said they hope their plans will help them better articulate



Franklin County has many narrow and winding roads, including Greenfield Road in Montague. (Photo courtesy Franklin Regional Council of Governments)

goals for road safety and prioritize projects, put them in a better position to win grants, and provide greater analysis and insight into their specific situations.

Bill Veno, senior planner for the Martha's Vineyard Commission, said the safety plan will help the communities assess road safety "in maybe a more uniform or more understandable manner."

Martha's Vineyard officials said their rural roadways come with particular safety challenges, and they seek plans to make their roads and streets safer for all users, including drivers, cyclists and pedestrians. The communities want to protect their rural character, which includes many narrow roads that lack multiple travel lanes, turning lanes, or significant shoulders — roads that cannot be easily widened. Officials acknowledge, though, that they have plenty of drivers speeding down the narrow roads.

The tourist season only adds to the safety challenges on the islands, bringing visitors and seasonal workers who are unfamiliar with the roads or who may not have vehicles to get around, said Patrick Reed, former transportation program manager in Nantucket, who now works on transportation for the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission.

"We want to promote safety, but we don't necessarily want giant roads and rights of way," Reed said.

Reed said the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission is sharing a Safe Streets grant with the Northern Middlesex Council of Governments. The two more densely developed regions will use their \$375,233 grant, combined with \$93,808 from the Massachusetts Department of Transportation, to create two comprehensive safety action plans.

Though communities and regions possess substantial knowledge about what makes roads safer, Reed said, that information has traditionally been dispersed throughout numerous documents.

"All of this is out there," Reed said. "But at the national level, and trickling down to the local level, is this idea that we need to put these different, disparate ideas about good planning in one place for safety purposes."

– Jennifer Kavanaugh

Northampton

City creates new climate department

Hoping to inject climate awareness into all of City Hall's operations, Northampton is assembling a new department that focuses on climate change and sustainability.

Sixteen years after becoming the first Massachusetts community to hire an energy and sustainability officer, the city is establishing a three-person Climate Action and Project Administration Department. The move coincides with the creation of a stabilization fund to help Northampton make city operations carbon neutral by 2030, and make the entire community net-zero for carbon emissions by 2050.

Mayor Gina-Louise Sciarra said she hopes the new department will inspire a culture shift within City Hall, in which all employees understand their roles in addressing climate needs.

"Particularly through capital projects, with every single thing we do, how do we view it through the lens of reaching these goals?" Sciarra said. "And how do I get departments to think creatively about this, or even connect dots they weren't connecting?"

The new department will create a director position and will take its chief procurement officer and energy and sustainability officer from other departments. Officials said they hope the moves will bring more strategic plan-

COMMONWEALTH continued on 21

Around the Commonwealth

COMMONWEALTH

Continued from page 20

ning and project management to climate work, and leverage the procurement officer's interaction with other departments to emphasize climate considerations.

"This department brings three pretty exciting disciplines together," said Alan Wolf, the mayor's chief of staff. "It's strategic climate methodologies as they apply to municipalities, and then project management ... and procurement as a tactical tool to achieve policy goals. So all three of those things are kind of new for Northampton that we're hoping to get from this department."

Some larger Massachusetts communities have climate-focused departments, and Northampton officials said they looked to Worcester and Syracuse, New York, as models for their new department. Northampton's move dovetails with Gov. Maura Healey's creation of the new Office of Climate Innovation and Resilience and the appointment of Melissa Hoffer as the state's climate chief,



With its new climate department, Northampton hopes to make climate and sustainability a focus throughout all City Hall operations.

the first such state-level cabinet post in the nation.

Northampton has hired a new chief procurement officer, William Coffey, to replace Joe Cook, who retired in February after more than three decades of service. The city is finalizing job descriptions for the department director, as well as for a new energy and sustainability officer. (The previous sustainability officer recently moved on to a new job.) Sciarra said she was hoping to have the full



State officials discuss cybersecurity

Susan Noyes (left), acting director for the Office of Municipal and School Technology, and Meg Sperenza, resiliency program manager at the MassCyberCenter, lead a tabletop exercise simulating a cyberattack during the March 23 meeting of the Massachusetts Municipal Management Association in Devens. team in place by the start of the fiscal year in July.

The city is also creating a Climate Change Mitigation Stabilization Fund, which the council approved earlier this year. With \$3 million in reserves, the fund got its initial infusion from American Rescue Plan Act funds, Sciarra said, and will depend on free cash going forward. The mayor said she hopes the fund will help cover design and feasibility work for big-ticket climate projects, allowing the city to be "shovel ready" for the various state and federal grants it pursues.

Sciarra credited resident engagement in creating the new department. Shortly after she took office in January 2022, the Northampton Climate Emergency Coalition, which consists of climate activists from several local groups, approached her about elevating Northampton's climate efforts. According to Sciarra, the coalition was also helpful in reaching out to councillors and other stakeholders, and in doing research and legwork to envision a new department.

During a Feb. 2 council meeting, Ward 1 City Councillor Stanley Moulton acknowledged the residents' involvement in creating the new department.

"It's really a textbook example, I think, of how a grassroots effort worked," Moulton said, "to really produce a lot of solid information, reasons for doing this and then build political support for it."

– Jennifer Kavanaugh

This monthly column features local and regional news items related to local government in Massachusetts. To suggest an item for this column, email editor@mma.org. Nonprofit Locally based Member driven

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Police turn to co-response protocol for mental health

By Jennifer Ranz

ΜΙΙΑ

Local police departments are increasingly implementing "co-response" protocols for calls involving mental health crises, where a licensed social worker serves on department staff and responds to calls alongside police officers.

This dual-response approach enables departments to effectively address situations where law enforcement and severe mental illness intersect, using a nuanced approach that is tailored to the situation at hand.

"Collaborative co-response strategies can help de-escalate situations in real time, as well as lead to thorough follow-up and better outcomes over the long-term," said attorney John Scheft, head of Law Enforcement Dimensions LLC.

Scheft and Christina Valeri, a mental health clinician with the Arlington Police Department, co-led a MIIA-sponsored training session on Dec. 13, "Police Response to Emotionally Disturbed People," which was attended by more than 50 law



Christina Valeri

John Scheft

enforcement officers from around the state.

During the training, Scheft outlined initial call response considerations, documentation and processes for mental health commitment, and strategies for supervisors and commanders. Valeri provided a mental health overview, including types of disorders that officers may encounter, common mental-health-related medications, and de-escalation strategies.

An estimated <u>20% or more of police</u> <u>calls</u> involve a mental health, substance abuse, or quality of life concern. A recent nationwide survey of more than 2,400 senior law enforcement officials conducted by the Naval Postgraduate School and Michael Biasotti, formerly of the New York State Association of Chiefs of Police, found that more than 80% of law enforcement respondents said they have seen an increase in mental health-related calls during their career, and 63% said the amount of time spent on these calls has increased. More than half reported that challenges with making appropriate referrals for treatment account for the increased time.

In Massachusetts, Valeri estimates that more than 50 local police departments are already implementing co-response strategies, and that most police calls she's responded to have included some level of mental health distress. Common concerns encountered by local police and clinicians include hoarding, unhealthy living conditions, elder abuse, substance

■ MIIA continued on 26

MIIA offers maternal mental health resources

Perinatal depression is the most common complication of childbearing, with about 15% of women experiencing significant depression following childbirth and 10% during pregnancy, according to Postpartum Support International.

To help connect municipal employees with the resources needed to help themselves or a loved one facing maternal mental health challenges, MIIA's Health Benefits Trust will soon launch a six-part informational video series available to anyone, regardless of health plan status, at <u>emiia.org</u> and in the MIIAWinners wellness portal.

Michelle Visser, a licensed psychotherapist and certified early intervention specialist with extensive experience in perinatal and parental mental health, worked with MIIA to develop the program and lead the video training. The series of 10- to 15-minute videos will include an overview description of perinatal mood and anxiety disorders, screening and discussion tools, risk factors, tips for self-advocating in the doctor's office, and treatment and support options.

In addition to reducing stigma around maternal mental health, Visser said a goal of the program is to ensure that people have factual information, as opposed to what might be covered by the media. It's important to know that perinatal depression can occur over a broad spectrum, from mild to more serious cases, she said.

"Women don't often think of mental health as part of the pregnancy experience, and symptoms can be surprising," Visser said. "My hope is that people might access these videos and have the information that they need to help themselves or a loved one."

For additional resources on maternal mental health, visit <u>postpartum.net</u> or visit the <u>Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts website's</u> "MyBlue" section under health and wellness.

For immediate assistance, call the Postpartum Depression Crises Hotline (1-800-PPD-MOMS), the National Maternal Mental Health Hotline (1-833-9-HELP4MOMS), or the national suicide and crisis lifeline at 988.

Maternal mental health informational flyers (for posting in worksite common areas) are available from both MIIA and Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massa-chusetts.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Continued from page 2

development of our Diversity, Equity and Inclusion initiative. The group was introduced to MMA members at our Annual Meeting in January and has been researching the most effective ways to connect our members with resources, education and training to support the local officials and communities who are engaged in this important work.

On behalf of our Board of Directors and staff, we want to thank the members of the MMA DEI Advisory Committee: Westwood Town Administrator Christopher Coleman (co-chair), former Arlington Town Manager and past MMA President Adam Chapdelaine (co-chair), Bolton Finance Committee Chair Brian Boyle, Danvers Assistant Town Manager Jen Breaker, Lexington Select Board Chair and MMA President Jill Hai. North Adams Councillor and Pittsfield Chief Diversity Officer Michael **Obasohan**, North Andover Deputy Town Manager Dee Casey, Northborough Assistant Town Administrator Becca Meekins, Revere Mayor Brian

Arrigo, Sharon Select Board Member Kiana Pierre-Louis, and Stoughton Select Board Member Debra Roberts. MMA staff members who are participating (in addition to me), are Communications and Membership Director Candace Pierce (as our lead), MMA Deputy Executive Director Katie McCue, and Education and Training Coordinator Lily Rancatore. They've all been fantastic contributors.

The most important decision was made early, and that was to be deliberate and thoughtful about how to move forward and build a plan that will have the best chance of being effective and sustainable.

Many of you will recall that the MMA partnered with the National League of Cities' Race, Equity and Leadership (REAL) program to deliver introductory training to hundreds of local officials in 2021. At the time, the NLC emphasized the importance of meeting people and communities where they are, and then moving forward with a common understanding of what DEI work is, including setting specific goals, and including enough time for dialogue, consensus and



MMA, lawmakers discuss cybersecurity

Rep. Tricia Farley-Bouvier (left) and Sen. Michael Moore (center), House and Senate chairs of the Joint Committee on Advanced Information Technology, the Internet and Cybersecurity, listen as MMA Executive Director Geoff Beckwith testifies about cybersecurity challenges facing municipalities during a March 28 informational hearing. Beckwith said local governments get about half of the ransomware attacks launched against government entities, but face limited resources and personnel to address cybersecurity concerns. State programs are critical in helping communities address security needs, he said, and the MMA's partnerships with the MassCyberCenter and state technology officials help keep communities informed about risks and resources. He also asked lawmakers to avoid imposing mandates or "one-size-fits-all requirements" for cybersecurity, given that many communities lack IT personnel and use older computer equipment, among other limitations.

deep communication.

The first steps include framing the discussion with common language and definitions around diversity, equity, inclusion, belonging, and other essential aspects of community building. Beyond framing the discussion, the MMA's DEI Committee has set a phased approach, with an initial focus to support cities and towns in their internal DEI work, looking at human resources policies, employee training, operations, policies for boards and committees, establishing DEI positions, and similar activities. A second phase will then provide tools and training to support local officials as they engage with the public on broader efforts to advance DEI in the community at large.

Our DEI Committee devoted many hours to developing and approving the MMA's DEI Framework, outlining our perspective and focus. <u>You can download and</u> <u>read the MMA's DEI Framework here</u>.

Strategic planning isn't rocket science. It's pretty simple, really. There are four stages in a continuous circle: make sense, make a plan, make it happen, make revisions. Success is possible only when the plan is fully supported at the very top, and the implementation is done by distributed leaders throughout the system.

The committee is still in the "making sense" stage, meeting with key stakeholders, analyzing a recent survey of municipal CEOs, and connecting with municipal DEI directors from across the state. We have issued an RFP for consultants to assist with focus groups and the development of a strategic plan to set a timeline and develop the curriculum for our training and education programming and resource guides ("make a plan"). Then we'll roll out our programs ("make it happen"), and we will certainly learn more at each stage, helping us update and change to enhance our effectiveness ("make revisions").

This is exciting and valuable work. We have been intentionally deliberative, so that we can meet you (and our members) where you are, and deliver meaningful support that helps accelerate diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging in our communities.

The MMA is your partner in this work, and we look forward to the journey ahead of us. ●

CHAPTER 90

Continued from page 1

with prioritization given to municipalities with low population density.

Both the House and Senate versions of the bill include \$25 million bond authorizations for each of the following multi-year transportation-related accounts:

- Municipal Small Bridge Program
- <u>Complete Streets Funding Program</u>
- Municipal grants for infrastructure focused on the enhancement of mass transit by bus
- Funding for study, design, construction or improvements that increase access to mass transit and commuter rail stations
- Grants to municipalities and regional transit authorities to support fleet electrification

The House and Senate are now expected to move quickly to reconcile the differences between the two bills.

Gov. Maura Healey got this year's Chapter 90 bond authorization process started on Jan. 19 when she filed a twoyear bill totalling \$400 million, or \$200 million per year. The Legislature revised the bill to authorize bonding for only one year at \$200 million.

"We're asking for an infusion of new life into the needs across the Commonwealth," Mansfield Town Manager Kevin Dumas told the Joint Committee on Transportation during its hearing.

The MMA, along with a number of municipal officials, testified before the Joint Committee on Transportation on March 7 in support of the two-year authorization proposed by Healey, and requested an increase to at least \$330 million per year, indexed to inflation.

The MMA also submitted <u>written testi-</u> <u>mony to the Transportation Committee</u> and to the Joint Committee on Bonding,



Solid waste issues discussed at MassRecycle Conference

MMA Executive Director Geoff Beckwith discusses the benefits of extended producer responsibility for mattresses during the MassRecycle Conference and Trade Show on March 23 in Marlborough. This year's content included how to shift the narrative on recycling, plan for success, and learn from established extended producer responsibility programs. The conference was held at a time when solid waste management costs are rising and there is a patchwork of pricing for mattress recycling across the state. Extended producer responsibility programs in other states have increased recycling rates while removing financial burdens for municipalities and giving residents uniform pricing statewide. Capital Expenditures and State Assets asking legislators to raise the annual authorization to at least \$330 million, emphasizing community need and the impact of inflation on the <u>Chapter 90</u> <u>program</u>, which has lost two-thirds of its purchasing power over the last 11 years.

"We're asking for an infusion of new life into the needs across the Commonwealth," Mansfield Town Manager Kevin Dumas told the Joint Committee on Transportation during its hearing.

MMA Legislative Director Dave Koffman thanked the governor and the Legislature for prioritizing Chapter 90 legislation, as communities are eager to put the money to use in the upcoming construction season.

Koffman also pointed out that the Chapter 90 program has generally been level-funded for the past 11 years. Adjusting for inflation, the purchasing power of \$200 million initially authorized in fiscal 2012 "is now just \$68.6 million in today's dollars."

The MMA's recent biennial Chapter 90 survey estimates municipal road repair needs at \$715 million for fiscal 2024, underscoring the need for additional state support.

Fitchburg Mayor Steve DiNatale, Melrose Mayor Paul Brodeur, Medford Mayor Breanna Lungo-Koehn and Athol Town Manager Shaun Suhoski stressed that the funding program is the primary mechanism to maintain locally owned roads. Easthampton Mayor Nicole LaChapelle also emphasized the growing impacts of climate change on roads and the need for additional Chapter 90 funding to support weather-related repairs.

Massachusetts Highway Association members Mike Hale and Dave Desrosiers, public works directors in Gloucester and Granby, respectively, addressed construction inflation, particularly the rising costs of asphalt, and the challenge of maintaining roads with such limited funding.

The MMA's <u>written testimony</u> noted that 58% of MMA survey respondents are saving multiple annual allotments to pay for larger projects or have done so in the past five years.

BUDGET

Continued from page 1

lion for the emergency assistance family shelters program, \$40 million focused on communities with a large influx of school-aged children due to shelter placement, and \$7 million to support refugee resettlement agencies.

The law includes Healey's requested \$65 million to extend the universal school meals pilot program, and \$130 million for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. Last month, the federal government announced an end to <u>Extra</u> <u>COVID SNAP benefits</u>, known as SNAP

Emergency Allotments.

The law also allocates \$68 million to continue Commonwealth Cares for Children grants to stabilize the state's child care providers through the end of the fiscal year.

Finally, the law <u>extends three Public</u>

<u>Health Orders</u> issued in connection with the COVID-19 pandemic, including one to extend staffing flexibilities for advanced life support ambulances.

MMA Executive Director Geoff Beckwith said cities and towns across the state applaud the governor and the Legislature for enacting an "outstanding bill."

"This measure invests \$400 million into local economies through the MassWorks grant program, injects \$104 million in the Clean Water Trust to improve local water systems throughout the state, and extends the extremely effective option to conduct public meetings virtually, making it easier for the public to access and see local government in action."

The law has an emergency preamble that enables it to take effect immediately upon being signed. ●



Students learn about municipal careers

Marion Police Chief Rich Nighelli (left) and West Bridgewater Town Administrator David Gagne speak during a Local Government Career panel at Bridgewater State University on March 29. Attendees included graduate and undergraduate students interested in careers in local government.

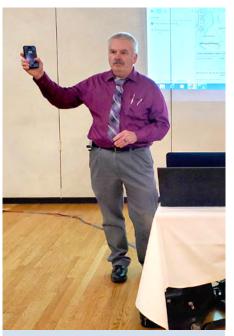
Meeting space wanted

Does your municipality have a public meeting space that would be appropriate for an MMA event?

With more than 60 meetings each year, the MMA uses several different types of function spaces around the state. The use of municipally owned meeting rooms greatly improves the organi-

zation's ability to sponsor affordable educational events in a variety of places.

To offer your town or city's municipal function space, contact Timmery Kuck, the MMA's conference and meeting manager, at tkuck@mma.org.



Granby highlights GIS work

During the March 28 meeting of the Worcester County Highway Association in West Boylston, Granby Highway Superintendent Dave Desrosiers describes how geographic information system mapping supports the work of the public works department. Desrosiers explained how the department uses GIS to track several assets and actions, and he highlighted technology's role in tracking and managing diseased trees, including those affected by emerald ash borer and spongy moths. The town also has a web page that highlights affected trees planned for removal.

MMA-Suffolk seeks applications for certificate program

The application deadline is April 30 for the MMA and Suffolk University's Certificate in Local Government Leadership and Management programs scheduled for this fall.

In September, the MMA and Suffolk University will launch the 21st and 22nd certificate programs in-person in Barnstable and Danvers.

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

The program is held over the course of 25 Fridays from September through May.

The program application is available on the <u>MMA website</u>.

Fellowship Program

May 1 is the application deadline for the MMA and Suffolk University's Municipal Fellowship Program, which offers significant support to municipal managers and professionals to attend the master's in public administration program at Suffolk's Sawyer School of Business.

The fellowship program provides a scholarship of up to \$28,000 while the recipient's municipality commits to continuing their salary and position while



Students gather online for the March 3 orientation for the spring 2023 MMA-Suffolk Municipal Finance Management Seminar. Twenty-eight students are participating in this 11th session of the seminar.

they attend the MPA program parttime. The application is available on the <u>MMA-Suffolk programs web page</u>.

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

Finance Seminar

The MMA-Suffolk Municipal Finance Management Seminar will hold three programs in 2023. The five-week program, held on Fridays, is designed to provide a deep dive into municipal finance.

The application for the fall 2023 session remains open through July 31. The application is available on the <u>MMA</u> website.

For more information on any of the MMA-Suffolk programs, visit <u>mma.org/suffolk</u> or contact Katie McCue at 617-426-7272, ext. 111, or kmccue@mma.org, or Kate Evarts at 617-426-7272, ext. 172, or kevarts@mma.org. ●

MIIA

Continued from page 22

abuse, and child services issues. Having a mental health clinician present during calls can help build trust — with both the clinician and the co-responding officers — as well as keep people out of the correctional system when mental health treatment is likely to be more effective, Valeri noted.

Scheft said co-response is one of the top innovations in policing over the last decade.

"It can be very difficult to predict when a mental health situation will turn violent," he said, "and having an experienced mental health professional on calls provides a less threatening approach that can help de-escalate." Police reform laws in Massachusetts now mandate that officers must de-escalate prior to any use of force, so having clinical resources on scene is vital, Scheft noted.

Many people, lacking other options, call 911 when a mental health crisis overwhelms their family, and some of these volatile situations may result in injury or death by the time police intervene. In addition to helping de-escalate these active situations, "co-response at its best provides follow-up care referrals that prevent the need for a future police response," Scheft said.

An effective clinician embedded with a police agency can provide follow up: staying in contact with family members, ensuring medication adherence, and arranging ongoing mental health care. Law enforcement liability insurance claims related to personal injury are among the highest in cost, but it's important to look at the bigger picture, noted MIIA Executive Vice President Stan Corcoran.

"We can save lives and recognize that someone is going through a crisis and perhaps isn't necessarily a threat to others but is to themselves," he said. "It makes sense for us to have an approach in place that is good from both a police perspective and a community perspective."

Training materials for the session with Scheft and Valeri are available at <u>emiia.org</u>.

Jennifer Ranz is a freelance writer.

MEMA to lead emergency management center

On March 2, the Healey-Driscoll administration announced the launch of the Northeast Emergency Management Training & Education Center, designed to strengthen regional response to climate change and other emergencies.

Led by the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency, the program will provide advanced education and expanded resources to New England's emergency management professionals, who face evolving challenges due to the increasing complexity and frequency of crisis events.

The six New England states formed the NEMTEC to meet a growing need among state and local emergency managers for improved access to training on emerging trends and expanding risks, including human-made hazards, infectious diseases, and climate and weather-related emergencies. Attendees will learn the latest strategies, tactics and skills to mitigate the severity of threats and improve outcomes.



"The establishment of the NEMTEC represents another important step in the Commonwealth's comprehensive approach to addressing emergency preparedness, including the challenges posed by the climate crisis," Gov. Healey said at the announcement in Boston. "Today's rapidly evolving threat landscape, driven in part by climate change, represents an immense challenge for the emergency management community. When disaster strikes, emergency managers require specialized knowledge and unique capabilities to adapt and respond effectively." Healey said emergency management professionals are integral to the crisis mitigation, pre-disaster planning, and recovery efforts that lessen impacts and increase disaster resiliency.

Public Safety and Security Secretary Terrence Reidy said this is a critical time "to ensure emergency management practitioners are prepared to carry out their unique responsibilities."

The NEMTEC will offer courses and workshops on a range of topics, including the National Emergency Management Basic Academy, Emergency Operation Center Management, incident management, and mission support. Courses led by knowledgeable and experienced instructors will be offered in-person, virtually, and in hybrid formats.

Visit the <u>NEMTEC website</u> for more information and to register for courses and workshops.

Everything new on the MMA website, straight to your inbox.

MMA.org is the best source for the latest developments affecting Mass. cities & towns:

- State budget & local aid
- State & federal grant opportunities
- Member group meetings & webinars
- Annual Meeting & Trade Show announcements
- And much more!





Sign up for our Weekly Update newsletter, sent every Friday morning.

SIGN UP TODAY

Visit <u>mma.org/weekly</u> to get on the list today!

People



John Coderre



Bill Keegan

Foxborough will undergo a change in leadership later this month when **John Coderre** becomes town manager and Bill Keegan retires after nine years in the role and four decades in municipal service.

The town of

Coderre's first day in Foxborough is set for April 10. Since 2003, he's been serving in the town of Northborough, as assistant town administrator for the first five years and as town administrator for the past 15 years. Previously, he

worked for nearly six years as the assistant town manager in Chelmsford and spent a year working as a management assistant in Windsor, Connecticut. He has a bachelor's degree in economics, and a master's degree in public administration, both from the University of Connecticut.

Keegan officially retired on Jan. 27, but has staved on as interim manager to assist with the transition, with April 12 being his final day. Keegan also served as the town administrator in Dedham from 2002 until 2014, and as the town administrator in Seekonk, human resources director in Hollywood, Florida, assistant town administrator in Wayland, assistant town manager in Shrewsbury, and town planner in Millbury. He was president of the Massachusetts Municipal Management Association from 2006 to 2007, and has been serving on the MIIA Board of Directors since 2015. In retirement, he plans to spend time with family, travel, play golf, and work as a consultant.

Michael McCall became the new town manager in Wayland on Feb. 27.

McCall had been the town manager in Southbridge since September 2020, and was the assistant town manager in Chelmsford from 2017 until 2020. He was town counsel for Pelham from 2015 to



Michael McCall

a software project manager, and then as in-house counsel. He also worked as a software engineer, project leader and technical manager for several other technology companies.

In Chelmsford, McCall served on the Finance Committee for three years and on the Board of Selectmen from 1998 to 2007.

Since 2017, McCall has also been a management alternate on the Joint Labor-Management Committee. He has a bachelor's degree in computer science from Merrimack College, a master's degree in computer science from Boston University, a law degree from Suffolk University, and a master's degree in public administration from Suffolk. He received a Certificate in Local Government Leadership and Management from the MMA-Suffolk University program in 2019.

In Wayland, McCall replaces **Stephen Crane**, who served as acting town manager for most of 2022 before he left to become the town manager in Ipswich in November, and John Bugbee, who took over as acting town manager. Before Crane's tenure, Louise Miller served as Wayland's town administrator. She is currently the chief financial officer and administration and finance director in Framingham.

Geoffrey Gorman,

a retired naval

officer, became

administrator in

Marion on March 1.

Since 2017, Gorman

had worked as the

of field service for

Northeast head

the new town



Geoffrey Gorman

2017 and for Milford for a decade before that.

From 2004 to 2006. McCall was an attorney at Qua, Hall, Harvey & Walsh, and before that spent eight years at Cisco Systems, first as

MilliporeSigma. In 2019, he founded the Falcon Foundation, a Mashpee-based nonprofit to promote educational and cultural development for residents.

Gorman has many years of experience in military roles, including as senior operations manager on the U.S.S. John S. McCain in Japan, as a senior strategic planning officer with the U.S. Army in Iraq from 2007 to 2008, and as assistant chief engineer on the U.S.S. Dwight D. Eisenhower, an aircraft carrier, in Virginia. He has held positions at several academic institutions, including the Surface Warfare Officers School and the Naval War College in Newport, Rhode Island, and the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution.

He has a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering from the University of North Florida, and a master's degree in oceanographic engineering from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology/ Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution.

In Marion, Gorman replaces Jay McGrail, who left last fall to become the town manager in Middleborough. Marion's finance director, Judith Mooney, had been serving as interim town administrator.

After serving for more than a year as acting town manager, Beth Rudoph

became Winchester's town manager on Feb. 7. Rudolph had been serving in the interim

role since October 2021, after the previous town manager, Lisa Wong, left to become the town administrator in South Hadley. Winchester first hired Rudolph in 2004 to be its assistant town engineer, and she became the town engineer in 2010. She has a bachelor's degree in civil engineering, and a master's degree in water resources engineering, both from Tufts University.

..... Megan Zammuto will become Concord's new deputy town manager on April 3.

Since April 2019, Zammuto had been serving as the assistant town administrator and executive director of municipal services in Maynard. Previously, she worked for more than three years

PEOPLE continued on 29

People

PEOPLE Continued from page 28



Megan Zammuto

eventually as a senior member services coordinator. She has a bachelor's degree in political science from Providence College, and a master's degree in public administration from Suffolk University.

as the economic

development

coordinator in

Lexington. Before

entering municipal

management, she

vears at the MMA.

first as a research

assistant and

and administrative

spent nearly six

In Concord, Zammuto replaces Kate Hodges, who left last April to become the town administrator in Lancaster.



assistant.

Kiana Chapman

Chapman has a background in digital marketing, customer service, sales and music.

Kiana Chapman

on April 3 as its

new receptionist

and administrative

is joining the MMA

Since 2016, she has worked as a digital marketing freelancer, designing creative content for businesses. Since 2019, she has also been a consultant for Credo Beauty in Boston. She has also worked in customer service and sales for several other businesses, and last year she released a five-song EP, her first.

She has an associate's degree in biology from the College of Southern Idaho, and she attended Berklee College of Music, studying music production and

New select board members elected

The following are new select board members elected in annual town elections from March 6 through March 29.

This listing is meant to highlight firsttime select board members, but it's possible that some listed here are returning engineering, as well as music technology. At the MMA, she is taking the place of Amanda Appleton, who was the MMA's receptionist for 16 years.



state representative and the first Black person to run for mayor of Boston in a general election, died on March 28 at age 94.

Mel King

A Boston native,

King first ran for mayor in 1979,

finishing third, and ran again in 1983 as head of the Rainbow Coalition, in an effort to unify the city's racial groups. He lost that election to **Raymond Flynn**, but the Rainbow Coalition lived on as the coalition the Rev. Jesse Jackson championed in his 1984 and in 1988 presidential bids.

The longtime community activist was a teacher and social worker before becoming executive director of the Urban League of Greater Boston in 1967, a position he held for four years. In 1971, he founded the Community Fellows Program at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. First elected to the Legislature in 1972, he served five terms in the House.



John Carroll, who served for nearly four decades as general manager in Norwood, died on Feb. 25 at age 95.

A U.S. Army veteran who had served during the Korean War era. Carroll went on to

become one of the state's longest-serving

retiring in 2017 at age 89. Before coming to Norwood, he served as

municipal managers. In Norwood, he

served for 39 years as manager, before

the state's public works commissioner from 1974 to 1978, including during the historic Blizzard of '78. He previously led the public works department in Lexington, and was a founding board member of the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority.



Anthony Verga

Anthony Verga, a former state representative and the father of Gloucester Mayor Gregory Verga, died on March 10 at age 87.

Born in Gloucester, Verga was first elected to the

House of Representatives in 1994 and represented the 5th Essex District for seven terms, through 2008. He also served as executive director of the Gloucester Fisheries Commission.

As a Navy veteran who served during the Korean War era, Verga advocated for veterans throughout his public service career and was the first House chair of the Legislature's Veterans and Federal Affairs Committee. While serving in the House, he sponsored the Welcome Home Bill, which was signed into law in 2005 by former Gov. Mitt Romney and provided state benefits to military and veteran families. For his service, he received the Legislator of the Year Award from the Korean War Veterans Association and the Charles Dick Medal of Merit from the National Guard Association of the United States.

PEOPLE continued on 33

to their board after an absence. If we are missing a new member, let us know by emailing newselectboard@mma.org.

Bedford: Paul Mortenson Concord: Mark Howell Duxbury: Brian Glennon

Lincoln: Kim Bodnar Natick: Kristen Pope North Andover: Brian Roache **Petersham:** Susan Dougherty Winchester: Michelle Prior

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Middle School Principal

Ipswich Public Schools

We're seeking a Principal to join us! Educational leadership: promote culture of DEI, lead stakeholders in shared mission and vision, and serve on district's leadership team. Curriculum and instruction: support active learning through curriculum and professional development, develop assessment strategies and staff training, and promote effective use of instructional technologies. Organizational leadership: collaborate with stakeholders in decision-making and facilitating change; apply knowledge of fiscal management policies and practices to administer budget; and hire, supervise, evaluate, and terminate personnel. School and community relations: promote partnership among school, business, and community; and assess and respond to community needs and perceptions. Click here to view the full posting.

Finance Manager Upper Blackstone Clean Water

Energetic leader wanted to manage our front office and accounting department! As a contributing member of our leadership team, candidate must have expert knowledge in computer accounting software with strong Microsoft Office skills, primarily Excel, and will be analytical, organized, adaptable, and able to manage multiple challenges. A general understanding of preparing and monitoring budgets at department level required. Bachelor's degree from accredited college or university with major in accounting, finance, business administration or a closely related field. Minimum of 10 years' professional experience in business administration or office management with strong accounting skills, three years of which shall have been in a supervisory capacity. Municipal or nonprofit experience preferred. Upper Blackstone offers a competitive benefits package, including medical, dental, vision, and 403(b) retirement plan. Employees are part of the Mass. State Retirement System. Send cover letter and resume to Human Resources, hr@ubcleanwater.org. Click here to learn more.

Facilities Coordinator

Acton-Boxborough Regional School District Description: reporting to the Director of Finance and Operations, this position plays a critical role in the support and maintenance of the district's eight schools and grounds. The Facilities Coordinator will oversee custodians, districtwide maintenance staff, and maintenance workflow for eight school buildings, including management of the work order system and hiring and scheduling contractors, as needed. This position will assist the Director of Finance and Operations in all aspects of leading the facilities department. <u>Click here</u> for full job description and application process.

Public Works Driver/Operator/Laborer Town of Rye, New Hampshire

The town of Rye is seeking applicants for the position of Public Works Driver/Operator/Laborer. Applicants must be at least 18, possess road maintenance experience, be a high school or technical school graduate, have heavy equipment operation experience, and possess a valid Class B CDL license. Successful applicant must reside within 25 miles of the Highway Garage, located at 309 Grove Road. Position pays \$25.11-\$30.86/hour with state retirement and excellent health benefits. Applicants can obtain an application and job description at the Town Hall, 10 Central Road, Rye, NH, by calling 603-964-5300, or emailing jrucker@town.rye.nh.us. Send applications to the Public Works Director, 10 Central Road, Rye, NH 03870. <u>Click here to learn more</u>.

DPW Deputy Director Town of Chatham

Come join team Chatham! Town of Chatham, Mass. seeks a highly skilled professional to oversee and coordinate daily operations of the Department of Public Works as Chatham's next Public Works (DPW) Deputy Director. The Deputy Director performs complex, diversified and highly responsible work in the delivery of major municipal public works services. This position plans, schedules and coordinates personnel, equipment and projects for the town's highway, grounds (including parks and cemeteries), facilities, transfer station, and water and sewer divisions. Is this job the perfect fit for you? Find out by viewing the full job description at chatham-ma.gov for more information. This full-time, benefits/pension eligible position is 40 hours per week and has an essential role in emergency response. Starting biweekly salary \$3,144-\$3,303.20 (\$81,744-\$85,883.20). The town of Chatham values diversity and welcomes candidates of all backgrounds to apply. Please email cover letter and resume in one PDF to jobs@chatham-ma.gov. Open until filled, first review is April 7. The town of Chatham is an ADA/EO/AAE.

Wastewater Treatment Operator Charles River Pollution Control District

The Charles River Pollution Control District, a regional medium-sized advanced wastewater treatment facility, designed to treat 5.7 MGD, is seeking a candidate for the full-time position of Wastewater Operator. The position requires that the successful candidate possess, or obtain within six months of hire, at least a Grade 4M Massachusetts Wastewater Operator License; on the job training and classes will be provided. Candidate will also be required to possess or obtain a 2A and 3A Massachusetts Hoisting License within the first six months of hire. Training will be provided. More information can be found at <u>www.charlesriverpcd.</u> <u>org/about-us/pages/employment</u>. Weekend, holiday shifts and on-call are required, additional compensation will be provided. Hourly rate ranges from \$20/hour-\$27/hour and will be based upon experience and qualifications. Valid driver's license required.

Paramedics

Town of Billerica

The town of Billerica Emergency Medical Service is seeking applications for full-time Paramedics and per diem positions. Applicants must be Massachusetts Certified Paramedics, current CPR, ACLS, PALS and have a current driver's license. ITLS and NRP are preferred but not required. Applicants must have at least two years of experience on an emergency ambulance. Preference will be given to applicants with documented paramedic experience. Non-smokers preferred. Job description: an emergency health care provider working under Massachusetts DPH, MGL Chapter 111C which regulates ambulances and its operators. Salary: \$63,025 (Step 1). After five years, \$78,000. See www.town.billerica.ma.us for details and where to apply.

Finance Director Town of Duxbury

The town of Duxbury is seeking qualified Finance Director candidates to coordinate and supervise all operations of the Finance Department consisting of accounting, assessing, treasury and collections. Performing a variety of complex professional, administrative, supervisory, and technical accounting and finance functions involved in maintaining the fiscal records of the town. The pay range is \$109,413-\$153,178 (starting salary depends on qualifications). Health, dental, life, disability, retirement, and many

CLASSIFIEDS continued on 31

Classified advertising rates and information

The Beacon publishes classified ads from units of government, public agencies, and companies.

Classified advertising categories are: Employment Opportunities, Requests for Proposals, and Services. Only one job opening or RFP can be listed per ad. The MMA cannot assume responsibility for information or claims made in any advertisement.

Classified advertising rates

Classified ad rates include publication in The

Beacon and on <u>www.mma.org</u>, though a discount is available for those who request placement of an ad only in The Beacon or on the website.

Member rates

- \$100 for first 100 words; \$100 for each additional block of up to 100 words
- Rate for one format only (print or website): \$75 for first 100 words, \$75 for each additional block of up to 100 words

Nonmember rates

- \$150 for first 100 words; \$150 for each additional block of up to 100 words
- Rate for one format only (print or website): \$125 for first 100 words, \$125 for each additional block of up to 100 words

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Beacon deadlines and publication dates

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

May Beacon

Deadline: April 25 Publication: May 1

June Beacon

Deadline: May 26 Publication: June 1

Placing an ad

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

For more information, call Amanda Brangwynne at the MMA at 617-426-7272.

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

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

CLASSIFIEDS

Continued from page 30

other benefits are available. Posting begins March 17 and will remain open through April 20. To view the full job description, job requirements, and to apply online, go to <u>townofduxburyjobs.easyapply.co</u>. EEOE

Chief Technology Officer Town of Nantucket

The town of Nantucket, Massachusetts has an immediate opening for the position of Chief Technology Officer. The Chief Technology Officer (CTO) performs a variety of complex technical, administrative, and supervisory work in the planning, support, development, installation and maintenance of information technology (IT) systems. The CTO is also responsible for developing and implementing technology initiatives townwide, with the exception of public safety, airport and the public schools. As a senior level department manager, the CTO reports directly to the Town Manager and exercises leadership and management oversight of the IT Department. The successful candidate has a bachelor's degree with specialization in information technology, business, project management, public administration or related field; IT engineering experience favorable; eight to 10 years of responsible experience in diverse areas of information technology with a minimum of three to five years in a supervisory capacity; or any equivalent combination of education, training and experience which provides the required knowledge, skills and abilities to perform the essential functions of the job. Salary range starting at \$150,000, commensurate with experience. Residency required. The town will put forth best efforts to assist with securing housing. The town of Nantucket offers a retirement pension through Barnstable County Retirement, 90% employer sponsored health insurance plan options, and a diverse selection of supplemental insurance policies. Application deadline: Sunday, April 16 at 4 p.m. Visit www.governmentjobs.com/careers/ nantucket to apply online. If you have any questions, reach out to HR@nantucket-ma.gov. The town of Nantucket (www.nantucket-ma.gov) is an equal opportunity employer and does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, sex, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, age, disability, national origin, veteran status, or any other basis covered by appropriate law.

Human Resources Director Town of Belmont

Town of Belmont, population 27,295, seeks highly qualified applicants for their next Human Resource Director. Education and experience: bachelor's degree in human resources, public administration, management or related field; master's degree preferred. Suffolk Certificate Program in Local Government Leadership and Management is advantageous. Five to seven years of increasingly responsible professional experience in management, human resources, labor relations, and supervisory experience – municipal preferred; or the equivalent combination of education, training, and experience. Salary range is \$115,000 to \$130,000, DOQ, plus an excellent benefits package. Apply online at www. GovHRjobs.com with a resume, cover letter and contact information for five professional references. The position will remain open until filled.

Superintendent of Water Town of Billerica

Directs and manages the operations of the Water Division of the Public Works Department, including the Water Treatment Plant and Water Distribution System. Responsible for coordinating all aspects of the Water Division, including treatment, distribution, and the laboratory. Directs activities of field crews and may serve as a leader on a variety of construction and maintenance projects for town-owned property, facilities, and structures. Responsible for the preparation, submission, and administration of the Water Division budget. Bachelor's degree in related field; 15 years of experience in public works, including five years of supervisory experience; or an equivalent and relevant combination of education, training, and experience. Must possess a valid Commonwealth of Massachusetts Water Treatment Plant Operators license (Grade 4T full), Water Distribution System Operators license (Grade 3D full), or ability to obtain through reciprocity, and valid Massachusetts driver's license. Thorough knowledge of the procedures, equipment, materials and tools related to public works construction and maintenance operations. Working knowledge of civil engineering principles and American Public Works Association practices and methods, as applicable to a municipal setting. Thorough knowledge of all applicable policies and regulations affecting water activities. To apply, go to the town of Billerica website by April 7.

Financial Analyst

City of Brockton

Brockton, the city of champions, is hiring! We are seeking a Financial Analyst with advanced Excel skills and the ability to complete assignments in a fast-paced environment. The person filling this critical position will work with the city's Chief Financial Officer and Budget Director in reviewing collective bargaining agreements and proposals, generating financial reports, monitoring budget expenditures, and developing presentations. You will have the opportunity to play an active role in analyzing and communicating information about the city's finances. This is a full-time, non-union position with an annual salary ranging between \$79,212 and \$86,513. Employees are our most valuable asset! We offer a comprehensive benefits package, a defined benefit pension, and a supportive and inclusive work environment. This position will remain open until filled. Please note that review of resumes will begin immediately. <u>Click here</u> for a complete job description and application instructions.

Portfolio and Loan Operations Manager Massachusetts Housing Partnership

MHP is seeking a Portfolio and Loan Operations Manager for its growing homeownership team. This new role will be an essential part of the homeownership management team and will provide critical management and oversight capacity to a growing number of homeownership programs and their associated business operations. Primary responsibilities are focused on loan closing, postclosing, accounting, and portfolio management related tasks and procedures. Additional responsibilities include supervising operations and portfolio focused team members, assisting with program/product development and implementation efforts, and serving as a key collaborator on broader initiatives. If interested in learning more or joining our team, please

see our full posting and application instructions on our <u>careers page</u>.

Director of Planning and Community Development Town of Ware

Wanted: Director of Planning and Community Development. This is a full-time, benefitted position. Duties and responsibilities include, but are not limited to: professional, technical, and administrative support to the Planning Board, Zoning Board, Community Development Authority and oversees the Department of Planning and Community Development, which includes planning, land use, zoning, and conservation. The position oversees the administration of the town's zoning bylaws, subdivision rules and regulations, evaluation of subdivision plans, the preparation of proposed amendments to the zoning bylaw, master plan, and specific plans, grants and projects. Night meetings required. Minimum qualifications: Bachelor's degree and five years' experience in municipal planning, employing planning and land use laws and regulations, or an equivalent combination of education and experience is required. Preferred qualifications: master's degree in planning or related discipline. Must be proficient with Microsoft Office and GIS. Must possess great attention to detail and be able to multitask and work accurately. All applicants must be able to pass a criminal background/CORI check and a pre-employment physical, including drug testing. Starting Salary: \$65,000-\$70,000. Interested applicants, please send cover letter and resume with three professional references to: Human Resources Department, Town of Ware, 126 Main St., Ware, Massachusetts 01082 or email resumes@townofware. com. <u>Click here</u> to learn more. AA/EOE

Seasonal Cemetery Laborer Town of Westminster

Town of Westminster is seeking a motivated individual to maintain cemetery grounds under the general supervision of Cemetery Foreman. Responsibilities: examples are mowing and trimming grass, gathering and removing leaves, snow removal, sanding of cemetery paths and roadways, planting and trimming shrubs and tree limbs, filling and reseeding sunken graves, and straightening and reconstructing damaged monuments. Participates in the locating of cemetery lots and graves via burial records and/ or maps, opening and closing of gravesite, setting up of greens, using lowering device, and other tasks related to the burial process. Work requires agility and physical strength, such as moving about rough terrain. Minimum requirements: 18 years of age or older. High school diploma or equivalent, minimum of one year work experience or any equivalent combination of education, training and experience. Valid driver's license. Mass. Hoisting License 2A or 2B preferred, but not required. Heavy equipment operation experience preferred, but not required. Ability to work in varying weather conditions, work is performed outdoors. Work may require lifting or carrying heavy items. Pre-employment conditions: CORI, drug screening, and a pre-employment physical. Hourly wage: \$15.36-\$16.84, based on experience. Seasonal position: parttime per diem up to 18 hours weekly, no benefits. For complete job description and application, visit www. westminster-ma.gov/human-resources. Position will remain open until filled. EOE.

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Solid Waste Manager Town of Nantucket

The town of Nantucket seeks qualified candidates for the position of Solid Waste Manager. The Solid Waste Manager is responsible for the administrative and technical management of the solid waste enterprise fund and operations including, but not limited to, contract management, capital projects development and oversight, supervision of personnel, and maintenance of the town's solid waste facility infrastructure in accordance with local bylaws and Mass. General Laws. The manager is responsible for overseeing and recommending adjustments, where necessary, to the town's comprehensive and progressive recycling/solid waste diversion program. Bachelor's degree with specialization in business, public administration, environmental science or a related field; five to 10 years of relative experience with a minimum of two to three years in a supervisory capacity, preferably in a full-service municipal public works department or solid waste facility; or any equivalent combination of education, training and experience which provides the required knowledge, skills and abilities to perform the essential functions of the job. Master's degree preferred. The town of Nantucket (www.nantucket-ma.gov) is an equal opportunity employer and does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, sex, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, age, disability, national origin, veteran status, or any other basis covered by appropriate law. The town of Nantucket offers a retirement pension through Barnstable County Retirement, 90% employer sponsored health insurance plan options and a diverse selection of supplemental insurance policies. Salary range starting at \$105,000, commensurate with experience. Residency required. The town will put forth best efforts to assist with securing housing. Application Deadline: April 9 at 4 p.m. Visit www. governmentjobs.com/careers/nantucket to read the full job description and apply online. If you have any questions, reach out to HR@nantucket-ma.gov.

Laboratory/Pretreatment Manager Upper Blackstone Clean Water

Are you seeking an opportunity to make a positive impact on the environment? Join our team! Upper Blackstone Clean Water is a Mass. Grade 7 Wastewater Treatment Plant, currently accepting applications for a Laboratory/Pretreatment Manager. Candidate will be responsible for planning, organizing, directing, and controlling the laboratory/pretreatment services. Must have a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university with a major in the field of chemistry or environmental sciences preferred. Candidates must have a minimum of 10 years of lab experience, supervising staff for at least three years. Upper Blackstone's employees are part of the Mass. State Retirement System. Salary will be based on skill level and experience. Send resume to Liz Mailhot, HR Manager, hr@ubcleanwater.org. Click here to learn more.

SERVICES

Municipal Energy Services

Through the MMA's MunEnergy program, MMA members have access to an energy contract designed exclusively for Massachusetts cities and towns. The MunEnergy program offers access to energy experts at Constellation, a vetted municipal energy contract, and options for sustainability programs. Energy professionals at Constellation, the MMA-endorsed supplier for MunEnergy, work with municipalities to manage electricity costs for the long-term. Constellation is also on the forefront of sustainability programs and provides financial support to the MMA for its promotional and marketing efforts. To learn more, visit <u>www.mma.org/munenergy</u>. 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.

Summer 2023 Certificate Programs from NCPP

Check out the summer 2023 online certificate programs at the National Center for Public Performance (NCPP) at Suffolk University in Boston, a research and public service center dedicated to improving performance in the public and nonprofit sectors. We are offering three online certificates during June-July 2023: 1) Strategic Performance Management, 2) Public Communications, and 3) Introduction to Government Analytics. Each certificate is between six to eight weeks and taught by recognized experts. The Strategic Performance Management certificate will guide students to design an effective performance measurement system. The Public Communications certificate will focus on topics such as strategic communications, crisis communications, media relations, technology, ethics, compliance, First Amendment issues, and public information campaigns. The new six-week Government Analytics Certificate provides a pragmatic introduction to government use of data analytics to solve problems and make analytics-informed decisions, integrate data visualization and storytelling, and understand AI/ Chat GPT. The cost for each certificate is \$1,100 for government/nonprofit employees. If you register three or more students from your organization, you'll receive an additional 20% off. This is a great way to use your professional development or tuition reimbursement funds to improve your public management skills and expertise. Contact us at ncpp@gmail.com for further information on the certificates.

Town Counsel/Legal Services

Brooks & DeRensis, P.C., is available to provide services to government entities at the state, county, city, town or regional district level. Legal services available include procurement law, contracts, eminent domain, labor relations and civil rights. Contact Paul DeRensis for all public law issues at 857-259-5200.

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,

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MA 02360; 508-746-3653; mmacginc@gmail.com.

Municipal Accounting Services

Marcum LLP (formerly Melanson) is a national Certified Public Accounting firm and has been a leader in the accounting and auditing profession for more than 60 years. Our assurance professionals, most of whom have been focused in the governmental arena throughout their entire careers, have an in-depth understanding of the complex economic and political environment in which these entities operate. Their knowledge and experience allow us to provide the highest level of professional service to our governmental clients. We provide both long- and short-term services as well as flexible access, either remotely or on-site, without adding to your long-term employee benefit costs. Contact us today! info@ marcumllp.com

Executive Recruiting, Management and Governance Consulting Services

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

Executive Recruiting, Interim Staffing, Human Resources and Management Consulting

GovHR USA/GovTempsUSA provides executive recruiting and interim staffing solutions, management and human resource consulting to local government and nonprofit clients across the country. Seasoned local government professionals provide five-star quality services including: Classification and Compensation Studies; Temporary and Outsourced staffing; Performance Evaluation System and Training. Visit our website at <u>www.GovHRusa.com</u> or contact us at 847-380-3240 or info@govhrusa.com to discuss how we may serve your organization. Post to our job board at <u>www.govhrjobs.com</u>.

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

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and efficiently, and is consistent with our commitment to excellence. For additional information on the legal services that KP | Law provides, please visit <u>www.k-plaw.com</u> or contact Lauren Goldberg, Esq., at 617-556-0007, or toll-free at 800-548-3522, or at lgoldberg@k-plaw.com.

General Consultant, Recruiting and Special Studies

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

Organizational Development and Conflict Resolution

The Mediation Group is New England's one-stop shopping for conflict resolution and organizational development. With 30-plus years of experience, our multi-disciplinary team provides individuals and organizations with support to move forward constructively and improve functionality. Our services include: facilitation, mediation, training and coaching, leadership development, cultural competency, independent workplace investigations, stakeholder assessments, public engagement and process design. For more information, visit <u>www.themediationgroup.org</u>, email info@ themediationgroup.org or call 617-277-9232.

Town Counsel Services

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

Tax Title Legal Services

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

Municipal Financial Management Software: Accounting, Cloud, Utility and Collections

VADAR Systems provides financial management software to more than 100 Massachusetts municipalities. Our accounting, cloud, utility and collections applications are designed exclusively for Massachusetts municipalities by Massachusetts end users. The VADAR Cloud maximizes efficiency with 24/7 secure, remote access to all your applications from any device. Our user support offers unparalleled expertise. Proudly serving Massachusetts for 20-plus years. For a free on-site demonstration, please contact us at 877-823-2700 or sales@vadarsystems.com. Learn more at <u>www.VADARsystems.com</u>. Locally owned and operated at 20 Main St., Suite G1, Acton, MA 01701.

Labor Counsel Services/Municipal Human Resources Specialists

Clifford and Kenny, LLP provides quality representation to cities, towns and school districts in the area of labor and employment. Attorneys John Clifford and Jaime Kenny have many years of experience in representing clients for collective bargaining and personnel-related matters including discipline and discharge of unionized employees. We have extensive experience in the area of police and fire injured-on-duty cases, and have worked extensively with municipalities and insurers to resolve costly longterm claims. We offer training in sexual harassment, social media and the "just cause analysis" to municipal managers. We also serve as appointed hearing officers

Massachusetts's

11th Congressional

District for 14 years,

before becoming the

Trinidad and Tobago

U.S. ambassador to

in 1994, a post he

held until 1997.

on a case-by-case basis. Many of our clients take advantage of a flat monthly rate for unlimited phone calls and emails, which encourages key managers to work with counsel prior to making critical personnel decisions. Check our website at <u>CliffordKennyLaw</u>, <u>com</u> to see a complete list of our satisfied clients or call John Clifford or Jaime Kenny at 781-924-5796 for more information.

Municipal Financial Management Services

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

Human Resources Consulting

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

Executive Recruitment and Municipal Management

Groux-White Consulting, LLC, is a full-service municipal management consulting firm specializing in executive recruitment, interim management, form of government studies, organizational effectiveness evaluations, strategic and financial planning and conflict resolution. Tom Groux and Rick White, One Pelham Road, Lexington, MA 02421; rickwhite58@ verizon.net; 781-572-6332;

www.grouxwhiteconsulting.com

PEOPLE

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Brian Donnelly, a former state legislator, congressman and U.S. ambassador, died on Feb. 28 at age 76, just two days before his 77th birthday.

A native of Boston's Dorchester neighborhood, Donnelly served as a state representative from 1973 to 1978. Starting in 1979, he represented

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Brian Donnelly

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.

Calendar

APRIL

Massachusetts Select Board

Association, Western and Rural Mass. Conference, 8:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m., The Delaney House, Holyoke. Contact: MMA Senior Member Services Coordinator Isabelle Jenkins

- 5 Association of Town Finance Committees, board meeting, 4-5 p.m., virtual. Contact: MMA Senior Member Services Coordinator Denise Baker
- **Massachusetts Municipal Councillors' Association**, board meeting, 8:45-9:45 a.m., hybrid (MMA office and Zoom). Contact: MMA Senior Member Services Coordinator Denise Baker
- **11 MMA Board of Directors**, 10-11:45 a.m., hybrid (MMA office and Zoom). Contact: MMA Executive Director's office
- **Massachusetts Select Board Association**, board meeting, 2:15-3:30 p.m., hybrid (MMA office and Zoom). Contact: Contact: MMA Communications and Membership Director Candace Pierce
- **13** Massachusetts Municipal Management Association and Massachusetts Municipal Human Resources, joint meeting, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Devens Common Center, Devens. Contact: MMA Senior Member Services Coordinator Denise Baker
- **19 MMA webinar**, Reframing Recruitment, 12-1 p.m. Contact: MMA Education and Training Coordinator Lily Rancatore at Irancatore@mma.org
- **25 MMA webinar**, public records and open meeting laws, 12-1:15 p.m. Contact: MMA Education and Training Coordinator Lily Rancatore at lrancatore@mma.org



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

Note: The MMA is advising in-person meeting attendees to keep up with the latest COVID vaccines for which they are eligible. We highly recommend that attendees take an at-home rapid antigen test prior to attending, and not attend if they have any COVID symptoms or if a household member has tested positive for COVID. These protocols are subject to change based on the latest public health data and guidance.

26 Massachusetts Mayors' Association, monthly meeting, 9:15 a.m.-1 p.m. Contact: MMA Communications and Membership Director Candace Pierce

27 Massachusetts Municipal Councillors' Association, statewide meeting, 6-8 p.m., Grill on the Hill, Worcester. Contact: MMA Senior Member Services Coordinator Denise Baker

28 Women Elected Municipal Officials, spring symposium, virtual, 9:30-11:30 a.m. Contact: MMA Communications and Membership Director Candace Pierce

29 Association of Town Finance Committees, Spring Conference, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Pompositticut Community Center, Stow. Contact: MMA Senior Member Services Coordinator Denise Baker

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

9 Massachusetts Municipal Councillors' Association,

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

9 **MMA Board of Directors**, 10-11:15 a.m., virtual. Contact: MMA Executive Director's office 9 Massachusetts Select Board Association, board meeting, 2:15-3:30 p.m., virtual. Contact: MMA Communications and Membership Director Candace Pierce

10 **MunEnergy**, webinar on summer energy costs, 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. <u>Advance registration</u> required. Contact: MMA Deputy Executive Director Katie McCue at kmccue@mma.org.

11 Massachusetts Municipal Human Resources, boot camp, Cyprian Keyes Golf Club, Boylston. Contact: MMA Communications and Membership Director Candace Pierce

17 **MMA webinar**, Reframing Recruitment, 12-1 p.m. Contact: MMA Education and Training Coordinator Lily Rancatore at Irancatore@mma.org

17-19 N

Massachusetts Mayors' Association,

spring conference. Contact: MMA Communications and Membership Director Candace Pierce

To list an event of interest to municipal officials in The Beacon, send information about the event, including date, location, sponsorship, cost, and whom to call for more information, to editor@mma.org.

MMA contacts

Denise Baker can be reached at dbaker@mma.org Timmery Kuck can be reached at tkuck@mma.org Candace Pierce can be reached at cpierce@mma.org.

For more information, visit www.mma.org