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FY24 state budget remains in conference

By Jackie Lavender Bird

As the state operates on an interim budget for July, a House-Senate conference committee is continuing its work toward a compromise fiscal 2024 state spending plan.

Both the House and Senate budget bills (H. 3901 and S. 2400, respectively) reflect a commitment to a fiscal partnership with municipalities, but there were a series of differences on some accounts affecting cities and towns, and the MMA weighed in to support the higher appropriation in each case.

Unrestricted General Government Aid

The Senate proposed \$1.27 billion for the Unrestricted General Government Aid account (1233-2350 and Section 3), an increase of \$39.3 million, or 3.2%, over the fiscal 2023 level of funding, and double the increase approved by the House.

With property taxes tightly capped by

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House Ways and Means Chair Aaron Michlewitz

Senate Ways and Means Chair Michael Rodrigues

Proposition 2¹/₂, the MMA has been pointing out that cities and towns rely on adequate state revenue sharing — particularly through UGGA — to provide municipal and school services, ensure safe streets and neighborhoods, and maintain vital infrastructure. The MMA has asked the conference committee to support the Senate's UGGA proposal.

Chapter 70

Both the House and Senate bills would

fund Chapter 70 school aid at \$6.5 billion, representing a commitment to fund the Student Opportunity Act in line with the originally intended schedule. In addition, both chambers recognized the challenges facing 119 "minimum aid" districts, which would receive only an increase of \$30 per student over the previous year under the budget bill filed by the governor in January. Both the House and Senate bills would double the minimum aid increase to \$60 per student.

Special education

Both the House and Senate budget bills would fully fund the state's commitment to the Special Education Circuit Breaker (7061-0012), which reimburses school districts for the high cost of educating students with learning disabilities.

Charter schools

The House and Senate budgets would fully fund the state's statutory obligation for charter school mitigation payments as

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CCC publishes draft regulations; regulatory process to begin soon

By Ali DiMatteo

The Cannabis Control Commission on July 13 published preliminary draft regulations regarding adult-use and medical cannabis that would upend existing host community contracts.

The CCC is expected to approve the publication of the draft regulations in the coming weeks, which would launch the official review process, culminating with the adoption of final regulations.

The MMA contends that the proposed draft regulations go significantly beyond the scope of the major cannabis law enacted last year (<u>Ch. 180 of the Acts of 2022</u>) and would apply retroactively to existing host community agreements. The MMA is raising concerns that constitutional tenets protect existing

contracts from statutory encroachment, and the regulations as drafted would result in substantial and costly litigation.

The MMA will continue to advocate for final regulations that take a two-tiered approach to host community agreements, allowing existing contracts to continue without interference until their expiration, while applying any new compliance structure to agreements executed after the effective date of the new regulations.

"Applying new regulations retroactively would upend the cannabis industry, while punishing local officials and municipalities who acted and negotiated in good faith," said MMA Executive Director Geoff Beckwith.

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

Local government is teamwork

Local government isn't a one-person show — it's a team event.

More than any other level of government, cities and towns rely on an amazingly varied group of employees, elected officials and appointed board members to make decisions and advance community goals, programs and priorities.

By my rough calculation, the average locality has at least 40 boards, committees, commissions and workgroups, with the vast majority of participants being local volunteers. With 351 municipalities, this translates into a staggering 14.000 teams that make decisions and recommendations that guide the governance of our towns and cities. Let's estimate that the average committee has five members (probably way too low), that gives us at least 70,000 citizen volunteers across the state. And that isn't even counting Town Meeting.

That's a lot of teams, and a lot of team members!

One reason why I'm focusing on this is connected to the disturbing rise in incivility that we experienced during the pandemic, and the deep concern that the trend has not subsided. We know local leaders are leaning in to reverse this trend and create positive settings that model respect and listening. The MMA's most popular webinars this year, with thousands of attendees, have



By Geoffrey Beckwith

focused on civility, de-escalation, coping with conflict, resident engagement, and so-called First Amendment audits.

A second reason why I've been looking at local government from a team-based angle is connected to the question of productivity and performance. Are there elements and traits that make teams more likely to

be successful? And do these attributes overlap with or amplify the dynamics that foster civility?

The answer to both these questions is an unequivocal *yes*.

This isn't a guess or an intuitive suggestion. It is based on data and analysis.

Google is one of the most successful technology companies in the history of the world, in great part because they have based their strategic decisions on data and analytics.

From 2013 to 2015, the company spent two years studying 180 teams, asking the question, "What makes a team effective at Google?" Code-named Project Aristotle (the ["]whole is greater than the sum of its parts" philosopher), Google's People Analytics team did a deep dive to find the answers.

Using a combination of quantitative and qualitative measures (executives tended to be more interested in results, such as sales or project launches, and team

DIRECTOR'S REPORT continued on 30

eBeacon

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

House budget bill has conditional sped funding

By Jackie Lavender Bird

The House on July 13 passed a \$693 million fiscal 2023 supplemental budget bill that includes conditional funding to address extraordinary special education cost increases, as well as an expansion of the Housing Development Incentive Program.

Major investments in the spending bill (H. 3994) are dedicated to relief for financially strained hospitals and several public employee collective bargaining agreements.

The bill includes \$75 million to address extraordinary cost increases in special education for eligible school districts, following a decision made by the Operational Services Division last October that allows out-of-district special education private schools to increase tuition by 14% in fiscal 2024.

It is unclear how many school districts would be able to access these funds to offset the new costs imposed by the It is unclear how many school districts would be able to access these funds to offset the new costs imposed by the OSD decision, as the budget language includes several constraints.

OSD decision, as the budget language includes several constraints. First, districts that incur special education instructional costs in fiscal 2024 that exceed 25% of instructional costs in fiscal 2023 would be eligible for reimbursement. Additionally, districts would be reimbursed for 100% of any instructional cost increases exceeding 10% where the total of the increase also exceeds 0.5% of the district's total actual net school spending in fiscal 2023. Finally, any school district with unobligated Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief funds would be ineligible for relief.

The bill would expand the Housing Development Incentive Program, which provides a tool for gateway cities to develop housing through the use of two tax incentives for developers. The House bill would allow the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities to authorize up to \$30 million in annual HDIP tax credits, an increase from the current cap of \$10 million. Further, the bill would allow the housing office to authorize up to \$57 million in one-time credits for this calendar year.

The House bill does not include the <u>municipal finance law changes</u> that were included in a <u>supplemental budget bill</u> <u>that was filed by Gov. Maura Healey</u> in March.

The supplemental budget bill now heads to the Senate for consideration. •

SCOTUS rules local governments cannot take surplus home equity

By Ali DiMatteo

In a unanimous decision released on May 25, the <u>U.S. Supreme Court ruled</u> that it was unconstitutional for a local government in Minnesota to retain the profits made when it sold a condo it had seized for unpaid taxes.

In Tyler v. Hennepin County, Minnesota, the court ruled that the county violated the Fifth Amendment when it sold a condo for \$40,000 and kept the \$25,000 in excess of the taxpayer's liabilities, which amounts to an unlawful taking.

While the decision was narrowly determined with specific case underpinnings, it is expected to have repercussions in tax title law nationwide. Under Minnesota law, as in Massachusetts, property taxes can become a lien against the property once they are assessed. In Minnesota, the state auditor creates a published delinquent tax list, which is also mailed to all delinquent property tax owners, and commences a lawsuit. If the lawsuit is not answered, a judge will enter judgment against the property.

While delinquent taxpayers have multiple ways to avoid foreclosure in Min-

nesota, they have no way to claim any proceeds from the sale of the property, in excess of the debt, once the foreclosure and subsequent sale go through.

The court found that, because Minnesota law recognizes that a property owner is entitled to surplus revenue in excess of their debt in other situations, such as a bank foreclosure on a mortgaged property, it must also recognize it when the state is involved.

The court did distinguish the Tyler case from a 1956 case, Nelson v. City of New York, in which a property owner had the ability to request the surplus money after foreclosure but failed to do so. The court wrote, "The ordinance challenged there did not absolutely preclud[e] an owner from obtaining the surplus pro-

.....

ceeds of judicial sale, but instead simply defined the process through which the owner could claim the surplus."

Additionally, the court found that because Minnesota law recognizes that a property owner is entitled to surplus revenue in excess of their debt in other situations, such as a bank foreclosure on a mortgaged property, it must also recognize it when the state is involved.

"It can not extinguish a property interest that it recognizes everywhere else to avoid paying just compensation when the State does the taking," the court wrote.

While the Tyler decision applies only to Minnesota, the similarities in Massachusetts law make the current tax title sale process unlikely to hold up in court without legislative changes.

Many municipalities consider the current tax-taking process to be slow and burdensome, and it is unclear whether and what fees a court may find excessive. Without the incentive of being able to recoup additional costs, the process may stall or even stop completely, leaving many municipalities with larger tax liabilities on their books.

MassDOT accepting requests while Ch. 90 bill stalls

By Adrienne Núñez

While the fiscal 2024 Chapter 90 bond bill remains in a conference committee, the Massachusetts Department of Transportation today said it will begin to accept, review and approve project requests from municipalities in advance of the legislation's final passage.

Approved and completed projects cannot be reimbursed, however, until the Chapter 90 bill and a bond terms bill are approved by the Legislature and signed by the governor, according to MassDOT, and official notifications of Chapter 90 allocations can only be made once the Chapter 90 bond and terms bills are enacted and signed.

A House-Senate conference committee has not yet reconciled differences between separate fiscal 2024 Chapter 90 bond bills passed by the House and Senate in March.

Both chambers have approved \$200 million for the local road and bridge maintenance program for this year, as well as \$150 million in additional transportation-related grant programs. The differences lie in the grant authorizations.

The House bill would authorize \$25 million for each the following multi-year transportation-related accounts:

- <u>Municipal Pavement Program</u>
- 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 the 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 Senate bill would replace the \$25 million for the municipal pavement program with \$25 million for a new municipal road formula program. The formula would be calculated based on road miles and population density, favoring less-dense communities.

The conference committee members are Reps. William Straus, Brian Murray and Steven Howitt, and Sens. Brendan Crighton, Paul Mark and Patrick O'Connor. The group first met on June 13.

Gov. Maura Healey started the process in January when she filed a two-year Chapter 90 bill totalling \$400 million, or \$200 million per year. The Legislature revised the bill to authorize bonding for just one year at \$200 million.

The <u>MMA and municipal officials testified</u> before the Joint Committee on Transportation in March in support of the two-year authorization proposed by Healey, while requesting an increase to at least \$330 million per year, indexed to inflation. In written testimony, the MMA emphasized community needs and the impact of inflation on the <u>Chapter 90 program</u>, which has lost two-thirds of its purchasing power while being essentially level-funded over the past 11 years.

Additional municipal road and bridge funding is included in the Senate's fiscal 2024 state budget bill, which includes another \$100 million, half of which would be allocated using the Chapter 90 formula, with the other half allocated using a formula focused on road miles. The Senate proposal would use \$100 million from the new 4% surtax on incomes over \$1 million, adopted by the voters last year, to fund this new budget-based allocation devoted to local roads. The House and Senate fiscal 2024 budget bills also await reconciliation.

MMA webinar to discuss statewide contracts and procurement

On Aug. 15, the MMA will host a free, hour-long webinar with the <u>Operational</u> <u>Services Division</u> to review statewide contracts and the use of COMMBUYS for procurement.

Panelists from the OSD's Local Government Team will discuss how to use statewide contracts effectively, identify underused contracts, post bid announcements, and search for products and vendors.

Speakers from the Operational Services Division will include:

- Local Government Account Manager Jennifer Forsey
- Strategic Sourcing Services Director Tim Kennedy
- Local Government Account Manager Jackie Needham

Appointed and elected municipal officials are invited to <u>register online</u>. The webinar will begin at noon.

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



Committee receives POST update

Enrique Zuniga, executive director of the Massachusetts Peace Officer Standards and Training Commission (back corner, by the window), gives an <u>update</u> on POST's work during the June 23 meeting of the MMA Policy Committee on Personnel and Labor Relations.

Administration announces 5-year capital plan

On June 22, the Healey-Driscoll administration announced a five-year, \$14 billion Capital Investment Plan that includes more than \$1.5 billion in housing-related spending and a new program to provide incentives for the creation of affordable housing.

The administration's first capital plan, covering fiscal 2024 through 2028, includes \$97 million per year for a new HousingWorks program, which aims to encourage the production of 200 to 300 units of affordable housing each year. In addition, the spending

plan includes \$90 million annually for housing acquisition, development and rehabilitation, and \$120 million per year to preserve the state's more than 43,000 units of public housing.

The spending plan also focuses on advancing climate and economic development goals, and administration officials said it will help preserve and modernize the state's infrastructure, invest in cities and towns, and make government more effective. The plan includes funding for local grant programs, libraries and technology.

The administration said the Housing-Works program will both leverage and consolidate existing programs and inject new funding to create more flexibility for increasing housing production. The creation of the new program would unlock an additional \$19 million in capacity for the <u>MassWorks program</u> by shifting housing-focused grants to the HousingWorks program.

The capital plan also reflects efforts to meet the state's climate goals, with decarbonization and climate-conscious investments. Through fiscal 2028, the plan would invest more than \$1.4 billion in the state's transportation systems to reduce emissions through electrification, create more sustainable modes of transportation, and build resilient infrastructure to withstand climate change. The plan includes more than \$1.6 billion to fund more than 40 state building decarbonization projects.



Gov. Maura Healey, left, discusses the administration's five-year Capital Investment Plan and the new Housing-Works program during a June 22 event in Hyannis with Alisa Magnotta, center, CEO of the Housing Assistance Corporation in Barnstable, and Administration and Finance Secretary Matthew Gorzkowicz. (Photo courtesy Joshua Qualls/Governor's Press Office)

> The plan provides a vision for the next five years, but Massachusetts governors release updated capital spending plans each year. The plan's funding depends on existing authorizations from the Legislature.

Lt. Gov. Kim Driscoll said the capital plan "demonstrates our administration's commitment to supporting cities and towns with the resources they need to deliver for their residents." She pointed out that the plan includes climate-focused funding to help communities respond to and plan for the impacts of climate change, while also supporting library construction, cultural facilities, and technological support for municipalities.

The plan's investments over five years include:

- \$1.2 billion in economic development funding, with \$163 million for local communities, including grant opportunities through the <u>Community</u> <u>One Stop for Growth</u> application portal
- More than \$125 million for municipal climate-focused grants, including almost \$24 million in fiscal 2024 for the <u>Municipal Vulnerability</u> <u>Preparedness</u> planning and action grant programs
- More than \$270 million per year for local transportation programs, including \$200 million for the <u>Chapter</u> <u>90</u> local road and bridge program

- \$134 million for library construction grants for the renovation and expansion of municipal libraries
- \$50 million in Cultural Facilities Fund grants
- \$74 million in local support for technology investments through capital programs
- The use of \$736,000 to unlock \$4.1 million in federal funds for ambient air monitoring, as well as support for community-based resilience programs and for parks, trails and open space
- \$262 million toward replacement of two bridges over the Cape Cod Canal, ultimately ramping up to a \$700 million total long-term commitment
- \$10 million for the launch of the Executive Office of Technology Services and Security's <u>Digital</u> <u>Roadmap</u>, which will improve access to Commonwealth digital services
- Download the capital investment plan (1.2M PDF) ●



MMHR discusses conversation strategies

Katie Gilfeather, an employee assistance program clinician with AllOne Health, leads a training on communication and difficult conversations during the Massachusetts Municipal Human Resources Annual Meeting on June 15 in Burlington. Gilfeather offered communication strategies and examined factors that make conversations difficult.

IRS proposes regulations for IRA 'direct pay' option

By Adrienne Núñez

The Internal Revenue Service has released <u>proposed regulations and fre-</u> <u>quently asked questions</u> regarding the "direct pay," or "elective pay," provision of the Inflation Reduction Act.

Elective pay allows states, local governments, nonprofits, and other eligible entities to access clean energy tax credits that are outlined in the IRA through a payment from the IRS. Tax-exempt entities that fulfill the requirements of eligible tax credit programs may elect to receive a payment in lieu of a tax credit.

The IRS's proposed regulations describe rules for the elective payment of these credit amounts in a taxable year, including definitions and special rules applicable to partnerships and S corporations and regarding repayment of excessive payments. The proposed regulations also describe rules related to an IRS pre-filing registration process that would be required. Municipalities wishing to receive an elective payment will be required to file an annual tax return and indicate the election on their return. The IRS said it will be releasing guidance outlining how such a return will be filed.

Municipalities will be required to complete a pre-filing registration process and satisfy all program eligibility requirements for the tax and applicable bonus credits. Documentation will be required to substantiate the filing, and returns must be filed on time.

Elective pay will be available through the following Production Tax Credit and Investment Tax Credit programs:

- Renewable Electricity Production Tax
 Credit
- Energy Investment Tax Credit
- Carbon Capture and Sequestration Tax Credit
- Advanced Energy Project Credit
- Nuclear Power Production Tax Credit

- Clean Electricity Investment Tax Credit
- Clean Hydrogen Production Tax Credit
- Commercial Clean Vehicle Credit
- Advanced Manufacturing Production Tax Credit
- Alternative Fuel Refueling Property Credit
- Clean Electricity Production Tax Credit
- Clean Fuel Production Credit

The proposed elective pay regulations are available on <u>Regulations.gov</u>, where public comments may be submitted until Aug. 14.

Enacted last summer, the Inflation Reduction Act is intended to provide funding and incentives to expand clean energy production, transform rural power production, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, create jobs, and spur economic growth.

DLS publishes issue dedicated to new local officials

The June 15 edition of the Division of Local Services' e-newsletter, City & Town, is dedicated to newly elected or appointed local officials, with municipal finance resources, information and policy guidance for those who might be new to local government.

Articles include a welcome to local government by Sean Cronin, senior deputy commissioner at the Division of Local Services; highlights of the DLS's <u>New</u> <u>Officials Youtube Playlist</u>; recommended policy resources for new officials; and helpful data for new officials.

There are also links to introductory municipal finance guidance, trainings, data and other helpful resources. The <u>Municipal Finance Training and Resource</u> <u>Center</u> features an array of trainings and municipal finance tools, and the <u>DLS</u> <u>Youtube channel</u> has a wealth of content related to municipal finance. The DLS also offers an online <u>Foundations in</u> <u>Municipal Finance for the New Official</u>.

Over the past several years, the DLS has retooled its approach to training and professional development by building an online resource center that is available at all times.

The newsletter encourages new local officials to <u>sign up for DLS email alerts</u> and confirm that their contact information is accurate in the <u>DLS Local</u> <u>Officials Directory</u>.

– John Ouellette



The June 15 issue of City & Town focuses on resources for new local government officials.

MSA webinar to focus on communication with constituents Sept. 8

The Massachusetts Select Board Association will host a free Zoom webinar on Friday, Sept. 8, to discuss best practices for communicating with public constituencies.

A panel of experts will discuss the different methods of communication available to select board members, creative strategies for conducting outreach to constituents, and the relevant aspects of the state's public records law. Speakers will be announced in the coming weeks.

The hour-long webinar will begin at 9:30 a.m. An email with the registration link

will be sent to all select board members later this month. Advance registration is required.

Contact: MMA Member Program Coordinator Anneke Craig at acraig@mma.org

Swift to WLG: Lead with confidence and empathy

By Jennifer Kavanaugh

As a former acting governor and business leader, Jane Swift has plenty of career tips to offer women: Use your power to improve people's lives, lead with confidence, take credit for your wins, and support your female colleagues.

Also: Don't wear heels when you're pregnant.

Swift shared her insights during the June 22 meeting of Women Leading Government in Bridgewater. Recalling her experiences balancing the governorship while raising three small children, she said women must use their positions to help younger women succeed.

"We need more women in every level of government, and we need them when they get there to use power differently," Swift said. "Embrace it, but then use it with empathy."

Elected in 1990 as the state's youngest senator at age 25, Swift became lieutenant governor in 1999, and acting governor in 2001, when then-Gov. Paul Cellucci left to serve as U.S. ambassador to Canada. She served nearly two years as acting governor, becoming the first woman in U.S. history to give birth while in that office. Since leaving Beacon Hill, Swift has worked in the business and nonprofit sectors, and founded the <u>Cobble Hill Farm Education & Rescue</u> <u>Center</u> in Williamstown.

Swift, who was pregnant with her first child while running for lieutenant governor and gave birth to twins as acting governor, faced intense scrutiny at a time when women in power, and certainly mothers of young children, were still much rarer in political life. She came under fire for her use of state resources while trying to balance work and family needs, and news coverage featured women questioning her ability to manage professional work, or motherhood, or both.

Referencing that period, Swift said she "made some of my worst mistakes when I was so worried about being perfect." She tried to power through her workload, she said, even when she should have skipped a ribbon cutting to care for a sick family member.

"It got in my head," Swift said. "I was so convinced that if I took a day off, called



Former Acting Gov. Jane Swift offers insights from her experience in government and leadership during the June 22 meeting of Women Leading Government in Bridgewater.

in and said I couldn't go to an event, that I was going to let every current, future and yet-to-be-determined woman in the world down."

But what might not have been apparent in those day-to-day struggles has emerged as a different story now — that Swift changed things for other women.

"Twenty years later, 15 years later, I have people who have their own children who say, 'Do you know how much it meant to me to see a woman doing that job?" Swift said.

Only 49 women have served as governor nationwide, Swift said, but 12 of them are in office now, including Gov. Maura Healey. And almost 2,500 women currently serve in state legislatures nationally, occupying a third of the seats, the highest percentage in history, she said. Massachusetts is "OK, but not great" at electing and appointing women, ranking 20th in the country in the percentage of women serving as municipal office holders, she said, while noting the number of women currently leading Massachusetts in statewide offices.

Swift urged more experienced women to seek out and mentor younger employees. She advised women to build teams, but not hide behind those teams when they're afraid of taking credit for their work. She said they also should plan ahead for networking opportunities, identifying up to three goals for what they want to accomplish during an event. She added that women must surround themselves with trusted people who offer support and act as sounding boards. Swift advised women to video record themselves speaking in order to find and eliminate "verbal tics," such as "I'm sorry," or "I believe," that undermine what should be declarative statements, and to purge their emails of similar language.

Audience members shared their experiences leading in traditionally male-dominated settings. Carin Paulette, the first woman director of veterans' services in Marshfield, said

some people still minimize her military service even when she appears in full dress uniform. She urged women to stop saying "I'm sorry" for simply doing their jobs.

"Like you were saying, own what you do and own your accomplishments," Paulette told Swift. "We need to be more forward in our conversations, instead of the questioning. We know our jobs. We know what we're doing."

The Massachusetts Municipal Management Association established the <u>Women Leading Government Committee</u> in 2018 to educate, mentor, encourage and support women in the local government profession.



Blais meets with MMA fiscal committee

Rep. Natalie Blais discusses a proposed Municipal Building Authority and rural schools bills during the June 27 meeting of the MMA Fiscal Policy Committee.

Mass. to receive \$147M in federal broadband funds

During an event at the White House on June 26, President Joe Biden, U.S. Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo, and federal telecommunication leaders announced that Massachusetts will receive \$147 million from the national <u>Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment program</u>, funding that will help the state further close the digital divide.

The program, overseen by the <u>National</u> <u>Telecommunications and Information</u> <u>Administration</u>, will use \$42 billion in federal funds to expand affordable highspeed internet service nationwide.

In Massachusetts, funding will be deployed through a five-year action plan and proposal that the <u>Massachusetts Broadband Institute</u> is developing through ongoing engagement with the <u>Massachusetts Broadband and Digital</u> <u>Equity Working Group</u>, the statewide Broadband & Digital Equity Summit that was held on June 13, and the <u>statewide Digital Equity survey</u>, which seeks input from Massachusetts residents about their barriers to internet access, affordability, and adoption. The plan and proposal are due to the federal government later this year.

Massachusetts Director of Federal Funds and Infrastructure Quentin Palfrey and Director of the Massachusetts Broadband Institute at MassTech Michael Baldino attended the White House event.

In a prepared statement, Gov. Maura Healey said, "With these funds, Massachusetts will build on ongoing work to ensure that our residents can access the affordable and reliable broadband service they need to work, learn, access healthcare resources, and connect with loved ones."

Palfrey said the new funding "will be a gamechanger for Massachusetts and the grant programs that will flow out of our statewide digital equity planning effort."

"This funding will continue Massachusetts's legacy of leveraging federal investment to build an economy around innovation and learning by ensuring residents statewide can adopt the 21st century digital tools that many of us take for granted," Palfrey said.

Baldino said the state has made progress over the last decade to close rural infrastructure gaps and has piloted programs that addressed digital inequities and spurred broadband adoption that can now be expanded "to achieve transformational change."



Michael Baldino, left, director of the Massachusetts Broadband Institute at MassTech, and Massachusetts Director of Federal Funds and Infrastructure Quentin Palfrey attended the Broadband Equity, Access and Deployment program announcement at the White House on June 13. (Photo courtesy Governor's Press Office)

Later this year, the Massachusetts Broadband Institute will host a series of regional listening sessions to solicit feedback about digital equity needs and opportunities. An overview of the state's ongoing engagement around broadband and digital equity programs can be found on the <u>Massachusetts Broadband</u> <u>Institute website</u>.

USDOT announces new Rural and Tribal Assistance pilot program

On June 15, the U.S. Department of Transportation released a <u>Notice of</u> <u>Funding Opportunity</u> for a new <u>Rural</u> <u>and Tribal Assistance Pilot Program</u>, which provides technical assistance grants to rural and tribal communities for infrastructure projects.

Applications will be accepted on a rolling, first-come, first-served basis starting at 2 p.m. on Aug. 14. No local funding match is required to participate in this program.

The USDOT will award \$3.4 million through individual grants ranging up to \$360,000.

Grants may be used to hire staff or advisors to assist with early development-phase activities including, but not limited to, feasibility studies; preliminary engineering and design; environmental review; revenue forecasting; financial feasibility analysis; statutory and regulatory analysis; and drafting and negotiation of agreements. Eligible applicants include local governments or political subdivisions with projects located outside of an urbanized area with a population of more than 150,000 residents as determined by the Census; state governments applying on behalf of a project in an area outside an urbanized area of more than 150,000 residents; federally recognized Indian Tribes; and the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands. Urbanized area listings should be drawn from the 2020 U.S. Census results.

Applications must be submitted <u>online</u>.

The <u>Rural and Tribal Assistance Pilot</u> <u>Program</u> joins the <u>Thriving Communities</u> <u>Program</u>, the <u>Regional Infrastructure</u> <u>Accelerators</u> and other new technical assistance opportunities.

Additional USDOT technical assistance resources can be found on the <u>USDOT</u> <u>Navigator</u>.

– Adrienne Núñez



The U.S. Department of Transportation will provide technical assistance grants to rural and tribal communities for infrastructure projects through the new Rural and Tribal Assistance Pilot Program.

MMA webinar reviews implications of SJC ruling

By Lily Rancatore

An MMA webinar on June 5 discussed the implications of a <u>recent ruling by</u> <u>the Supreme Judicial Court</u> that a public comment policy, or "civility restraint," violates free speech rights.

Sandwich Town Manager George "Bud" Dunham opened the session by discussing the erosion of decorum and civility, and "a general level of disrespect," that has been witnessed by those involved in local government, as well as all walks of life.

"I know one of the concerns we all share is, how will this type of behavior impact public service moving forward, whether it's attracting employees or retaining good ones," Dunham said. "It's getting harder, not easier, to work in public service and municipal government."

In an effort to shield themselves from disrespectful behavior and to set an example, many local boards and committees had formally adopted codes of conduct and rules of decorum in recent years, Dunham said, but the SJC decision "changed the rules of engagement."

"We're still trying to decipher how this case is impacting our operations," he said. "The court and the state have not issued any guidance on this yet."

Attorney John Davis of Pierce Davis & Perritano offered an overview of the case, Barron v. Kolenda, in which he represented the town of Southborough on behalf of MIIA. He said the case arose for a public participation policy adopted by the Southborough Board of Selectmen in 2017 that required speakers at public meetings "to act in a professional and courteous manner." He said some of the text of the policy was drawn from state law, including the open meeting law. Nonetheless, the policy was challenged in court as a preemption of constitutional rights.

The SJC ruled that boards may not restrict the speech of participants "based solely on the viewpoint or message of a speaker or the board's desire to avoid criticism." Ultimately, the court ruled, "although civility can and should be encouraged in political discourse, it cannot be required."

Characterizing the decision, Davis said, "You can't mandate civility. You can't



Attorney John Davis, top left, attorney Regina Ryan, top right, and Sandwich Town Manager George "Bud" Dunham discuss the implications of a recent Supreme Judicial Court ruling regarding civility at public meetings during a June 5 webinar hosted by the MMA.

mandate order. You can't mandate decorum."

Davis shared advice for navigating public participation going forward. Municipal officials may enforce time limits on public comment sessions and enforce time limits on individual speakers, though such rules must be enforced universally, without prejudice. A municipality may also adopt rules "preventing speakers from disrupting others," he said. "Disruption," he added, is related to *how* someone says something, not *what* they say.

Further, municipal officials may require that speech be "peaceable and orderly," meaning, for example, that someone can't shout objections spontaneously from the back of the room without being recognized to speak.

Attorney Regina Ryan of Discrimination and Harassment Solutions, the author of a standard of code of conduct for municipal boards and committees, reviewed updates to the guidelines. She said changes to Section IV, "Guidelines for Individuals Speaking at Public Meetings," will help municipal officials proceed in the current environment.

To maintain an orderly and peaceable meeting, she said, public participation periods can have a time constraint, and members of the public may speak only with the permission of the chair.

Ryan emphasized that municipal officials can encourage public meeting attendees to maintain order and civility and to refrain from making any personal or profane remarks. Public participants can be further encouraged to respect the views and opinions of others (including members of the public body and the general public) and to treat others as the speaker wishes to be treated.

Dunham moderated 30 minutes of questions and answers, where panelists addressed inquiries about slanderous statements made about non-municipal persons, threats of violence or discriminatory language, and applications of the

ruling to remote meetings.

In a <u>follow-up MMA webinar on June</u> <u>12</u>, Katie Gilfeather, an employee assistance program clinician with AllOne Health, shared practical tips for de-escalating public anger.

• View the June 5 SJC decision webinar



Fair Share Amendment discussed at LGAC

During the June 13 meeting of the Local Government Advisory Commission at the State House, North Andover Deputy Town Manager Denise Casey highlights new funding available from the Fair Share Amendment. The MMA supports proposals that would use \$100 million for local road and bridge maintenance, \$100 million for Green School Works, \$100 million for school construction projects, and \$161 million for the universal school meals program.

MMA webinar shares strategies for de-escalation

By Lily Rancatore

An MMA webinar on June 12 discussed how to maintain composure and use constructive language when confronted with uncivilized discourse at public meetings.

Katie Gilfeather, an employee assistance program clinician with AllOne Health, discussed some of the implications of a recent <u>Supreme Judicial Court ruling</u> regarding constituent behavior at public meetings.

When confronted with anger, she said, it can be difficult to decipher what's going on for the person internally, but the driving force behind someone's behavior is usually connected to a universal emotion, such as fear, frustration or feeling overwhelmed.

Gilfeather highlighted the importance of listening and responding rather than reacting. Anger makes it especially difficult to employ reasoning, which is why it can be futile to address an emotionally charged person with arguments of logic; only when a person is calm will they be able to process information, she said.

Angry constituents, Gilfeather said, may shift from the problem to an indictment of municipal officials as people. In these instances, it's best to set internal bound-



During a June 12 MMA webinar, AllOne Health Employee Assistance Program Clinician Katie Gilfeather (top) and Marlborough City Councillor Samantha Perlman discuss strategies for de-escalating public anger.

aries and listen from a place of curiosity without engaging in an illogical discussion. Sometimes, she said, silence is the best answer.

Supporting language, such as "I am listening," "I want to understand your concerns," or "I can tell this is very important to you," is also helpful in calming constituents.

Gilfeather shared other practical tips for diffusing tense situations, like using "power words" and compassionate responses. Ending abusive conversations is challenging, she said, but municipal officials can disengage if they feel threatened.

Given the emotional toll these engagements may have on municipal officials, Gilfeather also shared tips for self-care and resilience. She encouraged municipal officials to debrief with colleagues, take mental health breaks, practice mindfulness, and remember the big picture.

Municipalities can still set a standard for acceptable behavior in the workplace,

Gilfeather said, so creating and enforcing core values, expectations for civility and respect, and a code of conduct in the workplace are essential tools for confronting inappropriate behaviors.

Marlborough City Councillor Samantha Perlman moderated 20 minutes of questions and answers, which addressed inquiries about verbal attacks on protected classes and prioritizing physical safety.

• <u>View the webinar</u>

MMHR to hold Fall Conference Sept. 21-22 in Falmouth

Massachusetts Municipal Human Resources will hold its annual Fall Conference on Sept. 21 and 22 in Falmouth.

Conference sessions will include topics such as collective bargaining; creative strategies for employee recruitment and retention; Peace Officer Standards and Training certification; and transgender and gender-diverse inclusion in the municipal workplace.

Registration and networking will begin at

8:30 a.m. on Thursday, Sept. 21. The program will begin at 9:30 a.m. and conclude at 4:30 p.m. Attendees are invited to join a reception at the end of the first day of the conference for beverages, snacks and networking.

On Sept. 22, breakfast and networking will begin at 8 a.m., with the program beginning at 9 a.m. and concluding at noon.

The registration fee is \$185 for the full conference or \$110 for Thursday only.

Registration and information about hotel accommodations will be available at <u>www.</u> <u>mma.org</u> in late July.

The conference will be held at the Sea Crest Beach Hotel at 350 Quaker Road in Falmouth. Hotel rooms will be available for a nightly rate of \$199, including taxes and fees.

Contact: MMA Member Program Coordinator Anneke Craig at acraig@mma.org

MMA seeks input for Annual Meeting workshops

The MMA is seeking topic suggestions from members for the timely, informative and interactive workshops that are a key component of the MMA Annual Meeting & Trade Show each January. Please offer your input on topics that would help you in the work you do in your city or town. To submit ideas, use our convenient <u>online form</u>. The 2024 MMA Annual Meeting & Trade Show will be held on Jan. 19 and 20 in Boston. ●

USDOT accepting applications for grant programs

By Adrienne Núñez

The U.S. Department of Transportation is accepting applications for three discretionary grant programs that involve surface transportation projects designed to strengthen supply chains, spur economic development, and improve safety.

Applications for the <u>Mega grant</u> (also known as National Infrastructure Project Assistance), <u>Infrastructure for</u> <u>Rebuilding America</u>, and the <u>Rural</u> <u>Surface Transportation Grant</u> programs are being solicited together under the <u>Multimodal Project Discretionary Grant</u> program.

Funded through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, the MPDG will support projects as follows:

\$1.8 billion through the Mega program to support large, complex projects that are difficult to fund by other means and are likely to generate national or regional economic, mobility or safety benefits. Eligible projects could include highway, bridge, freight, port, passenger rail, and public transportation projects of national or regional significance. Half of the funds are available for projects above \$500 million in total cost, and half is



Applications are due Aug. 21 for three grant programs funded through the U.S. Department of Transportation.

available for projects between \$100 million and \$500 million in total cost.

- \$3.1 billion will be available through Infrastructure for Rebuilding America for multimodal freight and highway projects of national or regional significance to improve the safety, accessibility, efficiency and reliability of the movement of freight and people in and across rural and urban areas.
- \$675 million will be available through the Rural Surface Transportation Grant program to support projects that improve and expand surface transportation infrastructure in rural areas in order to increase connectivity,

improve the safety and reliability of the movement of people and freight, and generate regional economic growth and improve quality of life. Eligible projects include highway, bridge and tunnel projects that help improve freight and safety and provide or increase access to agricultural, commercial, energy or transportation facilities that support the economy of a rural area. Ninety percent of rural funding must be awarded in \$25 million or greater amounts.

States, metropolitan planning organizations, local governments, special purpose or public transportation authorities, tribal governments, federal land management agencies applying jointly with states, Amtrak in partnership, and groups of entities are eligible to apply, though applicant eligibility varies with each program and applicants are encouraged to review the <u>Notice of Funding</u> <u>Opportunity</u> for details.

Applications are due by Aug. 21 via Grants.gov. Additional resources are available online. ●

Entries sought for municipal website contest

The MMA is accepting nominations for its annual municipal website awards, which will be presented during the MMA Annual Meeting in January 2024.

The awards recognize excellence in customer service, functionality, convenience and government transparency delivered by a municipal website.

To enter the contest, chief municipal officials may simply <u>fill out a short online</u> <u>nomination form</u>. The entry deadline is Tuesday, Oct. 31.

The awards recognize the best municipal websites in five population categories: under 5,000; 5,001-12,000; 12,001-

25,000; 25,001-35,000; and 35,000plus. One winner is selected from each category.

Judges evaluate municipal websites based on the following criteria:

- Current and timely information
- Intuitive navigation tools and organization of material
- Ease of access to resources for residents, such as the ability to apply for licenses and permits, pay bills, order documents, and make suggestions
- Use of social media and tools for online community engagement (including the use of an events calendar)
- Availability of public records
- Clear branding as the official municipal government site
- Robust search function
- Mobile-responsive design
- Details about municipal departments
- Visual appeal and overall experience

For more information, contact Daniel Yi at dyi@mma.org. ●

CCC REGULATIONS

Continued from page 1

The CCC has posted the draft adult and medical use regulations online, but has not yet provided a separate document delineating the proposed changes governing host community agreements and municipal equity. The proposed draft regulations are included in the <u>CCC's</u> <u>July meeting packet</u>. (See page 251 of the PDF for the beginning of the notable additions and changes that are part of the draft regulations.) The MMA will provide additional information and recommended action steps once the draft guidelines are officially published by the CCC. •

MSA holds training for new members

By John Ouellette

The Massachusetts Select Board Association held a free training for newly elected select board members on June 9 in Devens, covering state laws, budgeting, funding sources, insights from current members, and collaborative decision making.

Mina Makarious, a partner at Anderson Kreiger LLP, led an introductory session about the state's open meeting and public records laws and how they affect the work of select board members, and Athol Town Manager Shaun Suhoski led a "Municipal Finance and Budgeting 101" session.

A panel of veteran select board members shared their experiences and insights, followed by a question and answer session. The panelists were Debra Roberts of Stoughton, Irwin Nesoff of Hull, Peter Spellios of Swampscott, and Andrew Hogeland of Williamstown, who is also president of the MSA.

MMA Deputy Legislative Director Jackie Lavender Bird gave a presentation on sources of state and federal funding for towns.

Collaborative decision making was the topic of a conversation between Lincoln Select Board Member Jennifer Glass and Adam Chapdelaine, a former town manager in Arlington.

Given that the nearly 300 towns in Massachusetts have a wide range of governing policies, Chapdelaine advised newly elected select board members to quickly get familiar with their own roles and responsibilities in their town, as well as those of the manager and other town officials and boards. While select



Lincoln Select Board Member Jennifer Glass, left, and Adam Chapdelaine, a former MMA president and town manager in Arlington, discuss collaborative decision making during the June 9 training for newly elected Select Board members.

board members are elected by resident to lead their town — and it's important for them to weigh in "respectfully and responsibly" on important issues — they also need to be careful "not to overstep," as other elected and appointed boards have statutory responsibility over certain issues, such as in the area of land use.

Chapdelaine focused on building trust, both with fellow board members and with the town manager or administrator, if there is one, and maintaining a level of respect even with those with whom you don't share views.

"Try to disagree agreeably," he said. "Go hard on the issues, but easy on the people."

Even if you win a vote on a given night, he said, you might not win the one you want at the next meeting a week or two later.

"A select board member doesn't have



Several veteran select board members share their local government experiences and insights during the MMA's June 9 training for newly elected select board members in Devens. Pictured are (l-r) Debra Roberts of Stoughton, Irwin Nesoff of Hull, Peter Spellios of Swampscott and Andrew Hogeland of Williamstown.

any individual governing authority," he said. "You have to collaborate with your colleagues."

Chapdelaine recommended holding an annual goal-setting session — as a posted public meeting, but not in the select board chambers — to discuss the priorities of board members, the manager and key departments. He said the retreat-like "good governance" practice was successful in Arlington to help reach consensus and a shared vision, while building trust and rapport.

He also recommended that select boards find a way to convene with the school committee, finance committee, capital planning committee (in towns that have one), and town finance staff to jointly develop and use a long-range financial plan for the town.

WEMO to hold annual Leadership Conference on Sept. 29

Jane Swift

"Communicating with Confidence" will be the theme of the Women Elected Municipal Officials' fifth annual leadership conference on Friday, Sept. 29, in Marlborough.

The keynote speaker will be former Gov. Jane Swift, now a nonprofit leader who advocates for women's leadership in education and runs an animal rescue organization.

The keynote will be followed by a series of small group breakout discussions

focusing on how women leaders can navigate misinformation and pushback in order to communicate with confidence about important issues.

Registration and networking will begin at 8:30 a.m.

The program will start at 9 a.m. and conclude at noon, followed by a networking lunch.

The conference will be held at the Courtyard Marriott in Marlborough at 75 Felton St. The cost to attend is \$45.

Additional information, including the registration link and agenda, will be available in the coming weeks. Registration will also be available at <u>www.mma.</u> org in early September.

Contact: MMA Member Program Coordinator Anneke Craig at acraig@mma.org

Efforts to battle PFAS contamination continue

By Josie Ahlberg

As cities and towns grapple with the management of PFAS (per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances) in drinking water across the Commonwealth, discussions continue on state and federal efforts.

Known for their stain-resistant, water-resistant and nonstick qualities, PFAS — also called "forever chemicals" due to their inability to biodegrade have been found to leach into groundwater and surface water. Because of their chemical stability, the family of chemicals poses significant barriers to traditional contaminant remediation measures and can linger in the environment.

The Legislature's Joint Committee on Public Health held a hearing on June 23 to discuss several legislative proposals to address PFAS contamination and use statewide. The <u>MMA submitted</u> <u>testimony in support</u> of H. 2197 and S. 1356, wide-ranging legislation filed by Rep. Kate Hogan and Sen. Julian Cyr, co-chairs of the PFAS Interagency Task Force. The identical bills would implement many of the key recommendations put forward in the <u>Final Report of the</u> <u>PFAS Interagency Task Force</u>, including the creation of a PFAS remediation fund, timelines to phase out PFAS in consumer products, testing for private wells, and further regulation for industrial polluters.

Because municipal drinking water, wastewater and stormwater utilities, as well as municipal landfills, are passive recipients of PFAS, liability protection for municipal surface water and groundwater discharges has been identified as a concern. The PFAS legislation seeks to establish industrial accountability, which municipalities and the MMA view as a welcome addition to methods to prevent PFAS from entering streams and water bodies across Massachusetts and protecting local governments legally and financially.

The MMA's comments also highlighted the need to pursue many funding opportunities to remediate PFAS contamination across the Commonwealth, as cities and towns have had to take on a significant financial burden to treat PFAS in drinking water supplies thus far.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is considering a National Primary Drinking Water Regulation for six PFAS chemicals, a proposal the <u>MMA</u> <u>commented on in May</u>. Further regulation of PFAS chemicals on a national scale would greatly benefit public health and help ensure that safe drinking water is available nationwide. Such regulation, however, would require significant investment from federal, state and local governments. Funding through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law has been made available, but an <u>analysis by the</u> <u>American Water Works Association</u> projects the likely fiscal impact of this work in the billions of dollars.

Additional PFAS efforts on the national level include <u>legislation</u> filed by U.S. Sens. Tom Carper of Delaware and Shelley Moore Capito of West Virginia to bolster the development of innovative technologies to identify PFAS in the environment, prevent further contamination, remediate or destroy PFAS, improve science related to the chemicals, and assist as communities clean up contamination.

The U.S. Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works accepted stakeholder comments on the proposal through July 14. Comments submitted by the MMA raised liability protection for local governments as necessary to addressing PFAS in a holistic and sustainable manner.

IG announces pilot program to offer free procurement training

On June 22, Inspector General Jeffery Shapiro announced a pilot program, called One Free Designee, offering core public procurement training at no cost to every municipality in Massachusetts.

In fiscal 2024, the Office of the Inspector General will offer each municipality free tuition (valued at nearly \$1,900) for the three classes required for one employee to receive the Massachusetts Certified Public Purchasing Official designation. Additionally, the OIG is waiving the \$100 fee associated with all designation applications and renewals.

To enroll an employee in the free training, the chief municipal officer (mayor, manager/administrator or select board chair) must complete an online form indicating the employee to receive the training and acknowledging that the cost of the training is an obstacle to obtaining the designation.

Shapiro said increasing the number of new



During the Small Town Administrators of Massachusetts annual meeting on June 15 in Boylston, Inspector General Jeff Shapiro offers a preview of a new pilot program for public procurement training.

Massachusetts Certified Public Purchasing Officials designees "is core to the mission" of his office "to prevent fraud, waste and abuse of public resources."

"The <u>MCPPO designation</u> provides public employees with a better understanding of the complexities of Massachusetts pro-

curement law and best practices," he said, adding that he seeks to "remove barriers to training" and position his office "as a resource and a partner in good government."

Upon completion of the three core courses, an employee can apply for the MCPPO designation, which is a widely recognized credential indicating knowledge of Massachusetts procurement laws and best practices.

The OIG plans to release the fall class schedule, along with the form to participate in One Free Designee, in the coming weeks.

The OIG has offered training on public procurement laws to state and local employees for more than 25 years. In May, the office published the latest edition of <u>"The Chapter 30B Manual: Procuring Supplies, Services and Real Property,</u>" which is available as a PDF in the MMA's online <u>Resource Library.</u>

\$575M available for coastal resilience projects

By Josie Ahlberg

Approximately \$575 million is available through the federal Inflation Reduction Act for projects that would increase the resilience of coastal communities to extreme weather, sea level rise and drought.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Climate Resilience Regional Challenge, offered by the U.S. Department of Commerce, is available to coastal states, territories, tribes, counties, cities, or other units of government, as well as nonprofit organizations or associations.

Priorities for this opportunity include building risk reduction, regional coordination and collaboration, equity and inclusion, and enduring capacity.

The challenge involves two funding tracks. Track One, Regional Collaborative Building and Strategy Development, will support the planning of adaptation strategies in coastal areas, with awards from \$500,000 to \$2 million. Track Two, Implementation of Resilience and Adaptation Actions, will lean on previous planning efforts to implement these strategies to meet the needs of coastal communities and regions. Most awards for Track Two will fall within \$25 million and \$50 million.

Applicants must propose strategies and actions that build the resilience of multiple communities within a coastal region, including communities that have been underserved or underrepresented.

The NOAA received \$3.3 billion from the IRA to help prepare communities and improve research and responses to weather and climate events. Additional opportunities available through the NOAA, such as the Ocean-Based Climate Resilience Accelerators and Climate Ready Workforce, can be found on the Inflation Reduction Act website.

The deadline is Aug. 21 to submit a letter of intent for the Climate Resilience Regional Challenge. Full applications are due on Feb. 13, 2024.



About \$575 million in federal Inflation Reduction Act funding is available to increase coastal resilience in the face of climate change.

Forty-five awards are expected to be made available, with no matching requirement.

Questions can be directed to resiliencechallenge@noaa.gov. More information is available on the <u>NOAA's Climate Resilience Regional Challenge webpage</u> and the accompanying <u>Grants.gov webpage</u>.

Town Report Contest entries due Oct. 31

The MMA is accepting entries for its Annual Town Report Contest.

First-, second- and third-place winners will be selected from each of four population categories: less than 5,000; 5,001-15,000; 15,001-30,000; 30,001-plus. Winners will be recognized and given a certificate during the MMA Annual Meeting & Trade Show in January 2024.

Judging criteria include:

- Attractiveness of report cover and layout
- Material arrangement
- Presentation of statistics and data
- Summary of the year's achievements
- Evidence of local planning for the future
- Practical utility of report

Each entry will be reviewed by two judges, chosen based on their expertise in the field and their ability to remain impartial.

To enter, please complete the <u>form on</u> <u>the MMA website</u> with a link to, or a PDF of, your town report. OPTIONAL: You may also opt to send a physical copy of your town's 2022 report to: Town Report Contest, Massachusetts Municipal Association, 3 Center Plaza, Suite 610, Boston, MA 02108. Entries are due by Tuesday, Oct. 31. For more information, contact Daniel Yi

at the MMA at 617-426-7272, ext. 125, or dyi@mma.org. ●



Attorneys field questions on meetings, records

Attorney Janelle Austin, top left, Northbridge Town Manager Adam Gaudette, top right, and attorney Lauren Goldberg discuss questions related to the state's public records and open meeting laws during a <u>July 18 webinar</u> hosted by the MMA.

MassCyberCenter releases 'Minimum Baseline of IT'

By Meg Speranza

Recent cyberattacks on cities and towns across the country have shed light on the importance of strengthening cybersecurity resiliency at the municipal level.

A critical component of securing a municipality's technology environment is bolstering its information technology policies and practices. To that end, the MassCyberCenter and the Cyber Resilient Massachusetts Working Group have updated the "<u>The Minimum Baseline</u> of Cybersecurity for Municipalities" to include a new resource guide for cities and towns as part of Goal 4: Secure Technology Environment and Best Practices. The update, called the "Minimum Baseline of IT," covers the technologies, devices and basic configurations needed to establish a technology environment that is safe and secure.

Core parts of the IT baseline guide include:

- Enforcing multifactor authentication
- Implementing a strategy for data backup
- Installing a firewall
- Conducting vulnerability scanning regularly

System and data backups are especially important in the event of a ransomware attack, since data can be restored from backups even if the attackers have locked up the primary system.

The Minimum Baseline of IT also points to the importance of creating and maintaining an asset inventory by setting up remote monitoring and management, reassessing assets annually, and refreshing equipment every five years. The baseline urges municipalities to check in on digital assets regularly, and to have a plan to update and upgrade the hardware that supports those assets, in order to better ensure the safety and security of Massachusetts municipalities.

The MassCyberCenter, in collaboration with the Cyber Resilient Massachusetts Working Group, launched the municipal cybersecurity-focused framework, "The Minimum Baseline of Cybersecurity for Municipalities," in 2020 to help communities across the Commonwealth get started on the path to cyber resiliency and to bolster their defenses against

cyberthreats.

The baseline is made up of four goals that address training, threat sharing, response planning, and working to secure the technology environment and implement best practices. These goals — aimed at reducing incidents and minimizing impacts — cover a range of topics, from implementing annual employee cybersecurity awareness training to installing password management controls. The baseline guide also provides resources to help municipalities achieve the goals.

The Minimum Baseline of IT was created by the Cyber Resilient Massachusetts Municipality working group, led by <u>Office of Municipal and School Technology</u> Director Susan Noyes, MassCyberCenter Resiliency Program Manager Meg Speranza, Danvers IT Director Colby Cousens, and Westfield Network Administrator Mike Steben.

Each month, the Cyber Resilient Massachusetts Working Group convenes public and private sector leaders to identify ways the Commonwealth's innovative technology ecosystem can help Massachusetts municipalities and critical institutions protect sensitive data, increase cybersecurity awareness, and respond to emerging threats.

On Oct. 5, the MassCyberCenter will host the annual statewide Municipal Cybersecurity Summit, which will be held in-person at Mechanics Hall in Worcester. The event will feature keynote addresses from federal, state, local and private sector leaders; an engaging round of panels about threats and programs from all levels of government; and more. Details and a link to register will be released in the coming weeks.

For more information about resources available from the MassCyberCenter, visit <u>masscybercenter.org</u>.

Meg Speranza is resiliency program manager at the MassCyberCenter.



Beckwith addresses municipal leagues at NLC event

MMA Executive Director Geoff Beckwith reflects on his more than three decades of leading the MMA during the National League of Cities 2023 State League Staff Workshop on July 13 in Boston. To an audience of staff members from state municipal leagues across the country, he said their work improves the lives of millions of people. "What really, really builds a happy life, and a happy organization, is having a mission, and contributing to that mission in a way that you know the impact is beyond yourself," he said. "You're helping other people. That's what you're doing."

Legislature considers extended producer responsibility

By Josie Ahlberg

The Legislature is considering several bills this session that would hold producers responsible for the end-of-life management of their products and packaging, a concept that could help local governments manage their increasing recycling and solid waste costs.

Thirty-three states have enacted extended producer responsibility laws, according to the <u>Product Stewardship Insti-</u> <u>tute</u>, a national nonprofit that supports EPR policies and programs. The institute says these laws have led to the launch of responsible post-consumer management programs for products such as paint, mattresses, carpets and electronics.

In a <u>resolution</u> approved at its Annual Business Meeting in 2019, the MMA declared its support for EPR for products including mattresses, paint and electronics. The resolution noted ongoing challenges to the operation of municipal waste management and recycling programs, and sought to advance the development of policy and advocacy strategies to enhance waste reduction, diversion, recycling and disposal options for municipalities.

In June, the MMA <u>testified before the</u> Joint Committee on Environment and <u>Natural Resources</u> supporting bills to establish EPR for paint, mattresses, packaging materials and electronic products. The bills included H. 823, S. 551 and S. 542 on paint recycling, H. 881, H. 916 and S. 513 on mattress recycling, H. 779, S. 572 and S. 471 on packaging stewardship, and H. 871 and S. 554 on electronic product recycling.

The MMA also testified in support of H. 767 and S. 525 on single-use plastics and H. 784 and S. 447 on plastic bag reduction.

The MMA contends that this slate of bills would help to address the rising costs for recycling services, capture more recyclable materials, and ensure that proper procedures are followed. Targeting specific materials — such as those that take significant space in landfills, contain elements that can be reused, or get easily caught in processing machinery — would help the complex network of waste management operating statewide.

Bottle bill

Lawmakers are also considering proposals to strengthen and update the state's 40-year-old bottle return law.

At recent hearings before the Joint Committee on Telecommunications, Utilities and Energy, the <u>MMA</u> <u>testified in support</u> of two bills that would <u>expand the bottle bill</u>. The bills, S. 3690 and S. 2104, would expand the range of containers eligible for deposits and

redemption, and increase the bottle deposit from five cents to 10 cents.

Many now-common containers, such as water bottles, sports drinks and miniature alcohol bottles, are not covered by the current statute. An updated bottle bill could boost the recycling rate of beverage containers from the current 42% to as much as 95%, according to a 2022



MMA Legislative Analyst Josie Ahlberg, right, and Marlborough City Council President Michael Ossing, chair of the MMA Policy Committee on Energy and the Environment, testify about bills related to extended producer responsibility during a June 14 hearing of the Joint Committee on Environment and Natural Resources.

report from Reloop.

The EPR and bottle bills await further action from the Joint Committee on Environment and Natural Resources and the Joint Committee on Telecommunications, Utilities and Energy.



Rausch, Cahill discuss energy and the environment

During the July 12 meeting of the MMA Policy Committee on Energy and the Environment, Rep. Daniel Cahill, left, and Sen. Rebecca Rausch, chairs of the Joint Committee on Environment and Natural Resources, explain how bills move through their committee and discuss effective advocacy strategies for municipal leaders who reach out to them. MMA members also heard from Sen. Cynthia Creem, who appeared remotely to provide an update on a municipal reforestation bill (S. 452).

Gov. announces 'green bank' dedicated to housing

On June 13, Gov. Maura Healey announced the launch of the first "green bank" in the country dedicated to affordable housing.

She said the Massachusetts Community Climate Bank, seeded with \$50 million in state funds from the Department of Environmental Protection, is designed to boost investment in efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from the building sector.

A primary goal is to attract private sector capital and federal funds available under the Inflation Reduction Act to finance building retrofits aligned with the state's long-term climate objectives, as well as construction of decarbonized buildings.

The governor said the bank will focus on the affordable housing market, where residents bear a disproportionate burden in energy costs and climate impacts, to promote an equitable energy transition and to meet the needs of environmental justice populations. Over time, she said, the bank will diversify investments to include other decarbonization measures that benefit communities.

The climate bank is located within <u>MassHousing</u>, the state's affordable housing finance and investment bank, and will work in partnership with the <u>Massachusetts Clean Energy Center</u> and <u>MassDevelopment</u>. The governor said the collaboration will ensure that each entity's capabilities are leveraged to support the identification, development, financing and execution of clean energy projects.

"The Massachusetts Community Climate Bank will be our financial engine for moving forward on our climate goals, relieving the pressure of high housing costs, and creating good jobs and healthier communities," Healey said. "This first-of-its kind initiative is going to make our state more competitive,



Gov. Maura Healey, right, announces the creation of the Massachusetts Community Climate Bank at the State House on June 13. Standing directly behind Healey is Melissa Hoffer, the state's climate chief. (Photo courtesy Joshua Qualls/Governor's Press Office)

affordable and equitable."

Lt. Gov. Kim Driscoll said the climate bank "can support deep energy retrofits and investments in energy efficiency technologies, eliminating emissions and cutting residents' energy costs for years to come."

The administration said the program can help nonprofit developers access capital that makes net-zero development possible, and can help the state rehabilitate and retrofit older affordable housing that's in need of repair by getting access to new federal climate funds.

Low- to moderate-income residents tend to pay a disproportionate share of their income on energy costs, have less control of their residences, and have fewer resources to invest in measures that will reduce their emissions and control their energy bills. The climate bank expects to provide low-cost capital and innovative deal structures to integrate clean energy and efficient technologies into affordable housing development and preservation and mortgage products for home improvements.

The climate bank will integrate clean energy into MassHousing's lending for affordable housing, create programs for similar affordable housing projects, and engage capital markets more broadly to invest in affordable housing decarbonization.

The program will finance heat pumps, efficiency upgrades to building envelopes, heat pump water heaters, high-efficiency appliances, and solar panels as a part of the same process as other affordable housing renovation measures.

The climate bank is intended to position Massachu-

setts to compete for funding from the National Clean Investment Fund under the Inflation Reduction Act and to anchor engagement with other federal finance opportunities, such as the U.S. Department of Energy's Loan Program Office.

In Massachusetts, the building sector is responsible for more than a quarter of total greenhouse gas emissions. Unlike cars, buildings last for decades, making the need to retrofit existing buildings especially important to achieve statewide decarbonization goals. According to the 2050 Massachusetts Roadmap report, more than 80% of the buildings that will exist in 2050 are already built.

The state's Clean Energy and Climate Plan calls for a 49% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from residential heating by 2030, and a 95% reduction by 2050.

On the first full day of her administration, Healey signed an <u>Executive Order</u> creating an Office of Climate Innovation and Resilience and establishing the cabinet-level position of climate chief, to which she has appointed Melissa Hoffer.

Products & Services Listings available to Partnership Program members

Members of the <u>MMA Partnership</u> <u>Program</u> are eligible to be listed in the Mass Municipal Data Hub's <u>Products &</u> <u>Services Listings</u>, which includes companies, associations and agencies that service municipalities. The listings, found via the <u>MMA home</u> page, help members find companies that provide a service or product for their community.

MMA members are welcome to let their current suppliers know of this

opportunity, if they aren't already listed, and have them contact MMA Advertising and Trade Show Manager Karen LaPointe at klapointe@mma.org or 617-426-7272, ext. 154, for more information.

Recruitment webinar covers key points of series

By Lily Rancatore

An MMA "Reframing Recruitment" webinar on June 14 featured speakers from previous webinars and workshops in the series, covering topics including innovative hiring strategies, vacancies and advertising, interviewing, and onboarding.

Jen Breaker, the assistant town manager and communications director in Danvers, began by discussing the goal of the four-part "Reframing Recruitment" series: to offer timely hiring strategies during a global labor shortage that became more apparent since the COVID pandemic.

Caitlyn Julius, the assistant human resources director in Springfield, summarized the importance of being proactive, rather than reactive, in municipal hiring. She also encouraged appointed and



Auditor meets with mayors

At the June 28 meeting of the Massachusetts Mayors' Association, Auditor Diana DiZoglio speaks about issues affecting municipal leaders, including unfunded mandates, and the work the auditor's office has done in recent years to support communities, including a 2021 report calling for greater investment in western Massachusetts and a 2020 report highlighting shortcomings in the payment-in-lieu-of-taxes program. DiZoglio also presented MMA Executive Director Geoff Beckwith with a citation to recognize his more than three decades leading the MMA and serving the needs of cities and towns.

elected officials to reframe local government as a business.

Salem Human Resources Director Lisa Cammarata shared highlights from the first Reframing Recruitment session, which took place during the MMA Annual Meeting in January. She encouraged attendees to think outside the box in their approach by using graphic ads, offering sign-on or recruitment bonuses, and hanging flyers on bulletin boards.

Recruitment is no longer a "check the box" item, Cammarata said. It needs to be prioritized 24/7.

Shrewsbury Human Resources Director Kristina Ordung summarized key takeaways from the March webinar, which focused on vacancies and advertising. She said it's important to create a staffing plan to proactively consider short- and long-term department needs. She said transparency is essential in recruitment and job ads, because it fosters positive relationships within the community.

Newton Human Resources Director Michelle Pizzi O'Brien summarized the April webinar, which focused on the interview process. She offered tips for reviewing applications, building an interview panel, selecting the best questions for prospective candidates, and creating a positive candidate experience. O'Brien also discussed how to conduct an effective interview and tailor the process according to the municipality's current vacancies and community needs.

Rachel Glisper, principal of Crossroads DEIB and vice president of GovHR, discussed the difference between orientation and onboarding, the topic of the May 17 webinar. Glisper said onboarding can be enormously beneficial to long-term employee retention, although each new employee is unique and will have individual needs. She stressed the importance of building a process that contains some "rinse and repeat" elements to avoid reinventing the wheel



Jen Breaker, assistant town manager and communications director in Danvers, speaks during the final "Reframing Recruitment" webinar on June 14.

with each new hire, like color-coding paperwork.

During a question and answer session, panelists discussed optimizing hiring with limited resources, streamlining the onboarding process, and advocating for a recruitment budget increase. Inquiries about centralizing recruitment under human resources, allocating funds for sign-on bonuses, and advertising salary ranges for positions were also addressed.

Breaker and Julius led the four "Reframing Recruitment" sessions, and were joined by a special guest for each.

- <u>View the June 14 Reframing</u> <u>Recruitment webinar</u>
- Previous sessions:
- <u>"Reframing Recruitment: What</u> <u>Happens After the Offer,"</u> May 17
- <u>"Reframing Recruitment: The</u> <u>Interview Process,"</u> April 19
- <u>"Reframing Recruitment: Setting the</u> <u>Table – Vacancies and Advertising,"</u> March 15
- <u>"Reframing Recruitment: Advancing Municipal Hiring Strategies,"</u> held during the MMA Annual Meeting in January

USDOT offers Reconnecting Communities grants

By Adrienne Núñez

The U.S. Department of Transportation announced on July 5 that up to \$3.16 billion is available for planning and construction projects through the <u>Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods</u> discretionary grant program.

In an effort to streamline the grant application process, the RCN Notice of Funding Opportunity combines two major grants with shared characteristics: the Reconnecting Communities Pilot and the Neighborhood Access and Equity programs.

Established by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, the Reconnecting Communities Pilot program aims to reconnect communities that have been cut off from economic development opportunities due to previous transportation infrastructure projects. The program will fund planning and capital construction grants for projects that will restore community connectivity by removing, retrofitting, mitigating or replacing divisive transportation infrastructure.

The Neighborhood Access and Equity discretionary grant program was created by the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022. The program funds projects that improve walkability, safety and affordable transportation access, and address existing transportation facilities that create barriers to community connectivity or negative impacts on the human or natural environment. It also provides funding for planning and capacity building activities in disadvantaged or underserved communities as well as funding for technical assistance to units of local government to facilitate efficient and effective contracting, design and project delivery and to build capacity for delivering surface transportation projects.

The Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods program is offering three grant types: Community Planning Grants, Capital Construction Grants, and Regional Partnerships Challenge Grants.

Community Planning Grants will award funding for planning activities for future construction projects and allow for innovative community planning to address localized transportation challenges. Up to \$50 million of RCP funds

.....

The pilot program aims to reconnect communities that have been cut off from economic development opportunities due to previous transportation infrastructure projects.

and \$135 million of NAE funds will be awarded for eligible community planning activities.

Capital Construction Grants will award funding for projects to remove, retrofit, mitigate or replace existing eligible dividing transportation facilities with new facilities that reconnect communities; mitigate a burdening transportation facility that is a source of air pollution, noise, stormwater, heat, or other burdens; or implement a strategy to reduce environmental harm and/or improve access through transportation improvements. Up to \$148 million of RCP funds and \$2.57 billion of NAE funds will be awarded for eligible construction activities.

Regional Partnerships Challenge Grants will award funding to a project led by two or more eligible applicants to address a persistent regional challenge related to equitable access and mobility. Eligible activities for Regional Partnerships Challenge Grants are the same as those listed under Capital Construction and Community Planning Grants, but they must have a regional focus, and clearly demonstrate regional coordination, including leveraging of local, state, and federal resources and policies. Up to \$450 million of NAE funds will be awarded.

State, local and tribal governments, metropolitan planning organizations, nonprofits, and partnerships are eligible to apply, though the RCP and NAE programs have different rules for determining applicant eligibility. Disadvantaged or underserved communities will be prioritized.

The Notice of Funding Opportunity is available on <u>Grants.gov</u>. Applications are due by Sept. 28 via Valid Eval through the following links:

- Community Planning Grants: <u>usg.</u> <u>valideval.com/teams/rcn_planning/</u> <u>signup</u>
- Capital Construction Grants: <u>usg.valideval.com/teams/rcn</u> <u>captialconstruction/signup</u>

Questions may be directed to reconnectingcommunities@dot.gov. ●



Mayor Wu addresses state league staff

Boston Mayor Michelle Wu speaks during the National League of Cities State League Staff Workshop on July 14 in Boston, where she discussed the importance of building trust and investing in "social infrastructure" that helps support a sense of belonging for residents.

Clean school bus grants available to districts, contractors

U.S. Sen. Elizabeth Warren is urging all Massachusetts cities, towns and school districts "to take full advantage of newly available federal grants to clean up our school bus fleets."

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is accepting applications through Aug. 22 for the second year of the <u>Clean School Bus program</u>, which provides grant funding to replace existing internal-combustion engine school buses with electric, propane or compressed natural gas buses, as well as the purchase of electric vehicle supply equipment infrastructure and installations.

State and local governmental entities that provide bus service, including public school districts, eligible contractors, nonprofit school transportation associations, and tribal organizations, are eligible to apply.

In a June 27 letter to the MMA and the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents, Sen. Warren noted that "most of the iconic yellow school buses across America still operate on diesel fuel," emitting air pollutants that are particularly harmful to children impacting their learning, development and health — while contributing to the climate crisis.

"The benefits of electrifying our school bus fleet are extraordinary," she wrote. "Replacing a single diesel bus with an



The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is accepting applications through Aug. 22 for grants to replace internalcombustion engine school buses with cleaner alternatives, and to pay for electric vehicle supply equipment infrastructure and installations.

electric one can reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 54,000 pounds each year — as good as replacing nearly six passenger vehicles. Electrification eliminates the health risk from air pollution to drivers, children riding the bus, and the communities through which they pass."

The EPA expects to award approximately \$400 million in competitive grant funding through the Clean School Bus program's second year of grants, with \$27 million available to EPA Region 1 (New England).

Funded through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, the Clean School Bus program is intended to reduce harmful emissions through the replacement of existing school buses with low- and zero-emission buses. Half of the available funding is dedicated to zero-emission buses, and half is dedicated to clean buses.

Sen. Warren points out that communities of color are disproportionately exposed to risks associated with diesel buses, and the EPA is prioritizing applications that "will replace buses serving high-need local education agencies."

Applications are being accepted via <u>Grants.gov</u>. Questions may be sent to cleanschoolbus@epa.gov with "Clean School Bus NOFO Question" in the subject line of the email. The deadline for submitting questions is Aug. 9.

Last fall, the Biden-Harris administration announced the first recipients of the EPA's Clean School Bus Program rebate competition, and five Massachusetts school districts secured \$29.5 million in rebates for the purchase of a total of 75 new, clean electric school buses.

The Clean School Bus program also plans to open an additional rebates opportunity later this year, which funds similar activities but has a shorter online application form and lottery selection process.

• <u>View U.S. Sen. Elizabeth Warren's</u> <u>letter about the Clean School Bus</u> <u>Program</u>

MMA opens booth selection for 2024 Trade Show

The MMA has opened booth selection for the 2024 Annual Meeting & Trade Show, to be held on Jan. 19 and 20, 2024, at the Hynes Convention Center in Boston.

Companies, nonprofits and government agencies looking to connect with MMA members by exhibiting can visit the <u>2024 MMA Trade Show web page</u> for more information, including the contract for exhibit space, a current exhibit hall floor plan, and a list of 2023 exhibitors.

As contracts are received, the MMA will add exhibitor names to the 2024 exhibitor list (with a link to their website) and add them to the exhibit hall floor plan.

Sponsorship opportunities will also be available; information will be available

in the coming weeks.

MMA members are encouraged to talk with companies they currently do business with about the MMA Trade Show, which is a great opportunity to meet other MMA members.

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

For more information about the conference, visit <u>www.mma.org/annual-meet-</u> <u>ing</u>. Details about the 2024 event will



The MMA's annual Trade Show provides a great opportunity for companies, nonprofits and government agencies to connect with MMA members.

begin to appear in September.

– Karen LaPointe

Administration announces \$11.6M in grants for trails

On June 15 in Billerica, Healey-Driscoll administration officials announced \$11.6 million in funding through the <u>MassTrails Grant Program</u> to support 68 trail improvement projects across the state.

The administration said the projects will expand and connect the state's network of off-road, shared-use pathways and trails to use for recreation, exercise, and environmentally friendly commuting.

The MassTrails Grant

Program provides matching grants, technical assistance and resources to individuals, municipalities, nonprofits, and other public entities for the design, construction and maintenance of diverse, high-quality trails, including hiking trails, bikeways, and shared-use paths.

This year's projects will have an impact on more than 100 communities, helping to develop new multi-use trails, expand accessibility, create connections between towns and existing trails, support the construction of boardwalks and bridges, design and install new signage, and acquire new land for trails.

The communities receiving funding will provide a proposed match totalling nearly \$16 million.

This year's MassTrails Grant projects will impact the following municipalities: Abington, Amherst, Andover, Ashburnham, Ashfield, Athol, Avon, Barnstable, Becket, Bellingham, Berkshire County, Billerica, Boston, Bridgewater, Brimfield, Buckland, Carver, Charlemont, Chatham, Chelsea, Clinton, Conway, Dalton, Deerfield, Dighton, Dudley, Gardner, Goshen, Granby, Groton, Hardwick, Haverhill, Hawley, Holden, Hudson, Lawrence, Lee, Lennox, Littleton, Lunenburg, Lynnfield, Malden, Marlborough, Medford, Melrose, Middleborough, Milton, Newburyport, Otis, Oxford, Pittsfield, Plainfield, Princeton, Raynham, Royalston, Sandwich, Savoy, Sheffield, Shelburne, South Hadley, Southampton, Spencer, Stoneham, Sturbridge, Sudbury, Taunton, Townsend,



Lt. Gov. Kim Driscoll, right, joined by Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Rebecca Tepper and Department of Conservation and Recreation Commissioner Brian Arrigo, announces the award of \$11.6 million in MassTrails grants on June 14 in Billerica. (Photo courtesy DCR)

> Waltham, Wareham, Washington, Westborough, Whately, Williamsburg, Winchendon, Winchester, Windsor, Woburn, and Worcester.

Billerica is receiving \$472,000 for the design, engineering and permitting of the Yankee Doodle Bike Path, a regionally significant non-motorized transportation connection between the Minuteman Bikeway in Bedford and the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail in Lowell.

Visit the <u>MassTrails Grants webpage</u>

for a complete list and brief description of each of the 68 projects receiving funding.

The MassTrails Grant Program, administered by the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation, is funded through two sources: the DCR capital budget and the Federal Highway Administration's Recreational Trails Program grants, managed at the state level by the Massachusetts Department of Transportation.

The grants announcement was made by Lt. Gov. Kim Driscoll, Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Rebecca Tepper, Department of Conservation and Recreation Commissioner Brian Arrigo, Highway Administrator Jonathan Gulliver, and other state and local officials.

On May 30, the MassDOT announced a new, interactive <u>Priority Trails Network</u> <u>Vision Map for statewide shared-use</u> <u>paths</u>. The map provides a centralized inventory of key rail trail projects that will help support an envisioned comprehensive statewide transportation trail network. It identifies approximately 320 miles of trails that have been constructed and are in use, 24 trails that are currently under construction, and another 60 miles of proposed paths that have been funded but not yet constructed. The map also lists priority shareduse path project locations that either have been proposed for consideration or will be pursued for funding and development to help address key gaps in the network.



MMA members speak at NLC conference

Jillian Harvey, Arlington's director of diversity, equity and inclusion, gives a presentation — "Becoming an Agent of Change: Bridging Perspectives and Building an Interconnected Staff" on July 14 during the final day of the National League of Cities 2023 State League Staff Workshop in Boston. Harvey was one of several MMA members who participated in the conference. Earlier in the day, Boston Mayor Michelle Wu, Needham Town Manager Kate Fitzpatrick and Westwood Assistant Town Administrator Molly Kean spoke during the conference's general session, which was focused on resilience and happiness at work.

Conference explores resilience for cities, towns

By Adrienne Núñez

The 2023 Resilient Cities Summit, held June 6 through 8 in Falmouth, brought together municipal officials, advocates and nationally recognized experts in urban development, design, finance and infrastructure to discuss how cities and towns can better prepare for climate risks and work toward a more resilient future.

Co-hosted by the National League of Cities, the Urban Land Institute, ULI Boston/New England, and the MMA, the event explored decision making regarding climate adaptation while fostering dialogue and learning across municipal and departmental boundaries. The summit aimed to provide access to people, tools and resources that would be helpful to advance resilience in their communities. Workshops offered information, motivation and resources to pursue equitable, resilient projects and processes.

Hadley-based consultant Susanne Moser addressed building "just resilience" by offering practical steps to approach resilience work within and among communities. She addressed common challenges encountered in the field, including reaching a common understanding of resilience, envisioning the transformation to a resilient community, and developing indicators and metrics to track progress.



Melissa Hoffer, the state's climate chief, discusses making the most of once-ina-generation federal funding during the 2023 Resilient Cities Summit in Falmouth on June 8.

Sanjay Seth, chief of staff at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 1, led an interactive discussion to explore why officials engage in climate resilience work, what concerns they had, and what fuels hope.

"Being a climate resilience practitioner is not only about the tension between hope, concern and despair," he said, "but supporting each other in navigating that."

Workshops touched on the following topics:

- Techniques and importance of collaboration
- Leveraging land use policy for resilient outcomes
- Public engagement
- Equity and justice



Julie Wormser, a senior policy adviser at the Mystic River Collaborative, discusses collaborative regional policy development during a June 7 session of the 2023 Resilient Cities Summit in Falmouth.

- Financing options and opportunities
- Use of data to support planning and action

Workshop presenters included Massachusetts Climate Chief Melissa Hoffer; Allison Rogers, director for environmental justice public engagement at the White House Council on Environmental Quality; Julie Wormser, a senior policy adviser at the Mystic River Collaborative; and Aubrey Germ, a climate resilience planner for the city of Baltimore.

Attendees were encouraged to observe local projects through self-guided tours of the <u>Waquoit Bay National Estuarine</u> <u>Research Reserve</u> in Falmouth and the Langone Park and Puopolo Playground in Boston's North End.

MMHR elects officers and directors for FY24

During its Annual Business Meeting on June 15 in Burlington, Massachusetts Municipal Human Resources elected Southborough Assistant Town Administrator Vanessa Hale as the association's chair for fiscal 2024.

The members also elected the following officers, effective July 1:

Vice chair: Dolores Hamilton, assistant town administrator, Stow

Treasurer: Molly Kean, assistant town administrator/human resources director, Westwood

Secretary: Jen Breaker, assistant town manager and communications director, Danvers

Members re-elected the following direc-



Vanessa Hale

tors for three-year terms:

- Marie Buckner, human resources director, Sandwich
- Dolores Hamilton

The following directors are in the midst of their three-year terms:

Dolores Hamilton

• Stephanie Duggan, human resources

manager, Maynard

- Joanne Faust, human resources director, Burlington
- Vanessa Hale
- Molly Kean

Association members recognized Hamilton for her service as chair for the past four years, including during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The MMHR Annual Meeting also featured sessions about navigating difficult conversations and prioritizing workplace well-being for human resources professionals.

For more information about the MMHR, visit the group's web page. ●

MMA-Suffolk certificate program holds graduation

By Kate Evarts

On June 27, the MMA and Suffolk University graduated the 19th and 20th classes of the Certificate in Local Government Leadership and Management program.

At a ceremony in Boston, Lt. Gov. Kim Driscoll, the graduation keynote speaker, addressed 37 graduates who attended certificate programs in Dartmouth and Grafton.

North Andover Deputy Town Manager Denise Casey and Natick Police Chief Jim Hicks addressed the graduates as faculty speakers. The student speakers were Danvers Equity and Inclusion Director Jasmine Ramón, Carver Town Planner Thomas Bott, and Medfield Land Use and Planning Director Maria De La Fuente.

Nearly 500 municipal officials have graduated from the MMA-Suffolk certificate program since its inception in 2011.

The program is designed for municipal

SUFFOLK continued on 28



Jasmine Ramón, the director of equity and inclusion in Danvers, speaks to her fellow graduates about the challenges of going through the program, and working in government, as a person of color. "It's not always easy for me to be here, with my last name, with my title, in this skin," said Ramón, who is the daughter of a Haitian immigrant. "While this problem exists everywhere, it is especially prevalent in state and local government, a world that is overwhelmingly white." She said that she and her fellow graduates have a responsibility to make their communities more inclusive and welcoming, and to see the limitations in their own perspectives and consider experiences different from their own when making decisions. "Consider how it will affect your most marginalized constituent," she said, "and start there."



Graduates from the Dartmouth class of the MMA-Suffolk Certificate in Local Government Leadership and Management program gather during the graduation ceremony on June 27.



Graduates from the Grafton class of the MMA-Suffolk Certificate in Local Government Leadership and Management program gather during the graduation ceremony on June 27.

Lt. Gov Kim Driscoll congratulates graduates during the June 27 ceremony at Suffolk University. Driscoll said, "Local government is where it's at," and it makes a profound impact in people's lives. She said municipalities depend on the hard work, professionalism and dedication to improvement demonstrated by municipal officials and employees. "We need you," she said. "We need your talent, your resilience, your experiences and your perspective."



STAM hosts state officials, elects officers at meeting

By Shaun Suhoski

Small Town Administrators of Massachusetts held its Annual Meeting on June 15 in Boylston to hear from state officials on a variety of topics and to elect a new leadership team.

State Auditor Diana DiZoglio outlined several priorities for her office, including support for issues of rural equity related to school funding and Chapter 90 formulas, reforms to the paymentsin-lieu-of-taxes program, and the creation of an authority to support munici-

the office.



Inspector General Jeff Shapiro gave an overview on his office's efforts to prevent "waste, fraud and abuse" of public funds as well as efforts to make the <u>Massachusetts Certified Public Purchas-</u> <u>ing Official</u> designation process more affordable to communities through a program to subsidize the training of one person per community to achieve the credential.

MMA Legislative Director Dave Koffman gave an update on the status of the state budget for fiscal 2024, as well as other legislative matters, while Chris Wilcock of the <u>Division of Local Services</u> discussed the duties and responsibilities of municipal assessors. Wilcock noted the dramatic improvements in the data and tools on the DLS website, particularly the <u>Municipal Finance Training and Resource Center</u>.

Anne Gobi, the state's new director of rural affairs, stopped by the meeting to greet members and provide her contact information.

Weston Town Manager Leon Gaumond, Carlisle Town Administrator Ryan McLane, Hardwick Town Administrator Nicole Parker, and former Barre Town



Athol Town Manager Shaun Suhoski, left, State Auditor Diana DiZoglio, center, and Stow Town Administrator Denise Dembkoski gather during the Small Town Administrators of Massachusetts annual meeting on June 15 in Boylston. During the meeting, DiZoglio outlined her priorities affecting rural communities, and STAM elected Dembkoski as its new president, to succeed Suhoski.

> Administrator Jessica Sizer (now at the Division of Local Services) reprised their well-attended MMA Annual Meeting presentation on regionalization of services, including the need for cooperation among the parties without micro-management, having clear written agreements, engaging all stakeholders, and not being afraid to try a new approach whether it is embraced or not.

In official business, STAM elected Stow Town Administrator Denise Dembkoski as its new president, to succeed Athol Town Manager Shaun Suhoski.

Members also elected:

- Carlisle Town Administrator Ryan McLane as vice president
- Brookfield Town Administrator Kelli Robbins as treasurer
- Ashfield Town Administrator Paul McLatchy III as secretary

Former STAM Chair Andrea Llamas of Northfield presented STAM's professional certification to Suhoski and McLane, just the ninth and 10th STAM members to be so recognized.

The group also adopted a series of bylaw changes and its first-ever set of legislative priorities, namely ensuring rural equity through:

- Inclusion of a "rural factor" in state programs and grants
- Reforming the payment-in-lieu-of-

taxes formula

- Provision of funding and technical assistance to comply with the Votes Act
- Reforming the Chapter 90 formula and increasing total funding
- Creation of a municipal building assistance authority
- More engagement with smaller community leaders about hybrid and remote meeting requirements

STAM is a professional organization of nearly 100 chief administrative officials from communities across Massachusetts of fewer than 12,000 residents.



HR officials examine well-being in the workplace

Sarah Mann, principal and connector-inchief at Executive & Leadership Coaching, leads a training on workplace well-being during the Massachusetts Municipal Human Resources Annual Meeting on June 15 in Burlington. She said everyone has a unique approach to well-being.

MassDOT mounts PR campaign about Sumner Tunnel

At the June 13 meeting of the Local Government Advisory Commission, Transportation Secretary and CEO Gina Fiandaca discussed plans to close the Sumner Tunnel this summer and asked local officials to help get the word out about the closure as well as mitigation plans.

Built in the 1930s as the first traffic tunnel in Massachusetts, the mile-long <u>Sumner Tunnel</u> (Route 1A South) runs parallel to the Callahan Tunnel under Boston Harbor and serves as a major artery connecting East Boston and Logan International Airport to Boston and Interstate 93. The Massachusetts Department of Transportation will close the tunnel from July 5 through Aug. 31, and again next summer, for major restoration work. The MassDOT has released a comprehensive <u>Sumner Tunnel Mitigation Plan</u> to address travel impacts and provide cost-effective, efficient alternative transportation options for residents and visitors. The agency encourages travelers to "Ditch the Drive" and use alternative means of travel.

Travelers can use <u>MassDOT 511</u> to review traffic conditions and the <u>MBTA's</u> <u>Trip Planner</u> to plan public transit trips.

For more information, visit <u>Sumner</u> <u>Tunnel Restoration: Project Details and</u> <u>Closure Schedule</u>.

– John Ouellette



During the June 13 meeting of the Local Government Advisory Commission at the State House, Transportation Secretary and CEO Gina Fiandaca discusses traffic mitigation plans for the closure of the Sumner Tunnel for restoration work.

MMA seeks help with annual database updates

For those who have not yet responded, the MMA is asking local leaders for help to ensure that the association has complete and accurate personnel information for every community.

The MMA is continuing the annual process of updating city and town information for its database, in order to reach as many municipal officials as possible with all of the benefits of MMA membership – including access to in-person events, webinars, publications including The Beacon, and the MMA Annual Meeting & Trade Show every January in Boston.

The MMA has been sending emails to chief municipal officials with the necessary information for the CMO or a designated staff member to update their community's information using a convenient, online form.

The form should take only a few minutes to update and submit. It is pre-populated with personnel information that the MMA currently has on file — names of local officials, job titles, phone numbers and email addresses — so only updates and corrections are needed.

"You and your colleagues perform such vital work for your community, and we at the MMA want to support you every step of the way," said MMA Deputy Executive Director Katie McCue. "Having this information allows us to serve you better, and to provide you with all of the resources we can to help you serve your community." For questions, technical issues or to change a community designee, contact Database@mma.org.



LGAC discusses climate

During the June 13 meeting of the Local Government Advisory Commission at the State House, Easthampton Mayor Nicole LaChapelle thanks the Healey-Driscoll administration for creating the new Massachusetts Community Climate Bank, the nation's first "green bank" dedicated to affordable housing. She also commended the administration on its climate focus generally, including the appointment of Melissa Hoffer, the first state climate chief in the country. "Thank you so much for following through with the commitment."

Around the Commonwealth

Nantucket

With override, town boosts affordable housing efforts

Faced with an increasingly dire housing shortage, the town of Nantucket has invested more than \$67 million in housing efforts in recent years, approved an override for future projects, and partnered with developers to bring additional housing to the island.

In May, Town Meeting and voters at the polls approved a \$6.5 million override to fund affordable housing initiatives. The annual funds will add to the nearly \$70 million Nantucket has already dedicated for housing, through a combination of budget allocations, debt exclusions and borrowing authorizations. The override will cost the owner of an average yearround property (currently \$1.69 million) another \$211 per year, factoring in a residential exemption.

Town officials say the housing situation has reached a crisis point, where soaring real estate prices are driving out longtime residents and making it increasingly difficult for people to live year-round or work in the island community of 14,000. In May, the median sale price for a Nantucket home was \$4.7 million, according to Realtor.com, while the nonprofit Housing Nantucket estimates that more than half of the island's yearround residents struggle to pay housing costs.

"You just can't live here and not be aware of, and affected by, the housing issue in some way," said Tucker Holland, Nantucket's housing director.

The \$67 million approved before this spring's votes is ultimately expected to produce about 236 housing units. Holland said 38 households are under new roofs so far, with another 22 expected to get housing this fall.

Since fiscal 2020, the town has bought several lots and started issuing requests for proposals from developers; used the Community Preservation Committee fund to secure two \$5 million borrowings; helped builders with financing to speed up development; and taken part in affordability buydowns for deed



Nantucket is actively working to increase its housing stock.

restrictions to lower prices for some new houses.

Up to this point, Nantucket has focused largely on rental housing, Holland said, but the override money will allow for more home ownership opportunities. Brooke Mohr, a member of Nantucket's Select Board and the Affordable Housing Trust, said she sees numerous possibilities for the new funds, including programs to incentivize deed restrictions requiring year-round occupancy and possibly more affordable pricing. The town is forming a working group to examine possible deed restrictions, she said, and will analyze data to better understand specific housing needs and supply.

"It's setting aside enough housing stock that we have a balance of visitor bedrooms to worker and community resident bedrooms that is good for the economy, good for the sustainability and the livelihood of the community, and really protects the visitor experience because they are actually to serve them when they come here," Mohr said. "So that's the long-term goal."

Mohr and Holland agree that the housing problem affects municipal operations and every part of Nantucket life. Town government has several department heads retiring this year, and schoolchildren potentially face larger class sizes next fall due to staffing shortages. Nearly a third of the town's positions turned over last year, Mohr said. Around town, restaurants can't open daily because of staffing shortages, and even long-time residents are leaving for good, he said. "Those are the people who coach our kids, volunteer on nonprofit boards," Mohr said. "They're the lifeblood of the community, and they're giving up. It's just really sad."

For years, the town has also sought legislative support for a real estate transfer tax to support further housing initiatives. Those efforts haven't yet succeeded, but Nantucket officials note that the idea is gaining momentum among other communities. Until that happens, they said, Nantucket must work to solve its own housing problem.

"We don't have a choice here," Mohr said. "We're an island."

– Jennifer Kavanaugh

Amherst

Town completes comprehensive solar assessment

The town of Amherst recently completed a townwide <u>solar assess-</u> <u>ment</u> as a part of an effort to reach carbon neutrality by 2050. As a result, the town now has a mapping tool that shows where



solar is feasible for the town, as well as for businesses and residents who may be interested in solar installation in the future.

The town's Energy and Climate Action Committee had identified renewable energy development as a major pathway toward meeting the carbon neutrality goals set in its Climate Action, Adaptation and Resilience Plan. The town has also formed a Solar Bylaw Working Group.

"The town is wanting to move toward electrification of municipal buildings and will need to move toward renewable energy sources to reduce carbon," said Sustainability Director Stephanie Ciccarello.

"We want more options for local solar and microgrid development," she said.

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Around the Commonwealth

COMMONWEALTH

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"So where in town is a good fit for those options? What are our potential development opportunities for solar?"

The assessment, done in partnership with GZA GeoEnvironmental, included extensive public engagement, with a survey and virtual and in-person feedback sessions, as well as a feature on the town's online public engagement platform, EngageAmherst.com.

The new solar map shows where projects could be sited, including on residential and private properties, so that the town can support property owners in installing solar. The map excludes any areas that would not be feasible for solar installation, including land owned by area colleges and universities, land with conservation restrictions, and land under wetlands protections, as well as any parcels with logistical challenges. Areas that were not excluded are assigned a feasibility score.

"The really important thing is that our mapping tool is not definitive in that this is where solar can go," Ciccarello said. "It's about feasibility. These are areas that would be best, so maybe solar can go there, and these are the areas that would not work."

The final report contains an extensive look at feedback gathered from department heads and the community as a part of the Community Preference Assessment, with the goal of understanding opinions and sentiments regarding solar development.

"One of the important things that came from this process is the conversations that people have had within the community regarding solar development impacts on land use," Ciccarello said. "They are difficult conversations to have, but you have to have them because the community needs to decide what they would support moving forward."

– Meredith Gabrilska

Somerville

Harvard report highlights city's civic engagement



A recent study on Somerville's civic engagement activities published by the Harvard Kennedy School offers insights on citizen interaction at a time when local governments

seek new ways to engage residents and create a more civil environment for public discourse.

In May, Harvard's Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation published "Civic Engagement in Somerville: Joe Curtatone's Story of How Community Activism Powered a Remarkable Urban Renaissance," a <u>first-person</u> <u>account</u> by the former Somerville mayor about his experiences building civic engagement. Curtatone, who was mayor from 2004 to 2022, is a senior fellow at the Ash Center and president of the Northeast Clean Energy Council.

While the study focuses on the previous administration, Somerville Mayor Katjana Ballantyne said Somerville continues to seek broader participation. The city is working on its first participatory budgeting process, she said, and a recent survey, called Public Safety for All, garnered the city's highest and most diverse survey response rate ever, due to outreach. She emphasized the importance of learning from different approaches.

"The exchange of good ideas between cities is a powerful force for positive change, so if academic attention helps get the word out about Somerville's community engagement approaches, I'm glad we can contribute," Ballantyne said. "But it's also a reminder that we too need to continue to learn from other cities and our residents."

Harvard released the study soon after the Supreme Judicial Court ruled that the use of "civility restraints" at public meetings violates free speech rights. The ruling landed as public officials face increasing hostility from constituents and seek new strategies to engage the public in more constructive ways.

Curtatone has had a long academic association with Harvard, which teaches about his work in its government programs. For instance, the Bloomberg Harvard City Leadership Initiative teaches mayors about the Curtatone administration's data innovations. The Harvard study describes how officials helped bring the MBTA Green Line extension into Somerville, developed the Assembly Square area, and addressed childhood obesity through a Tufts University partnership. The Shape Up Somerville program became the model for First Lady Michelle Obama's "Let's Move!" fitness campaign.

Under Curtatone, Somerville created SomerStat, a program collecting data on everything from potholes to public health; established a 311 "One Call to City Hall" program for residents to report problems; engaged the public through the development of the Somer-Vision2040 comprehensive planning process; and created the SomerViva Office of Immigrant Affairs to improve outreach. Somerville also began holding twice-yearly community meetings in each of its seven wards to discuss city data and pressing issues, with participation from top-level department heads.

The Harvard study also describes a process of trial and error, and fine-tuning engagement efforts as engagement needs varied from issue to issue.

"That's why it's so important for politicians, academics and activists to understand that there is no one blueprint for building better civic engagement," Curtatone said.

That process continues today. Ballantyne said Somerville relies on numerous outreach measures, including community meetings, surveys, task forces, listening sessions, coffee hours, staff availability at events, emails, 311 calls, interactions with the city's multilingual Equity Outreach Team, and work with community partners. Ballantyne said her daily bus commute also gives her insights into constituents' needs.

COMMONWEALTH continued on 31

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SUFFOLK

Continued from page 23

employees looking to further their careers in municipal management. Classes cover topics including budgeting, human resources management, and strategic leadership. The five-course, graduate-level program is held over the course of 25 Fridays.

The application period ended April 30 for certificate programs scheduled to begin this fall in Barnstable and Danvers. Information about the 2024-2025 programs will be available in the fall, and applications will be available on Feb. 1 on the MMA website.

Welcoming Municipal Fellows

The MMA and Suffolk University are welcoming the third class of MMA-Suffolk Municipal Fellows.

The program, a partnership of the MMA and Suffolk that launched in 2021, offers significant financial support to municipal professionals to attend the master's in public administration program at Suffolk's Sawyer School of Business. The 2023-2024 MMA-Suffolk Municipal Fellows are:

- Medfield Land Use and Planning Director Maria De La Fuente
- Malden Housing and Community Development Deputy Director Alex Pratt

The fellows are both graduates of the MMA-Suffolk Certificate in Local Government Leadership and Management program, and were accepted into Suffolk's MPA

program. Each recipient received the support of the chief municipal official in their respective municipality to continue working while attending the program part-time.

Alex Pratt

Maria De La Fuente

The fellowship was highly competitive, and the MMA and Suffolk congratulate the recipients.

Municipal Finance Management Seminar

The MMA-Suffolk Municipal Finance Management Seminar will hold three programs in 2023.

The five-week program, held on Fridays via Zoom, provides an in-depth examination of Massachusetts municipal finance, including the operational aspects of finance structure, systems and processes in Massachusetts cities and towns.

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

Questions

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

Send us your Municipal Innovation Award entries!

- Has your community been working on a new and unique project?
- Do you have a solution to an issue faced by many municipalities?
- Has your community found a way to improve efficiency in providing municipal services?

If so, your community should enter the MMA's Innovation Award contest!

The Kenneth E. Pickard Municipal Innovation Award is sponsored each year by the MMA to recognize municipalities that have developed unique and creative projects or programs to increase the effectiveness of local government. It is named in honor of Kenneth E. Pickard, executive secretary of the Massachusetts League of Cities and Towns from 1969 to 1973. Any city or town that is a member of the MMA is eligible to apply. The awards will be presented at the MMA's Annual Meeting & Trade Show in January 2024.

Entries are due by Tuesday, Oct. 31.

HOW TO ENTER

- Fill out the summary sheet found on the MMA website (at <u>www.mma.org/mma-annual-meeting/awards</u>), including a description of the project, the groups and individuals involved, goals, strategy, results and funding structure.
- Have your community's chief municipal official sign the nomination form (found at <u>www.mma.org/mma-annual-</u> <u>meeting/awards</u>).
- Include any additional materials that would assist the judges in understanding the project or program. Feel free to send photos, brochures, maps, newspaper articles, videos, etc.

Entries MUST include a summary sheet and signed nomination form and must be submitted by email.

JUDGING

Entries are judged by the following criteria:

- Project originality or novelty
- Adaptability to other communities
- Cost-effectiveness
- Efficiency or productivity
- Improvement of a municipal service / administration / performance
- Consumer / community satisfaction

Please send one electronic copy to dyi@mma.org.

For more information, please contact Daniel Yi at the MMA: 617-426-7272, ext. 125, or dyi@mma.org. Nonprofit Locally based Member driven

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Serving Massachusetts' communities since 1982

Strategies for handling unemployment fraud

By Jennifer Ranz

The Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance recently issued an alert about another uptick in fraudulent claims, three years after many states were hit with an <u>initial</u> <u>spike</u> during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The DUA said it <u>approved only 12%</u> of claims from a recent batch of applications, while rejecting 25% and putting the remaining 63% on hold pending further review.

Forbes reported that unemployment benefits in Massachusetts are <u>among the</u> <u>highest</u> in the country. Until recently, when unemployment dropped below 5.1%, claimants were eligible for 30 weeks of benefits, compared to 26 weeks in other states. The maximum weekly benefit is \$1,015. These statistics make Massachusetts a more frequent target for fraud, according to Paul Scott, vice president of the Unemployment Tax Management Corporation, which provides unemployment services to many MIIA members as well as other Massachusetts employers.

Municipalities are disproportionately targeted (compared to other employers) for fraudulent claims because of the higher number of long-term, high wage-earning employees, such as police officers, firefighters and teachers, Scott said.

"Municipalities are a lucrative target, as benefits are calculated based on wages earned," he said. "Typically, criminals are using personal information they secured illegally over the past two decades not a recent breach — and they're often able to file false claims for municipal employees who are still employed there years later."

Federal-state complexity

As most municipalities in Massachusetts are "reimbursing" (self-insured) contributors to the unemployment system, they have been forced to reimburse the state for a claim before it has been fully vetted and processed, Scott said. The federal government urged employers to pay claims quickly during the pandemic in 2020, and while some claims have since been deemed invalid, claimants must first pay back the state DUA before municipal employers can recover fraudulent funds or funds paid in error. Scott said this further burdens municipalities, because the state is behind on processing appeals from 2021 and 2022.

MIIA has been working with the MMA's Legislative Division, the DUA and the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development to find a solution to help cities and towns while the DUA's system is being resolved, said Stan Corcoran, executive vice president of MIIA. "Through the effort of the MMA, and MIIA's relationships with interested parties in the state, we're focused on coming up with a better approach to addressing the high incidence of these fraud payments," he said. "Our goal is to collaborate with members and the DUA to mitigate and eliminate this fraud."

The <u>increase in claims</u> that kicked in during the pandemic, and the increase in both state and federal programs that impacted unemployment claim administration, have made the entire claims process more complex.

"There are five or more federal laws, including the CARES Act, that supplemented the state's unemployment system," said Nancy Fermano, a management consultant with MIIA. "As with all employers, municipalities saw a significant increase in the number of claims received."

While some municipalities had human resources staff who were experienced in navigating the system, others had fewer resources and more volume than staff could handle given the time constraints to make payments to claimants, she said.

Non-fraud claims

Due to the increased complexity and the nature of the reimbursable system,

■ MIIA continued on 31

MIIA opens application for Risk Management Grant Program

MIIA has opened the application period for its Risk Management Grant Program, now in its 22nd year, which helps MIIA members address safety and risk management priorities.

For fiscal 2024, MIIA is focusing on helping members mitigate property and cybersecurity losses, both of which are top contributors to municipal insurance claims.

Municipalities are encouraged to apply for grants that boost facilities

management and preventive maintenance efforts, especially water line inspections and replacement, and the installation of heating equipment and insulation. To address potential cybersecurity issues, municipalities can apply for funds to support cyber risk assessments, social engineering training, multi-factor authentication, and software patches and backup.

A total of \$1 million is available for the fiscal year, with a maximum grant amount for a municipality of \$10,000.

MIIA will begin its review of grant applications on Aug. 4. With a goal of streamlining the review process and enabling faster distribution of funds, MIIA is conducting biweekly grant review and approval until the funding is exhausted.

For more information, visit <u>MIIA's</u> grant information page.

– Jennifer Ranz

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Continued from page 2

members gave more weight to culture, e.g.), the project evaluated the effectiveness of all teams using a blend of four different lenses: the executive's evaluation of the team, the team leader's evaluation, the team members' evaluations, and objective sales and performance data measured against benchmarks.

Google conducted hundreds of interviews, explored its rich database of annual employee survey responses, and examined more than 250 attributes, including whether decisions were made by consensus, whether team members were introverted or extroverted, the seniority and tenure of members, team workload, individual performance of team members, expertise of team members, and whether they were located in the same office. (Spoiler alert: none of those attributes mattered.)

In 2015, Google revealed its findings, identifying the five key dynamics that set successful teams apart from others. They were:

1. Psychological safety: Team members felt safe to take risks and be vulnerable in front of each other.

2. Dependability: Team members got things done on time and met Google's high bar for excellence.

3. Structure and Clarity: Team members had clear roles, plans and goals.

4. Meaning: The work was personally important to team members.

5. Impact: Team members believed that their work mattered and created change.

Of these five characteristics, psychological safety was the most important, and by a wide margin. It was the foundation that held up and supported the other four dynamics of success.

<u>Google's re:Work website</u> offers much more detail; I'm sharing the highlights here.

There are so many management theories out there, so many how-to-do-it methodologies that are being peddled by experts and academics, but for me, this Google project breaks through the clutter and synthesizes multiple insights into one elegant and actionable framework.

It's no surprise that psychological safety

is a fundamental key to success, and it's good to have this gut instinct backed up by rigorous analysis. Most of us strive to look competent, smart, and aware. But on a team, if we are afraid to be vulnerable, if we hold back ideas or questions for fear of making mistakes or admitting we don't understand or don't agree, then we have one foot in the team and one foot outside. We're more defensive, we contribute less, and we're less likely to make commitments or take on new responsibilities.

People who work on psychologically safe teams stay longer, achieve more, and feel greater satisfaction. It's a good guess that local officials who serve on high-performing, safe boards and committees tend to stay longer, and the waiting list of applicants is probably longer than for panels where there is in-fighting and members are unsure about where they stand with each other.

At Google, and now in many other organizations, teams use this "Google Framework" to regularly self-rate their performance on all five dynamics, and collectively decide on small actions to move the needle and improve in each of these areas, especially if psychological safety is low. Over time, teams can improve and gain momentum.

This disciplined approach to take small yet important steps to implement change reminds me of a powerful observation by Neil Pasricha, the author of "The Book of Awesome," who says, "It is far easier to act yourself into a new way of thinking than it is to think yourself into a new way of acting."

Wouldn't it be great if all 14,000 of our municipal teams could use something like this Google Framework to take their temperature and lean in? The results could improve overall achievement, amplify best practices that enhance civility and positive engagement, and make the experience of volunteering and serving more rewarding and less prone to conflict.

Reading between the lines, it's important to note that decision-making by consensus wasn't correlated with high performance. How teams discussed various strategies and ideas did matter. If team members felt safe and felt heard by their colleagues, then they accepted the decisions and were dependable in their efforts to help move the actions forward. But if team members did not feel heard or valued, they were more likely to consent in public but hold back in private, undermining their commitment and follow-through, and weakening overall performance.

Civility, active listening, focusing on the issue or problem to be solved and not the personalities, all contribute to psychological safety. How we engage, and how we model these five traits matters a great deal.

Of course, there is a major difference between Google teams and our public boards and committees: the open meeting law. Discussions are exponentially harder in the public square (fishbowl?), where it is extremely difficult to be vulnerable and take risks, especially when social media can magnify what is said and done. Public service takes courage.

That said, individual team members can look at these measures and ask themselves, "How am I contributing to my committee's psychological safety? Am I dependable? Can I help clarify our structure and roles? How does serving on this board provide meaning to me, and how can I help us have impact?" I've always found that self-reflection helps me make sense of a situation. This makes the next step, listening to others, much easier, because I'm already in a learning mindset.

Many boards and committees hold annual retreats to set priorities and goals for the coming year. In addition to the "what do we want to do and accomplish?" part of the agenda, Google provides evidence for adding "how are we doing as a team, and how can we improve the ways we engage and work with each other?" to the discussion.

Personally, I am in awe of the outstanding work that you and your colleagues are doing to move your communities forward. I've been concerned that serving in local government is more challenging than ever, and the experience for some may not be as rewarding as they hoped.

If this is the case for you, perhaps these insights from Google can help. I hope so.

MIIA

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it is crucial for municipal employers to gather and provide detailed information about an employee separation at the outset, Scott said.

"Good documentation, including a letter of resignation that includes the reason why the person is resigning, is key," he said. "Nine out of 10 times, we won't need the letter, but there will be a case where the story may change down the line, and it's helpful to have that letter that says the individual left under good circumstances."

In cases where an employee stops reporting, municipal employers should also be careful to document the aban-

COMMONWEALTH

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"You have to be prepared to meet people where they are," Ballantyne said, "whether that's speaking their language, heading out into the community to where people gather, or offering up a range of ways to participate that fit into donment in writing, he said.

Another strategy municipalities can employ is to take advantage of the state's "reasonable assurance" provision, Scott said. Employees of school departments are ineligible for unemployment benefits if provided with reasonable assurance of returning the following school year. In addition, Massachusetts has a seasonal certification program, enabling municipalities to apply for a staff position to be classified as seasonal and thereby exempt from unemployment. These positions include lifeguard, recreation program staff, and athletic coaches.

Third-party resources are also available to help municipalities navigate the system. As part of its Unemployment Services Program, MIIA offers unemployment services to its members, including risk mitigation training, claims auditing and management, and all related payment processing. MIIA's full-service program is administered by its partners, UTMC and First Nonprofit Companies, and has resulted in the identification of more than \$1.7 million in unemployment benefit errors and \$27 million in fraud charges to date.

For more information on unemployment fraud, as well as free webinars on reasonable assurance and seasonal certification programs, visit <u>MIIA's Unemployment Services Program page</u>. ●

their lives."

The city benefits from an active citizenry, but engagement remains an ongoing challenge, said City Council President Ben Ewen-Campen.

"I love Somerville, and I'm proud that we're getting recognition, but I also think that we still have a lot of work to do," he said. "It's a perpetual thing."

– 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.

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BUDGET

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outlined in the Student Opportunity Act.

Rural schools

The Senate budget includes a \$15 million appropriation for Rural School Aid (7061-9813) to provide assistance to eligible towns and regional school districts. The grants would help schools facing the challenge of declining enrollment to identify efficiencies in school services or opportunities for regional collaboration. The MMA has stated its support for this proposal.

Regional school transportation

The House included \$107.8 million for Regional School District Transportation (7035-0006), which represents a 100% reimbursement rate according to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's estimate of fiscal 2024 claims.

Vocational transportation

State law (M.G.L. Ch. 74) requires the state to reimburse cities and towns for the cost of transporting students to out-of-district vocational education programs. The law recognizes the significant expense of providing transportation services, as these students must travel long distances to participate in vocational programs that might not be available locally. For many years, however, this account has been funded at just \$250,000, representing a reimbursement rate of just 6% of total claims.

The Senate budget includes a \$5.1 million appropriation for out-of-district vocational transportation (7035-0007), a proposal strongly supported by the MMA.

McKinney-Vento

Both the House and Senate budgets would fully fund, at \$28.6 million, the mandate to provide transportation for homeless students to their original districts (7035-0008) under the federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act. The amount reflects 100% of DESE's anticipated claims for fiscal 2024.

PILOT

Both the House and Senate bills include an appropriation of \$51.5 million to cover a portion of the payment-in-lieu-of taxes (PILOT) amount to cities and towns with state-owned land (1233-2400). This amount would hold communities harmless from recent property valuations, so no municipality would receive less than it did in fiscal 2023.

Fair Share revenue

Revenue from the voter-approved Fair Share Amendment, which took effect on Jan. 1 of this year, offers unique opportunities for funding additional education and transportation programs in fiscal 2024. The House and Senate bills both include the following Fair Share proposals of note for municipalities.

The Senate budget includes \$100 million in supplemental aid to support the construction and maintenance of municipal roadways, with at least half of the funding distributed based on each municipality's total share of road mileage. Municipalities are responsible for more than 30,000 miles of roads, or nearly 90% of all road miles statewide. The Senate's proposed funding would help communities quickly address immediate safety needs on local roadways.

The House budget includes \$100 million for a grant program administered through the DESE to provide financial support to K-12 districts to install or maintain clean energy infrastructure. The Green School Works program would further invest in schools, while helping to support local climate action and promoting energy efficiency.

The Senate budget includes \$100 million in supplemental grants for school construction projects already approved for financing by the Massachusetts School Building Authority. This funding would address significant and unanticipated cost escalations in recent years that are having an adverse impact on previously approved MSBA projects.

The House budget includes \$161 million to codify the universal school meals program, which would provide free lunches at public schools for all students, regardless of household income. The state has worked hard to extend the free school lunch program that began during the COVID-19 pandemic, and the House bill would make the program a permanent fixture across school districts in Massachusetts.

Community Preservation Trust Fund

An outside section in the Senate bill (Sec. 75) would direct the comptroller to transfer \$30 million to the Massachusetts Community Preservation Trust Fund prior to sending the net surplus for fiscal 2023 to the state's stabilization fund. Some 195 municipalities have adopted the Community Preservation Act, and the Senate provision would provide much-needed stability to the Community Preservation Trust Fund. The deposit proposed by Section 75 is common during times of surplus state revenues, and the MMA argues that it would greatly benefit communities that have adopted higher local property taxes in order to address environmental and housing challenges.

MassHealth crossover payments

Outside Section 34B in the House bill would provide financial relief for emergency medical service providers for the transport of patients who are eligible for both Medicare and MassHealth. The section would provide "MassHealth crossover" reimbursements for dual-eligible transports, which would provide additional assistance to emergency medical services providers to support ongoing efforts to recruit and retain staff. The MMA has partnered with the Fire Chiefs of Massachusetts, Professional Firefighters of Massachusetts, and the Massachusetts Ambulance Association in support of this provision in the House budget.

Lottery proceeds

An outside section of the House's budget bill would expand the Massachusetts State Lottery to authorize internet-based games, or an "iLottery," with proceeds from the new platform benefiting early education and care.

While the MMA appreciates the interest in expanding Lottery operations to compete in a rapidly changing market, the association is strongly urging legislators to ensure that all proceeds continue to solely support cities and towns through Unrestricted General Government Aid. The MMA argues that diverting future Lottery proceeds to other programs would weaken the funding base for the state's primary local aid account.

The Lottery generated \$1.105 billion in net proceeds in the most recently completed fiscal year (2022), according to the State Lottery Commission, which supported 94.6% of the state's annual appropriation for UGGA.

The Senate budget bill did not include a provision to expand the Lottery platform.

People

Mitchell Ruscitti became the new town administrator in Hopedale on June 26.

From December 2021 until recently, Ruscitti was the grant and community engagement manager for the United Way of Tri-County/United Way of Pioneer Valley/Mass211. A former Rutland Select Board member (2019-21), he was also founder and chief consultant of Tillrock Consulting, assistant director of grants development and compliance at Mount Wachusett Community College, grants team manager for Veterans Inc., project manager for the Commonwealth of Kentucky Cabinet for Economic Development, and senior staff assistant and then project manager for Worcester's Executive Office of Economic Development.

Ruscitti has a bachelor's degree in history and political science from UMass Lowell, and a master's degree in public administration from the University of Kentucky.

In Hopedale, Ruscitti replaces **Diana Schindler**, who left late last year to become the finance director in Greenfield. **Jeff Nutting** served as the interim administrator.



Danvers Town Manager **Steve Bartha**, president of the Massachusetts Municipal Management Association, will become one of six regional vice presidents serving on the executive board of the

Steve Bartha

International City/County Management Association this fall.

Bartha was elected as the Northeast vice president in June. He and the other five vice presidents will be inducted for the 2023-2026 term at the 109th ICMA Annual Conference, to be held in Austin, Texas, from Sept. 30 to Oct. 4.

Bartha has been serving as town manager in Danver since December 2014. He has also served as an assistant town manager in Avon, Connecticut; as a budget analyst for the Connecticut Office of Policy and Management; and as a management

assistant for the city of Ann Arbor, Michigan. He has a master's degree in public administration from the University of Connecticut and a bachelor's degree in political theory and constitutional democracy from Michigan State University.



International City/County Management Association Northeast Regional Director **Patricia Vinchesi**, a longtime municipal manager and a founding member of Women Leading Government, retired

Patricia Vinchesi

on June 16.

Vinchesi, who served in her ICMA role for more than five years, has more than 30 years of experience in municipal management — as town administrator in Scituate from 2009 until 2017, and as town administrator in South Hadley, Whately and Longmeadow. She was also the deputy executive director of the Springfield Finance Control Board.

Vinchesi was president of the Massachusetts Municipal Management Association from 2005 to 2006.

In retirement, she said she plans to stay active with WLG and continue as an ICMA coach. She said she also plans to travel with friends and family, read and garden.



century leading Belchertown's public works department, **Steve Williams** became the town administrator on June 2. Williams took over

After more

than a quarter

Steve Williams the administrator

role from **Gary Brougham**, who retired on June 4 after more than 25 years in the role. This is the second time Williams has followed directly in Brougham's footsteps; Williams took Brougham's place as public works director when Brougham became administrator in 1997. Previously, Williams had been the chief operator at the town's water reclamation facility.

Williams has a bachelor's degree in construction management from UMass Amherst.

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Jonathan Tavares joined the Attleboro City Council as an at-large member after winning a June 6 special election. He filled a seat left vacant by Mayor **Cathleen DeSimone**, who had served on the council for three years before winning a special mayoral election in February.

Jessica Sizer,



who most recently served as town administrator in Barre, joined the Division of Local Services on April 3 as a project manager in the Financial Management Resource Bureau.

Jessica Sizer

A town councillor in Palmer for the past four years, Sizer served for nearly three years as administrator in Barre. She has a master's degree in public policy and a bachelor's degree in political science and government, both from UMass Amherst.

Barnstable Town Clerk **Ann Quirk** was named the 2023 Clerk of the Year by the Massachusetts Town Clerks' Association at its annual conference in Plymouth in June. Quirk has been serving as Barnstable's clerk for the past decade.



William Kennedy Jr.

William Kennedy

Jr., a former longtime municipal manager and a deputy executive director of the MMA in the 1980s, died on July 4 at age 85.

Kennedy served as town manager in Holden from 1970

through 1985, and as deputy executive

People

PEOPLE

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director of the MMA from 1986 to 1988. He later served as town administrator in Stoughton, executive secretary in Auburn, and chief financial officer in Worcester. After retiring from local government, he served for more than a decade as a regional environmental officer for the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

A Navy veteran and reservist, he attended the U.S. Naval Officer Candidate School in Newport, Rhode Island, served three tours of duty in Vietnam, and was honorably discharged in 1996 as a captain. He received a bachelor's degree in political science from the University of Vermont and a master's degree in government administration from the Wharton School, and was an adjunct professor at several Worcester-area colleges.



Maureen Valente,

a longtime municipal leader who also worked in state government, died on June 11 at age 69.

Valente served for 15 years as town manager in Sudbury before

Maureen Valente

leaving in 2015 to become CEO of the Massachusetts School Building Authority. Prior to Sudbury, she served as treasurer in Lexington, and as assistant treasurer in Concord. She also taught public administration courses at Suffolk University and was a member of the Massachusetts State Retirement Board. Earlier in her career, Valente worked for the International City/County Management Association in Washington, D.C. She held a bachelor's degree from the University of California, Berkeley, and a master's degree in public administration from George Washington University.

Valente's husband, **Carl Valente**, is also a longtime municipal official, having served as town manager in Lexington and Weston, and as town administrator and finance director in Needham.

Saundra Graham, Cambridge's first Black woman city councillor and a former state representative, died on June 23 at age 81.



Graham served on the Cambridge City Council from 1971 until 1989, and as vice-mayor from 1976 to 1977. Her service on the council overlapped significantly with her time in the Legislature, where she served from

Saundra Graham

1977 until 1988, representing the 4th Middlesex District. She was also the first Black woman to represent Cambridge in the Legislature. She was chair of the Massachusetts Black Legislative Caucus and a member of the Massachusetts Caucus of Women Legislators, and she served on the Joint Committee on Housing and Urban Development.

On July 10, the city of Cambridge honored Graham by having her lie in state at City Hall. The Graham and Parks School in Cambridge is named after her and civil rights activist **Rosa Parks**.

David M. Bartley, a former House

speaker and education champion, died on June 13 at age 88.

A high school teacher and basketball coach, Bartley was elected to the House of Representatives in 1962. Representing Holyoke for 13 years, he was elected House speaker in 1969. His accomplishments include the 1972



passage of the Chapter 766 Special Education Law. After stepping down as speaker, he spent 29 years as president of Holyoke Community College, and served as then-Gov. Edward King's secretary of Administration and Finance in the early

David Bartley

1980s.

Bartley graduated from Holyoke Junior College (now Holyoke Community College) and UMass Amherst, where he also earned his master's and doctorate degrees, and where he played basketball. His accomplishments on the court led to an invitation to try out for the Boston Celtics and his 2005 induction into the UMass Basketball Hall of Fame.

His son, **David K. Bartley**, represents Ward 3 on the Holyoke City Council.

This monthly column highlights transitions, accomplishments and awards, and life events of municipal officials. To submit information for People, contact MMA Associate Editor Jennifer Kavanaugh at 800-882-1498 or jkavanaugh@mma.org.

New select board members elected

The following are new select board members elected in annual town elections from May 30 through June 26.

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

Brimfield: Paul Vandal Buckland: Joan Christine Livingston Holland: Kate Landers Leicester: Kevin Menard Leyden: Erica Jensen Marblehead: Bret Murray Monson: Peter Warren Peru: Ed Munch West Boylston: James Morrissey Westhampton: Susan Bronstein

People

Pooler to retire as Arlington town manager

After serving for a quarter century in municipal government, Arlington Town Manager Sandy Pooler will be retiring on July 28.

Pooler has been working in Arlington since 2016, first as deputy town manager and then as deputy town manager/finance director and then as town manager for the past year. He previously served as finance director in Amherst from 2011 to 2016, and worked for 11 years in Newton, first as the chief budget officer and then as the city's chief administrative officer. He previously served as legal counsel to several committees in the House of Representatives, and was a law clerk for a federal district judge in California.

The MMA Fiscal Policy Committee honored Pooler for his service during its June 27 meeting, and the town is holding a retirement party for Pooler on July 27. In retirement, Pooler said he plans to travel and continue teaching at the UMass McCormack Graduate School of Policy and Global Studies.

James Feeney will take over as town manager in Arlington on Aug. 1. Feeney started in Arlington in 2009 as health compliance officer, and his roles have since included acting director of health and human services.



James Feeney

acting recreation director, and interim facilities director. He served as assistant town manager from 2016 to 2019, and became deputy town manager for operations in 2021.

During his time in Arlington, Feeney has also served as a lead facilitator at Boston University's Office of Distance Education. He has bachelor's degree in health science and a master's degree in public health in epidemiology, both from Boston University.



MMA Deputy Legislative Director Jackie Lavender Bird, left, recognizes retiring Arlington Town Manager Sandy Pooler for his service during the June 27 meeting of the MMA Fiscal Policy Committee.



LGAC honors Beckwith's service

MMA Executive Director Geoff Beckwith, center, poses with Lt. Gov. Kim Driscoll, left, and MMA President and Lexington Select Board Member Jill Hai at the State House during the June 13 meeting of the Local Government Advisory Commission, which was Beckwith's 211th and final LGAC meeting. In advance of his retirement in September after 31 years leading the MMA, Driscoll presented Beckwith with a proclamation to recognize his career-long dedication to local government. "I want you to know how grateful I am to have worked with you," said Driscoll, who previously served as mayor of Salem for 17 years and was a deputy city manager in Chelsea. "You've built a lot of strength in our cities and towns."

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Principal Assessor

Town of West Bridgewater

The West Bridgewater Board of Assessors seeks qualified candidates for the position of Principal Assessor. The Principal Assessor is responsible for administrative, supervisory and technical work in overseeing the town's municipal tax assessment activities for all classes of real and personal property and conducts revaluation and annual value updates in accordance with state requirements. The Principal Assessor reports to and serves the Board of Assessors to assure compliance with state law and regulations governing the municipal tax assessment process. Minimum Qualifications: Position requires a bachelor's degree in business or related field and three to five years' experience as a Principal Assessor; 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. Thorough knowledge of the modern assessment practices and procedures relating to the assessment of property and levying taxes. Thorough knowledge of Massachusetts real and personal property assessment laws. The employee must be a Massachusetts Accredited Assessor, Certified Massachusetts Assessor, or have the ability to achieve certification within 18 months of appointment; and have a valid Class D driver's license. Salary is \$80,000 to \$95,000, depending on qualifications. To apply for this position, visit the town of West Bridgewater website: www.westbridgewaterma. org/departments/human resources/job_ opportunities.php. Applications should be submitted to Linda Torres, Assistant Town Administrator/HR Director either by email to ltorres@wbridgewater. com, or mail to 65 North Main St., West Bridgewater, MA 02379. Applications will be accepted until the position is filled, and preference will be given to those

Director of Senior Services Town of Granby

submitted by Aug. 11. AA/EOE

The town of Granby is seeking a Director of Senior Services, who oversees the daily operations of the senior center. Responsible for the administrative, fiscal management, managerial, supervisory, and social service work in connection with the service programs for the elderly and community. Responsible for the development and implementation of support programs, services, events, activities, and facilities. Desired qualifications are a bachelor's degree and five years' experience in social work, gerontology, human services field or any equivalent combination of education and experience working with senior citizens. Work schedule is 40 hours per week. Salary range is \$55,000-\$65,000/D0Q. Applications may be obtained at the Selectboard Office, 10 W State St., Granby, MA 01033 or by calling 413-467-7177 or emailing cleonard@granby-ma.gov. Applications and resumes will be received until the position is filled.

Principal Assessor Town of Southbridge

The town is seeking qualified and motivated applicants for the position of Principal Assessor. Performs professional, administrative, technical and supervisory work in managing the operations of the Assessor's Department and in the appraisal of town-wide property, in accordance with state and local statute and regulations, along with billing for the Water and Sewer Departments. Must be proficient in using Microsoft Office Suite (Word, Excel, Power Point, etc.), have an aptitude for numbers and details, and possess excellent organizational skills. Must have proficient written and oral communication skills, work independently, and be self-motivated. Bachelor's degree required. Minimum of three to five years of experience with assessing or appraisal, preferably in a municipal government setting; or an equivalent combination of education and experience, which provides the required knowledge, skills and abilities to perform the essential functions of the position. Must pass the Massachusetts Department of Revenue Course 101 within six months and attain the designation of Massachusetts Accredited Assessors (MAA) Certification within three years of employment. Hiring salary range begins at \$89,074.70, based upon qualifications. To Apply: Forward a town of Southbridge employment application, resume, and cover letter to the Town of Southbridge, Human Resources, 41 Elm St., Southbridge, MA 01550, fax 508-764-5425, or email to hr@southbridgemass.org. The position will be open until filled. The town of Southbridge is an equal opportunity employer and values diversity at all levels of the workforce. EOE

Planning/Economic Development Coordinator Town of Deerfield

The town of Deerfield seeks a qualified, motivated, enthusiastic, and experienced Planning/Economic Development Coordinator. Duties include grant development and administration, facilitating economic development, planning, land use activities, and coordination of associated policies and procedures. Pre-employment physical exam required. Full-time, 40 hours/week, benefitted position with salary range of \$73,000-\$75,000. Job description and application available at <u>www.deerfieldma.us/jobs</u>. Send applications, cover letters and résumés to the Asst. Town Administrator at ata@town.deerfield.ma.us or mail/deliver to 8 Conway St., South Deerfield, MA 01373. No phone calls, please. Application review begins immediately. AA/EEO employer.

HVAC Technician PT-12 Town of Winchester

There exists within the Department of Public Works the following vacancy: Buildings Maintenance – PT-12 – HVAC Technician. Those interested should apply online or in writing to the Director of Public Works as soon as possible. Posting will remain open until it is filled. 15 Lake St., Winchester, MA 01890. Full job description at www.winchester.us/Jobs.aspx?Uni queld=100&From=All&CommunityJobs=False& JobID=HVAC-Technician-PT12-37. Salary Range: \$58,513-\$85,201. To apply, send your resume and cover letter to humanresources@winchester.us.

Truck Driver/Skilled Laborer Town of Barre

The town of Barre DPW-Highway Dept. is seeking qualified applicants for the immediate full-time position of Truck Driver/Skilled Laborer. Applicants must have a valid Massachusetts driver's license Class B (CDL) with DOT Medical Examination Certification and a Hoisting Engineer License Class 2B with DOT Medical Examination Certification. A full job description with minimum requirements and employment application is available at www. townofbarre.com. This position is a union position and the current classification is a PW-1 with a starting hourly rate of \$20.78/hour. Interested applicants should submit a letter of interest and an employment application to: Town of Barre DPW, 441 Wheelwright Road, Barre, MA 01005. For further information, please contact the DPW Administrative Assistant, Shannon O'Connor, at 978-355-5013 or by email to dpw@townofbarre.com. AA/EOE

CLASSIFIEDS continued on 37

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.

September Beacon

Deadline: August 25 Publication: August 31

October Beacon

Deadline: September 26 Publication: October 2

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

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Town Manager Town of Madison, Maine

Madison, Maine (population of 4,725), is located in Somerset County and at the critical stages of redevelopment. The Select Board seeks that dynamic person to be their next Town Manager, who will continue to guide the growth of the community. Submit your resume and identify your municipal leadership, executive and planning experience. Complete Town Manager application package and information available at <u>madisonmaine.com</u>. Interviews are scheduled for July. Applications accepted until the position is filled. Send information to: Town Manager Search Committee, P.O. Box 190, Madison, ME 04950. EOE

Chief of Inspections

City of Brockton

Brockton, the City of Champions, is hiring! We are seeking a Chief of Inspections with strong managerial skills and an understanding of the Massachusetts sanitary code to lead and supervise the day-to-day operations of inspections and code enforcement in the Inspectional Services Department. You will have the opportunity to "think outside the box" in this newly created position as you work to improve processes and procedures. Compensation ranges between \$83,130 and \$96,233, depending upon experience and qualifications, and includes a generous benefits package. For a complete job description and application instructions, visit brockton.interviewexchange.com/jobofferdetails. jsp?JOBID=162539. Deadline to Apply: July 28 or until filled. (Please note that applications will be reviewed immediately.)

Senior Planner Town of Burlington

The Senior Planner is the Planning Department's point person for all things related to land use permitting, specifically overseeing the review process for site plans, subdivisions, special permits and related. Also oversees the work of the Assistant Planner, assists in long-range planning, communicating with consultants, and assisting in grant applications. Requires a bachelor's degree in planning, or related field and four years' professional experience. The successful candidate will be a dynamic and motivated professional who enjoys public service. Pay range starts at \$73,668 to a max rate of \$100,447. We would love to consider you for this opportunity! Apply at <u>burlington.catsone.com/</u> <u>careers</u>.

County Administrator Bristol County

This position is the Executive Secretary and the Chief Administrative Officer for supervising all personnel and activities under the direct jurisdiction of the County Commissioners. The county is seeking a qualified person of proven ability who has had substantial experience in federal, state or regional government. A bachelor's degree or greater with excellent organizational and communication skills is required. Efficiency with all Microsoft programs and experience with preparing government budgets is essential. Salary is negotiable. See county website for full job description: <u>www.countyofbristol.net</u>. Letters of interest and resumes will be accepted through August 31 in the Office of the Bristol County Commissioners. Attn. Maria Gomes, PO Box 208, Taunton, MA 02780 or email to mgomes@ countyofbristol.net.

Maintenance Specialist Medfield Public Schools

Medfield Public Schools is seeking a full-time Maintenance Specialist. This is a 40 hour/week, Monday to Friday position. Pay Range: \$22.61-\$27.27/hr. High school diploma and three to five years' experience in facility maintenance required; or an equivalent combination of education and experience. Experience with plumbing, carpentry or HVAC in a licensed shop required. Ability to operate a variety of equipment including drills, saws, grinders, painting equipment and other power tools. Please send resume to kvandenboom@email.medfield.net. Use "Maintenance Specialist" as the subject.

School Custodian Walpole Public Schools

Walpole Public Schools is seeking a full-time custodian at Walpole High School effective immediately. This is a 40 hour per week, Monday to Friday, 2 p.m.-10 p.m. position. Interested candidates, please email hr@ walpole.k12.ma.us to apply. Starting rate \$24.05 per hour. Walpole Public Schools also has openings for temporary summer custodians, Monday to Friday, 6 a.m.-2 p.m. Please email hr@walpole.k12.ma.us to apply.

Associate Planner Town of Billerica

The Planner assists in the operations of the Planning and Community Development Office under the direction of the Director and provides a wide range of development and land use planning activities duties related to board and commission staffing, plan creation and implementation, data collection and policy analysis, and a variety of other planning and economic development projects, as needed. This position is anticipated to be a union position in the Billerica Professional Administrators Association (BPAA). Bachelor's degree or equivalent in urban planning, civil engineering, or closely related field. Salary: \$57,206-\$67,592. Hours: Monday-Friday; 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m. For a complete listing and to apply: <u>www.</u> town.billerica.ma.us.

DPW: Water Treatment Operator Town of Billerica

Duties required for the proper operation of a public works water supply, to assist the Treatment Chemist in procuring and testing samples, to perform required routine mechanical equipment, and to perform related work as required. Must have a Grade III license from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Board of Certification of Operators of Drinking Water Supply Facilities. Substitutions for requirements will be at the discretion of the Director of Public Works. Starting Salary: \$66,816-\$75,932.21 annually, depending on experience. Excellent benefits and pension plan! Apply: Send cover letter and resume to hr@town. billerica.ma.us. Visit <u>www.town.billerica.ma.us</u> for complete details.

Master Mechanic Town of Barre

The town of Barre DPW is seeking qualified applicants for the immediate full-time position of Master Mechanic. This position provides skilled manual repairs on public works and emergency vehicles. Must have knowledge of gas and diesel equipment and possess the necessary tools to perform maintenance and repairs. Applicants must have a valid Massachusetts driver's license class B (CDL) with DOT medical examination certification and a hoisting engineer license class 2A with DOT medical examination certification. A full job description with minimum requirements and employment application is available at <u>www.townofbarre.com</u>. This position is a union position with benefits and the current classification is a PW-4 under the town's union contact. Interested applicants should submit a letter of interest and an employment application to: Town of Barre DPW, 441 Wheelwright Road, Barre, MA 01005 by Wednesday, July 19, at 12 p.m. or until filled. For further information, please contact the DPW Administrative Assistant, Shannon O'Connor, at 978-355-5013 or email dpw@townofbarre.com. AA/EOE

Part-Time Administrative Assistant to the Public Works Director Town of Rye, New Hampshire

The town of Rye, N.H., is seeking candidates to fill the position of Part-Time Administrative Assistant to the Director of Public Works. Previous experience working in public works, civil construction or a municipal office is highly desirable. This is a part-time position without benefits, normally not to exceed 25 hours per week. Pay commensurate with experience. Employment application and detailed job description can be found on the town website at <u>www.town.rye.nh.us</u> under "employment opportunities." Send application and resume to: Public Works Director, 10 Central Road, Rye, NH 03870 or email to jrucker@town.rye.nh.us. Applications are accepted until the position is filled.

Deputy Recreation Director Town of Rye, New Hampshire

The town of Rye, N.H., is accepting applications for the position of Deputy Recreation Director. This full-time position works as the assistant to the Director to create and implement programs for the community as well as assist in the budgeting and maintenance facets of the department. Assistance with general operations of the Recreation Department, marketing and public relations will also be required. The full job description can be seen on the town website <u>www.town.rye.nh.us</u> under employment opportunities. Salary range is \$28.91-\$35.56/hr. Send cover letter and resume to Rye Recreation Commission, c/o Dyana Martin, Recreation Director, 10 Central Road, Rye, NH 03870.

Director of Facilities Town of Norfolk

The Director of Facilities position is shared with the School Department and the town of Norfolk. The Director of Facilities is responsible for coordinating, integrating, and implementing facilities planning, maintenance, and overall management of the town of Norfolk's and the School Department's buildings and grounds. The Director of Facilities reports directly to both the Superintendent of Schools and to the Town Administrator. Full-time, 40 hours per week. Grade 16, non-union with benefits. Salary: \$122,803 +/- DOQ. Qualifications: Bachelor's degree in civil engineering, facilities management, or a related field preferred; seven to 10 years of experience in building and facilities maintenance, construction with HVAC or electrical trade, with at least three

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years of which are in a supervisory capacity; or any equivalent combination of education and experience. Must possess a valid motor vehicle operator's license with a good driving record. Massachusetts Certified Public Purchasing Officer (MCPPO) required within one year of starting the position. A master's degree in a related field with a Massachusetts state license as a Professional Engineer is desirable. Preference for applications received by July 17 by 5 p.m. Position is open until filled. To apply, candidates must send a resume, cover letter, and a completed town of Norfolk job application to jobs@norfolk.ma.us. AA/EOE

Foreman

City of Waltham

The city of Waltham is looking for a Foreman in the Building Maintenance Department. Comprehensive benefits package. See <u>www.city.waltham.ma.us/</u> <u>category/tags/jobs</u>

IT Manager Town of Newbury

The town of Newbury seeks qualified candidates for the full-time position of IT Manager. The position is responsible for overseeing the town's Windows and telephone environments, point of contact for questions and issues from end-users and their systems, manage community engagement through social media/website, oversee/participate in the new software/programs/application initiatives and ensuring overall health and protection of IT infrastructure for the town of Newbury. Applicants should possess an associate's degree in a related field and at least five to seven years' experience in a technical support capacity. Familiarity with a municipal setting is preferred. Position is 35 hours per week (Monday, Wednesday, Thursday 8 a.m.-4 p.m. and Tuesday 8 a.m.-7 p.m.) with benefits package, salary negotiable based on experience starting at \$90,000. Accepting resumes until the position is filled. Town of Newbury, Town Administrator, 12 Kent Way, Byfield, MA 01922. AA/EOE

Assistant Town Administrator Town of Rockland

The town of Rockland is seeking qualified candidates for the position of Assistant Town Administrator. This position assists the Town Administrator with professional, administrative, daily operations and project management of the town. Responsibilities include complex administrative tasks, general project and people management, planning and economic development initiatives, grant administration, special projects as required and assigned, and other related work. Education and Experience: Bachelor's degree in public administration or related field with a master's degree preferred; a minimum of three to five vears of municipal experience preferred, project and complex administrative experience; or any equivalent combination of education and experience. Annual Salary: Up to \$110,000 DOQ. Excellent benefits with town contribution of 79% BCBS and 50% dental, life insurance, voluntary plans such as vision, FSA/ DCA, long term and short-term disability. Full job description found online at <u>rockland-ma.gov</u>. Resume and letter of interest should be emailed to Human Resources, scallahan@rockland-ma.gov.

Deputy Fire Chief Town of Hamilton

Hamilton, Mass. (7,764 pop.), seeks qualified applicants for the position of Deputy Fire Chief. Candidates should have excellent administrative knowledge, leadership and management skills and have superior technical and mechanical aptitude. Full job description with detailed information and requirements here. This is a 40 hour-perweek position with additional emergency response responsibilities. This is a contract position. Annual salary \$100,000 to \$120,000 based on qualifications, plus benefits package. Submit resume and cover letter to the Fire Chief, via email RBrunet@hamiltonma.gov as a single PDF, by close of business on July 30. AA/ EOC

Superintendent of Water Town of Billerica

Responsible for coordinating all aspects of the Water Division, including treatment, distribution, and the laboratory. Responsible for compliance with Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection and the Environmental Protection Agency Drinking Water Regulations. Plans use of manpower and equipment and carries through the execution of water projects and programs; directs activities of field crews and may serve as a leader on a variety of construction and maintenance projects for townowned property, facilities, and structures; assigns laborers, operators, and foremen to specific tasks; instructs laborers and operators in proper use of equipment, and ensures that safety procedures are followed. Responsible for the preparation, submission, and administration of the Water Division budget. Plans, assigns, schedules, supervises, and reviews the work of subordinates. Day-to-day operations and management of a SCADA System and remote communications network. Responsible for producing weekly, monthly, and annual reports required by regulatory agencies. Reviews and approves waterrelated permits. 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. Salary Range: \$105,443-\$124,587. See complete job description at <u>www.town.billerica</u>. ma.us or apply to HR@town.billerica.ma.us.

Assistant Town Accountant Town of Duxbury

Duxbury is seeking qualified Assistant Town Accountant applicants (full-time and benefits eligible). Duties include compliance with state, federal, and local regulations and policies in accordance with standard municipal accounting practices, and administrative and clerical services in support of accounting operations. Associate's degree in accounting, finance or equivalent, three to five years' professional accounting experience, preferably municipal accounting with knowledge of UMAS, proficiency in MS Office, aptitude to learn proprietary financial software packages, and understanding of the applicable Massachusetts municipal laws and regulations. UMAS certification and supervisory experience are desirable. Municipal accounting experience preferred. Position open until filled, full job description and application at townofduxburyjobs.easyapply.co.

Senior Comprehensive Planner Old Colony Planning Council

OCPC is looking for a Senior Comprehensive Planner who will join a high-performing team who are responsible for delivering plans and projects at the regional and city/town levels, in particular, but not limited to: regional and municipal long-range planning, including visioning and master plans; municipal vulnerability and hazard mitigation planning; municipal energy use reduction and climate adaptation; parks and open space planning, economic development and recovery; housing; and zoning. Job open until filled. To apply, please email your cover letter, resume, and one work sample (report, presentation, or other) to Mary Waldron, Executive Director, Old Colony Planning Council, at mwaldron@ ocpcrpa.org.

Senior Community and Economic Planner

Old Colony Planning Council

OCPC is looking for a Senior Community and Economic Planner who will use their skills to be a technical lead/co-lead on numerous plans, project management initiatives, civic engagement efforts, and other deliverables. They would produce grant funding applications, planning narratives, data and policy narratives, writing (both technical and creative), educational materials, project documentation, and other work, as needed. Job open until filled. To apply, please email your cover letter, resume, and one work sample (report, presentation, or other) to Mary Waldron, Executive Director, Old Colony Planning Council, at mwaldron@ocpcrpa.org.

Principal Transportation Planner Old Colony Planning Council

OCPC is looking for a Principal Transportation Planner who will play an important role in delivering plans and projects within the department, both independently and in collaboration with other staff. The Transportation Department is responsible for delivering plans and projects at the regional and city/ town levels, that include regional and long-range planning; transit planning; corridor planning; travel demand modeling; and bicycle and pedestrian planning. Job open until filled. To apply, please email your cover letter, resume, and one work sample (report, presentation, or other) to Mary Waldron, Executive Director, Old Colony Planning Council, at mwaldron@ocpcrpa.org.

COA Program and Activities Assistant Town of Georgetown

The town of Georgetown is seeking applicants for the position of Program and Activities Assistant at the Georgetown Senior Community Center. The Program and Activities Assistant assists with operations and activities at the Georgetown Senior Community Center. The position requires a degree from a two or four-year college or university and experience in human services. A drivers' license is required. Computer skills include Microsoft Office and data input. Salary is \$17.21 per hour, 32 hours per week, with benefits. Cover letters and resumes may be sent to the Town Administrator, 1 Library St., Georgetown, MA 01833 or by email to mschultz@georgetownma. gov.

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Treasurer/Collector Town of West Brookfield

The Treasurer/Collector manages the town's cash and is responsible for the deposit, investments, and disbursement of town funds. The Treasurer/Collector is authorized to issue debt on behalf of the town upon approval of the Board of Selectmen and prepares for the sale of long-term bonds by working with the town's financial advisor, bond counsel, Town Administrator, and the Town Accountant. Establishes and maintains an efficient cash management system, including maintenance of the town's cashbook, and determines cash flow needs of the town by timing investments to ensure maximum yield for interest and planning when borrowing may need to occur. Is the custodian of all tax title accounts and prepares and maintains tax title deeds, prepares documents with assistance from the town tax title attorney for foreclosures. The Treasurer/ Collector collects and enforces the collection of all committed taxes, betterments and other amounts as provided by law. Salary range is \$70,000 to \$85,000 commensurate with experience. Interested applicants may send their cover letter and resume to rsanangelo@ wbrookfield.com.

Licensed Electrician Town of Saugus

We are looking for positive, reliable, and honest people who take pride in their work and can thrive in a town setting. This is a full-time position. Essential Responsibilities: Installs control and distribution apparatus such as switches, relays, and circuit breaker panels. Observes functioning of installed equipment or system to detect hazards and need for adjustments, relocation, or replacement. Repairs faulty equipment or systems. Keeps records and prepares sketches showing location of wiring and equipment, or follows diagrams or blueprints, ensuring that concealed wiring is installed before completion of future walls, ceilings, and flooring. Connects wiring to lighting fixtures and power equipment. Connects power cables to equipment, such as electric range or motor, and installs grounding leads. Tests continuity of circuit to ensure electrical compatibility and safety of components with testing instruments such as ohmmeter, battery and buzzer, amp meter, and oscilloscope. Job Requirements: Knowledge of the national electrical code (NEC), local codes, and construction safety requirements. Experience in a commercial/industrial environment preferred. Experience in all electrical systems preferred. Qualifications: High school education; five years of experience in residential and commercial building electrical installations; or any equivalent combination of education and experience. Active journeyman or master electrician license. OSHA 10 required/OSHA 30 preferred. Familiarity with interpreting electrical schematics, blueprints, and manuals. Valid driver's license. Please email applications/resumes to hr@saugus-ma.gov.

Principal Clerk Town of Saugus

Applications are being accepted for a full-time Principal Clerk in the Treasurer/Collector's Office. Qualifications: The incumbent must possess a thorough knowledge of office-related computer software including, but not limited to, Microsoft applications. Must possess knowledge of general accounting principles, must possess the ability to analyze data, must be able to work independently and with others, must be able to work well with the public and appropriately resolve consumer concerns, and must be able to take direction from superiors. Please email applications/resumes to hr@saugus-ma.gov.

Meter Reader Technician Town of Saugus

Applications are being accepted for a full-time Meter Reader Technician in the Treasurer/Collector's Office. This position reads and records utility service meters; enters data and retrieves information into and from a computer database: tests and repairs all sizes of water meters; installs and replaces meters in the field; and provides technical support to the Utility Billing and Meter Operations Manager and Water Foreman. All other duties as directed. Oualifications: The incumbent must possess a thorough knowledge of operational characteristics, services and activities of a municipal utility. Knowledge of automatic meter reading (AMR) or advanced metering infrastructure (AMI) systems preferred. Knowledge of operation and adjustments of residential, commercial and industrial water meters. Knowledge of methods and techniques of meter calibration. The ability to test, diagnose, and calibrate water meters. The ability to understand and follow oral and written instructions. Please email applications/ resumes to hr@saugus-ma.gov.

Town Planner Town of Saugus

This position focuses on short, intermediate and long-term planning initiatives in the areas of: land use, housing, commercial/economic development, infrastructure and energy, open space and environmental concerns. The position supports the work of the Planning and Development Director and will assist the Director in his/her various duties and assignments as they arise, including the preparation of grant applications and the supervision/ coordination of planning and other studies. The position also requires management responsibilities for special projects funded by grants and related means. The position reports directly to the Planning and Development Director and the Town Manager, as appropriate. Qualifications: Minimum of two years in planning and community development or highly related and relevant experience. Bachelor's degree required, master's degree preferred, in planning, urban development or a closely related field. Please email applications/resumes to hr@saugus-ma.gov. Please email applications/resumes to hr@saugus-ma.gov.

Civilian Dispatchers Town of Saugus

Applications are being accepted for a full-time Civilian Dispatcher at the Public Safety Building. Responsibilities include receiving calls on E911 systems, determining appropriate level of response, and dispatching public safety personnel calmly and clearly to locations where corrective action is needed. Responsibilities also include maintaining proper records of all communications, providing information and assistance to the general public, as well as various clerical and computer-related functions. Applicants must be able to work well under pressure. Qualifications: Applicants must be able to complete all required training successfully. Prior training and experience is preferred. Close Date: Open until filled. Application: Please email all cover letters/resumes to Human Resources at HR@saugusma.gov.

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SERVICES

Municipal Energy Services

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

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, 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 shortterm 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 Bernard Lynch at 978-621-6733 or BLynch@CommunityParadigm.com;

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CLASSIFIEDS

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

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

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

Labor Counsel Services/Municipal Human Resources Specialists

Clifford and Kenny, LLP provides quality representation to cities, towns and school districts in the area of labor and employment. Attorneys John Clifford and Jaime Kenny have many years of experience in representing clients for collective bargaining and personnel-related matters including discipline and discharge of unionized employees. We have extensive experience in the area of police and fire injured-on-duty cases, and have worked extensively with municipalities and insurers to resolve costly longterm claims. We offer training in sexual harassment, social media and the "just cause analysis" to municipal managers. We also serve as appointed hearing officers on a case-by-case basis. Many of our clients take advantage of a flat monthly rate for unlimited phone calls and emails, which encourages key managers to work with counsel prior to making critical personnel decisions. Check our website at <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 www.hrsconsultinginc.com. WBE certified

Executive Recruitment and Municipal Management

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

Calendar

JULY



monthly meeting, 9 a.m.-1 p.m., Sandwich Hollows Golf Club, Sandwich. Contact: MMA Senior Member Services Coordinator Denise Baker

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Massachusetts Mayors'

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

AUGUST

MMA webinar, Best Practices for 15 Navigating Statewide Contracts and COMMBUYS Purchasing, noon. Contact: MMA Education and Training Coordinator Lily Rancatore

SEPTEMBER

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

Massachusetts Select Board 8 **Association**, webinar, Contact: MMA Member Program Coordinator Anneke Craig

- **Massachusetts Municipal** 12 Councillors' Association, board meeting, 8:45-9:45 a.m., MMA office and Zoom. Contact: MMA Senior Member Services Coordinator Denise Baker
- MMA Board of Directors, 12

10-11:15 a.m., MMA office and Zoom. Contact: MMA Executive Director's office

Massachusetts Select Board 12 Association, board meeting, 2:15-3:30 p.m., MMA office and Zoom. Contact: MMA Member Program Coordinator Anneke Craig

For more information, visit www.mma.org



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

Massachusetts Municipal 14 Management Association,

monthly meeting, 9 a.m.-1 p.m., Lake Pearl, Wrentham. Contact: MMA Senior Member Services Coordinator Denise Baker

Massachusetts Municipal 21-22 Human Resources, Fall Conference, Sea Crest Hotel, Falmouth.

Contact: MMA Member Program Coordinator Anneke Craig

Massachusetts Mayors' 27 **Association**, monthly meeting, 9:15 a.m.-1 p.m. Contact: MMA Communications and Membership **Director Candace Pierce**

Women Elected Municipal 29 Officials, leadership conference, 9 a.m.-1 p.m., Courtyard Marriott, Marlborough. Contact: MMA Member Program Coordinator Anneke Craig

OCTOBER

ICMA Conference, state dinner. 2 Austin, Texas. Contact: MMA Senior Member Services Coordinator Denise Baker

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

MMA Board of Directors, 10 long-range planning meeting, 8:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Contact: MMA Executive Director's office

Massachusetts Select Board 12 Association, leadership conference, Pompositticut Community Center, Stow. Contact: MMA Member

Program Coordinator Anneke Craig

Massachusetts Municipal 19 Management Association, boot camp, 9 a.m.-3 p.m., Sharon Community Center, Sharon. Contact: MMA Senior Member Services Coordinator Denise Baker

Massachusetts Municipal 27 Human Resources, labor relations seminar. Devens Common Center, Devens. Contact: MMA Member Program Coordinator Anneke Craig

NOVEMBER

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

Women Leading Government, 2 meeting, 9 a.m.-1 p.m., The Manor, West Boylston. Contact: MMA Senior Member Services Coordinator Denise Baker

Association of Town Finance 4 **Committees**, Annual Meeting, 9 a.m.-3 p.m., Sharon Community Center, Sharon. Contact: MMA Senior Member Services Coordinator Denise Baker

Massachusetts Municipal 14 Councillors' Association. board meeting, 8:45-9:45 a.m., MMA office and Zoom. Contact: MMA Senior Member Services Coordinator Denise Baker

MMA Board of Directors, 14 10-11:15 a.m., MMA office and Zoom. Contact: MMA Executive Director's office

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.

Anneke Craig can be reached at acraig@mma.org